ENGLISH COMPOSITION I



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Book: English Composition 1

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About This Course

The course was developed by Lumen Learning, with contributions from faculty from the Department of Writing and Rhetoric at the University of Mississippi, as well as significant contributions from:

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Course Contents at a Glance

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  - Communication and Professionalism
  - Critical Thinking
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- Module 2: Reading Strategies
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  - Specialized Reading Strategies
  - Rhetorical Context
  - Vocabulary
  - Types of Reading Material
- Module 3: Writing Essentials
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  - Effective Paragraphs
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- Module 4: Writing in College
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  - Finding Evidence
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- Module 9: Academic Argument
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- Module 10: Research—Finding and Evaluating Sources
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- Module 11: Research—Using Sources
  - Integrating Source Material
  - Writing Ethically
  - Quoting
  - MLA Documentation
  - APA Documentation

- Module 12: Grammar Basics
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  - Verbs
  - Parts of Speech
  - Sentence Structure

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Learning Outcomes



The content, assignments, and assessments for this course are aligned to the following learning outcomes. You can view the entire list of learning outcomes here.

- Module 1: Success Skills
  - Identify common habits that lead to success in college
  - Write professionally and effectively in your college communications
  - Effectively use digital tools to convey your ideas
  - Recognize the importance of critical thinking and reflection as an intellectual process
- Module 2: Reading Strategies
  - Analyze and utilize general reading strategies
  - Utilize specialized reading strategies
  - Define and identify rhetorical context
  - Use context clues and other reading strategies to learn and retain new words
  - Analyze various types of reading material
- Module 3: Writing Essentials
  - Identify, analyze, and create effective thesis statements
  - Recognize and evaluate effective paragraphs
  - Examine how to analyze and appeal to your audience in your writing
  - Analyze effective sentences, including the use of the active voice
- Module 4: Writing in College
  - Explain common college-level writing assignments and effective writing techniques
  - Examine characteristics of common essay assignments
  - Examine characteristics of writing narratives
  - Evaluate multimodal text
- Module 5: Grammar Essentials
  - Analyze the use of punctuation marks
  - Analyze the use of apostrophes
  - Analyze the use of commas
  - Examine the use of semicolons and colons
  - Critique passages, revising for run-on sentences and fragments
- Module 6: The Writing Process
  - Describe topic selection activities
  - Analyze prewriting activities
  - Describe ways to find evidence in support of a claim
  - Analyze essay organizational techniques
  - Evaluate drafting techniques
- Module 7: The Writing Process—Revising and Proofreading
  - Analyze revision activities
  - Evaluate revision strategies
  - Evaluate editing and proofreading activities
- Module 8: Analysis and Synthesis

- Examine the basics of analysis
- Recognize and evaluate keys to successful analytic writing
- Identify and apply different types of analytic processes
- Examine strategies for successful synthesis

- Module 9: Academic Argument
  - Evaluate argumentative essays and thesis statements
  - Examine the structure of logical arguments and types of supporting claims
  - Describe and apply the rhetorical appeals of logos, pathos, and ethos
  - Evaluate logical fallacies in argument
  - Evaluate strategies for rebuttal and refutation of counterargument
- Module 10: Research—Finding and Evaluating Sources
  - Describe research writing and the importance of starting with a research question
  - Evaluate methods for finding various types of sources using search engines and databases
- Module 11: Research—Using Sources
  - Synthesize outside sources with your own through effective quotes, paraphrasing, and summarizing
  - Evaluate concerns about plagiarism and how to demonstrate academic integrity
  - Examine MLA documentation formatting and practices
  - Examine APA documentation formatting and practices
- Module 12: Grammar Basics
  - Understand the use of nouns and pronouns
  - Analyze the use of verbs
  - Analyze the use of other parts of speech, including adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions, and articles
  - Analyze sentence structure

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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1.2: Assignment- Multi-Modal Narrative
1.3: Assignment- Narrative Essay—Final Draft
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1.5: Assignment- Compare/Contrast Essay—Final Draft
1.6: Assignment- Illustration Essay—Prewriting and Draft
1.7: Assignment- Illustration Essay—Final Draft
1.8: Assignment- Cause-and-Effect Essay—Prewriting and Draft
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1.1: Assignment- Narrative Essay—Prewriting and Drafting

For this assignment, you will begin working on a narrative essay. At this stage, you will work through the prewriting and drafting steps of the writing process.

Narrative Essay Prompt

Choose one of the following topics to write your own narrative essay. The topic you decide on should be something you care about, and the narration should be a means of communicating an **idea** that ties to the essay's theme. Remember in this essay, the narration is not an end in itself.

Friends

1. Gaining independence
2. A friend's sacrifice
3. A significant trip with your family
4. A wedding or a funeral
5. An incident from family legend

The World Around You

1. A storm, a flood, an earthquake, or another natural event
2. A school event
3. The most important minutes of a sporting event

Lessons of Daily Life

1. A time you confronted authority
2. A time you had to deliver bad news
3. Your biggest social blunder

Firsts

1. Your first day of school
2. The first performance you gave
3. A first date

Getting Started on Your Narrative Essay

Prewriting

STEP 1: To get started writing, first pick at least one prewriting strategy (brainstorming, rewriting, journaling, mapping, questioning, sketching) to develop ideas for your essay. Write down what you do, as you'll need to submit evidence of your prewrite.

Remember that "story starters" are everywhere. Think about it—status updates on social media websites can be a good place to start—you may have already started a "note" to post on social media, and now is your chance to develop that idea into a full narrative. If you keep a journal or diary, a simple event may unfold into a narrative. Simply said, your stories may be closer than you think!

Drafting

STEP 2: Next, write an outline for your essay. Organize the essay in a way that:

- Establishes the situation *[introduction]*;
- Introduces the complication(s) *[body]*; and
- States the lesson you learned *[conclusion]*

STEP 3: Lastly, write a first draft of your essay. Remember, When drafting your essay:

1. Develop an enticing title—but don't let yourself get stuck on the title! A great title might suggest itself after you've begun the prewriting and drafting processes.
2. Use the introduction to establish the situation the essay will address.

3. Avoid addressing the assignment directly. (For example, don't write "I am going to write about my most significant experience," because this takes the fun out of reading the work!)
4. Think of things said at the moment this experience started for you—perhaps use a quote, or an interesting part of the experience that will grab the reader.
5. Let the story reflect your own voice. (Is your voice serious? Humorous? Matter-of-fact?)
6. To avoid just telling what happens, make sure your essay takes time to reflect on why this experience is significant.

Assignment Instructions

1. Choose a writing prompt as listed above on this page.
2. Review the grading rubric as listed below this page.
3. Create a prewrite in the style of your choice for the prompt.
4. Create an outline for your essay.
5. Develop a draft essay according to the following formatting guidelines: (Papers submitted that do not meet these formatting requirements will be returned to you ungraded.)
   - Minimum of 3 typed, double-spaced pages (about 600–750 words), Times New Roman, 12 pt font size
   - MLA formatting
6. Submit your prewriting and draft as a single file upload.

Requirements

Be sure to:

- Decide on something you care about so that the narration is a means of communicating an **idea.**
- Include *characters*, *conflict*, *sensory details.*
- Create a *sequence* of *events* in a *plot.*
- Develop an enticing title.
- Use the introduction to pull the reader into your singular experience.
- Avoid addressing the assignment directly. (don't write "I am going to write about…"—this takes the fun out of reading the work!)
- Let the essay reflect your own voice (Is your voice serious? Humorous? Matter-of-fact?)
- Avoid telling just what happens by making sure your essay reflects on why this experience is significant.

If you developed your prewriting by hand on paper, scan or take a picture of your prewriting, load the image onto your computer, and then insert the image on a separate page after your draft.

Rubric

Grading Rubric: Narrative Essay Prewriting and Draft

Criteria	**Category**	**Point Total: 50**
Presentation	Paper is double-spaced throughout using Times New Roman 12 pt. font. Full name, class, Instructor's name, your location, and time of class, date, and description of assignment are in upper-left-hand corner. The essay should be paginated (show page numbers) as well. Title should not be bolded or underlined.	__/2 pts
Title	The title is three or more words and hints at the essay's main point.	__/1 pts
Introduction	Introduction sets up the problem the author struggles with. This could be internal, external or both.	__/10 pts

Essay body	The body presents the “complication” that sets the plot in motion.	__/10 pts
Transformation	Conclusion shows the transformation from the introduction and thus the “moral” of the story.	__/10 pts
Audience	The “moral” of the story is objective and reflects a universal lesson that all readers can benefit from.	__/2 pts
Show, don’t tell	Author “shows” the events with vivid and compelling language rather than simply tells the story.	__/5 pts
Prewriting and brainstorming	Demonstrates good exploration and effort by including a prewrite and outline.	__/10 pts

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1.2: Assignment- Multi-Modal Narrative

For this assignment, you will turn in a multi-modal presentation of your narrative essay. This can be done through a medium of your choosing, including video, ppt, Prezi, audio, comic book, essay, etc.

Narrative Essay Prompt

Choose one of the following topics to write your own narrative essay. The topic you decide on should be something you care about, and the narration should be a means of communicating an **idea** that ties to the essay's theme. Remember in this essay, the narration is not an end in itself.

Friends

1. Gaining independence
2. A friend's sacrifice
3. A significant trip with your family
4. A wedding or a funeral
5. An incident from family legend

The World Around You

1. A storm, a flood, an earthquake, or another natural event
2. A school event
3. The most important minutes of a sporting event

Lessons of Daily Life

1. A time you confronted authority
2. A time you had to deliver bad news
3. Your biggest social blunder

Firsts

1. Your first day of school
2. The first performance you gave
3. A first date

Assignment Instructions

1. Review the grading rubric as listed on this page.
2. Review feedback on your first draft.
3. Work through the revision and proofreading stages of the writing process.
4. Create a final version of your Narrative Project according to the following formatting guidelines:
    1. The narrative should include *characters, conflict, sensory details.*
    2. The project creates a *sequence* of *events* in a *plot.*
    3. The project has an enticing title.
    4. An engaging introduction pulls the reader into your experience.
    5. Avoid addressing the assignment directly (don't write or say "I am going to write about… or I'm going to talk about…")
    6. Let the presentation reflect your own voice (Is your voice serious? Humorous? Matter-of-fact?)
    7. Share the story AND reflection on why this experience is significant.
5. Because there are many different formats in which this could be submitted, the guidelines vary depending on what medium you choose to share for your presentation. All projects should include an engaging presentation, a title, introduction, story, conclusion, and reflection.
    1. If it is a written essay, then it should be 3–4 typed, double-spaced pages (about 600–750 words), 12 pt font size, Times New Roman in MLA formatting. It should include at least three images.
    2. If it is a video, it should be between 2-5 minutes long and be presented in an interesting way, with visual stimuli and either written or verbal narration. MLA Works Cited should be attached separately.
    3. If it is an audio presentation, it should be between 2-5 minutes long and be presented in an interesting way, with clear sound quality and narration. MLA Works Cited should be attached separately.

Rubric

Grading Rubric: Multi-Modal Narrative Essay—Final Draft

Criteria	**Ratings**	**Point Total: 100**
Presentation	Presentation is interesting, engaging, and meets the minimum requirements of 2-5 minutes in length or 3-4 pages typed. It is easy to access and includes appropriate MLA Works Cited page.	__/8 pts
Title	The title is three or more words and hints at the essay's main point.	__/2 pts
Introduction	Introduction sets up the problem the author struggles with. This could be internal, external or both.	__/20 pts
Story	The body presents the "complication" that sets the plot in motion.	__/20 pts
Transformation	Conclusion shows the transformation from the introduction and thus the "moral" of the story.	__/20 pts
Reflection	The "moral" of the story is objective and reflects a lesson learned.	__/10 pts
Show, don't tell	Author "shows" the events with vivid and compelling language rather than simply tells the story.	__/20 pts

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1.3: Assignment- Narrative Essay—Final Draft

For this assignment, you will turn in your final draft of your narrative essay.

Narrative Essay Prompt

Choose one of the following topics to write your own narrative essay. The topic you decide on should be something you care about, and the narration should be a means of communicating an **idea** that ties to the essay's theme. Remember in this essay, the narration is not an end in itself.

Friends

1. Gaining independence
2. A friend's sacrifice
3. A significant trip with your family
4. A wedding or a funeral
5. An incident from family legend

The World Around You

1. A storm, a flood, an earthquake, or another natural event
2. A school event
3. The most important minutes of a sporting event

Lessons of Daily Life

1. A time you confronted authority
2. A time you had to deliver bad news
3. Your biggest social blunder

Firsts

1. Your first day of school
2. The first performance you gave
3. A first date

Assignment Instructions

1. Review the grading rubric as listed on this page.
2. Review feedback.
3. Work through the revision and proofreading stages of the writing process.
4. Create a final version of your Narrative Essay according to the following formatting guidelines. Papers submitted that do not meet these requirements will be returned to you ungraded.
    - 3–4 typed, double-spaced pages (about 600–750 words), 12 pt font size, Times New Roman
    - MLA formatting
5. Submit your final version of your Narrative Essay as a single file upload.

Requirements

Be sure to:

- Decide on something you care about so that the narration is a means of communicating an **idea.**
- Include *characters*, *conflict*, *sensory details.*
- Create a *sequence* of *events* in a *plot.*
- Develop an enticing title.
- Use the introduction to pull the reader into your singular experience.
- Avoid addressing the assignment directly. (don't write "I am going to write about…"—this takes the fun out of reading the work!)
- Let the essay reflect your own voice (Is your voice serious? Humorous? Matter-of-fact?)
- Avoid telling just what happens by making sure your essay reflects on why this experience is significant.

If you developed your prewriting by hand on paper, scan or take a picture of your prewriting, load the image onto your computer, and then insert the image on a separate page after your draft.

Rubric

Grading Rubric: Narrative Essay—Final Draft

Criteria	**Ratings**	**Point Total: 100**
Presentation	Paper is double-spaced throughout using Times New Roman 12 pt. font. Full name, class, Instructor's name, your location, and time of class, date, and description of assignment are in upper-left-hand corner. The essay should be paginated (show page numbers) as well. Title should not be bolded or underlined.	__/8 pts
Title	The title is three or more words and hints at the essay's main point.	__/2 pts
Introduction	Introduction sets up the problem the author struggles with. This could be internal, external or both.	__/20 pts
Essay body	The body presents the "complication" that sets the plot in motion.	__/20 pts
Transformation	Conclusion shows the transformation from the introduction and thus the "moral" of the story.	__/20 pts
Audience	The "moral" of the story is objective and reflects a universal lesson that all readers can benefit from.	__/10 pts
Show, don't tell	Author "shows" the events with vivid and compelling language rather than simply tells the story.	__/20 pts

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1.4: Assignment- Compare/Contrast Essay—Prewriting and Draft

For this assignment, you will work through the prewriting and drafting stages of your writing process in a compare/contrast essay.

Compare/Contrast Essay Prompt

Choose one of the following topics for an essay developed by comparison and contrast. The topic you decide on should be something you care about so that the examples are a means of communicating an **idea;** not an end in themselves. Possible examples include:

Experience

1. Two jobs you have held
2. A good and a bad job interview

People

1. Your relationship with two friends
2. Two relatives

Places and Things

1. A place as it is now and as it was years ago
2. Two towns or cities.
3. Nature in the city and in the country

Education

1. A passive student and an active student

Writing Your Compare/Contrast Essay

Prewriting

STEP 1: To get started writing, first pick at least one prewriting strategy (brainstorming, rewriting, journaling, mapping, questioning, sketching) to develop ideas for your essay. Write down what you do, as you'll need to submit evidence of your prewrite.

Drafting

STEP 2: Next, write a draft of your essay.

1. Develop an enticing title.
2. Think of specific, interesting details or events to incorporate into the essay to grab the reader.
3. Let the essay reflect your own voice (is your voice serious, humorous, matter-of-fact?)
4. Organize the essay in a way that may capture the reader, but don't string the reader along too much with "next, next, next."
5. To avoid just telling what happens, SHOW us what happened with vivid examples and/or testimony. Make sure you take time to reflect on why this experience is significant.

Assignment Instructions

1. Review the grading rubric as listed on this page.
2. Choose a writing prompt as listed above on this page.
3. Create a prewrite in the style of your choice for the prompt.
4. Develop a draft essay according to the following formatting guidelines. Papers submitted that do not meet these formatting requirements will be returned to you ungraded.
    - Minimum of 3 typed, double-spaced pages (about 600–750 words), Times New Roman, 12 pt font size
    - MLA formatting
5. Submit your prewriting and draft as a single file upload.

Requirements

Be sure to:

- Develop your essay by comparison and contrast.
- Decide on something you care about so that the narration is a means of communicating an **idea.**
- Include *characters*, *conflict*, *sensory details* as appropriate to help your essay come alive, if possible.
- Create a logical sequence for your points of comparison.
- Develop an enticing title.
- Use the introduction to establish the situation the essay will address.
- Avoid addressing the assignment directly (don't write "I am going to write about…" – this takes the fun out of reading the work!).
- Let the essay reflect your own voice (Is your voice serious? Humorous? Matter-of-fact?).
- Avoid "telling" your reader about what happened. Instead, "show" what happens using active verbs and/or concrete and descriptive nouns and details.
- Make sure you take time to reflect on why your points are significant.

If you developed your prewriting by hand on paper, scan or take a picture of your prewriting, load the image onto your computer, and then insert the image on a separate page after your draft.

Rubric

Grading Rubric: Compare/Contrast Essay Prewriting and Draft

Criteria	**Rating: Meets Expectation**	**Approaching Expectation**	**Point Total: 50**
Ideas	The paper demonstrates outstanding or above average idea development demonstrating comparison and contrast between ideas.	The writer sufficiently defines the topic, even though development is still basic or general.	__/10 pts
Content	The paper demonstrates outstanding or above average evidence of supporting the main point. Paragraphs are well-developed and clear, showing how things are similar or different, and why.	The writer demonstrates sufficient support of the main point, but could use more supporting details.	__/15 pts
Organization	The organization is clear and showcases the central theme. The presentation of information is compelling.	The organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader through the text without too much confusion.	__/15 pts
Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, Conventions	The writer demonstrates an outstanding word choice selection, flow and cadence, with well-built sentences and strong grasp of standard writing conventions.	The writer demonstrates sufficient selection of words. The text tends to be more mechanical and contains some errors of standard writing conventions.	__/5 pts
Prewrite	Attaches a prewrite example showing forethought in developing ideas for the essay.	Only partially demonstrate effective prewriting strategy	__/5 pts

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1.5: Assignment- Compare/Contrast Essay—Final Draft

For this assignment, review the feedback from your peer review, work your way through the revising and proofreading stages of the writing process, then submit your final version of the essay.

Assignment Instructions

1. Review the grading rubric as listed on this page.
2. Review feedback
3. Work through the revising and proofreading stages of the writing process.
4. Create a final version of your Compare/Contrast Essay according to the following formatting guidelines. Papers submitted that do not meet the requirements will be returned to you ungraded.
   - 3–4 typed, double-spaced pages (about 600–750 words), 12 pt font size, Times New Roman
   - MLA formatting (see the MLA Format page as needed)
5. Submit your final version of your Compare/Contrast Essay as a single file upload.

Rubric

Grading Rubric: Compare/Contrast Essay Prewriting and Draft

Criteria	**Rating: Meets Expectation**	**Approaching Expectation**	**Point Total: 100**
Ideas	The paper demonstrates outstanding or above average idea development demonstrating comparison and contrast between ideas.	The writer sufficiently defines the topic, even though development is still basic or general.	__/30 pts
Content	The paper demonstrates outstanding or above average evidence of supporting the main point. Paragraphs are well-developed and clear, showing how things are similar or different, and why.	The writer demonstrates sufficient support of the main point, but could use more supporting details.	__/30 pts
Organization	The organization is clear and showcases the central theme. The presentation of information is compelling.	The organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader through the text without too much confusion.	__/30 pts
Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, Conventions	The writer demonstrates an outstanding word choice selection, flow and cadence, with well-built sentences and strong grasp of standard writing conventions.	The writer demonstrates sufficient selection of words. The text tends to be more mechanical and contains some errors of standard writing conventions.	__/10 pts

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1.6: Assignment- Illustration Essay—Prewriting and Draft

For this assignment, you will work through the prewriting and drafting stages of your writing process in an illustration/example essay.

Illustration/Example Essay Prompt

Choose one of the following statements and agree or disagree with it in an essay developed by using multiple and extended examples. The statement you decide on should concern a topic you care about so that the examples are a means of communicating an **idea;** not an end in themselves.

Family

1. In happy families, talk is the main activity.
2. Grandparents relate more closely to grandchildren than to their children.
3. Sooner or later, children take on the personalities of their parents.

Behavior and Personality

1. Rudeness is on the rise.
2. Gestures and facial expressions often communicate what words cannot say.
3. Our natural surroundings when we are growing up contribute to our happiness or unhappiness as adults.

Education

1. The best courses are the difficult ones.
2. Students at schools with enforced dress codes behave better than students at schools without such codes.

Politics and Social Issues

1. Drug and alcohol addiction does not happen just to “bad” people.

Media and Culture

1. The Internet divides people instead of connecting them.
2. Good art can be ugly.
3. A craze or fad reveals something about the culture it arises in.
4. The best rock musicians treat social and political issues in their songs.

Rules for Living

1. Lying may be justified by the circumstances.
2. Friends are people you can’t always trust.

Writing Your Illustration/Example Essay

Prewriting

STEP 1: To get started writing your essay, first pick at least one of the rewriting strategies we learned about in the course: brainstorming, rewriting, journaling, mapping, questioning, sketching. Use your chosen method and gather ideas for your essay. Write down what you do, as you’ll need to submit evidence of your prewrite.

Drafting

STEP 2: Write a draft of your essay. When drafting your essay:

1. Develop an enticing title.
2. Use the introduction to pull the reader into your singular experience by introducing the problematic situation.
3. Avoid addressing the assignment directly. (Don’t write, “I am going to write about my most significant experience”—this takes the fun out of reading the work!)
4. Think of things said at the moment this experience started for you—perhaps use a quote, or an interesting part of the experience that will grab the reader.
5. Let the essay reflect your own voice. (Is your voice serious? Humorous? Matter-of-fact?)

6. Try to organize the essay in a way that may capture the reader by mixing multiple and extended examples, but don't string the reader along too much with "next, next, next."
7. To avoid just telling what happens. SHOW your reader what happened describing vivid examples and incorporating testimony. Make sure you take time to reflect on why this experience is significant.

Assignment Instructions

1. Review the grading rubric as listed on this page.
2. Choose a writing prompt as listed above page.
3. Create a prewriting in the style of your choice for the prompt.
4. Develop a draft essay according to the following formatting guidelines: (Papers submitted that do not meet these formatting requirements will be returned to you ungraded)
    - Minimum of 3 typed, double-spaced pages (about 600–750 words), Times New Roman, 12 pt font size
    - MLA formatting (see the MLA Format page as needed)
5. Submit your prewriting and draft as a single file upload.

Requirements

Be sure to:

- Agree or disagree with the prompt statement by using multiple and extended examples.
- Decide on something you care about so that the narration is a means of communicating an **idea.**
- Develop an enticing title.
- Use the introduction to establish the situation the essay will address.
- Avoid addressing the assignment directly. (Don't write "I am going to write about…" – this takes the fun out of reading the work!).
- Let the essay reflect your own voice (Is your voice serious? Humorous? Matter-of-fact?).
- Avoid "telling" your reader about what happened. Instead, "show" what happens using active verbs and/or concrete and descriptive nouns.

*If you developed your prewriting by hand on paper, scan or take a picture of your prewriting, load the image onto your computer, and then insert the image on a separate page after your draft.

Rubric

Grading Rubric: Illustration/Example Essay—Prewriting and Draft

Criteria	**Rating: Meets Expectation**	**Approaching Expectation**	**Point Total: 50**
Ideas	The paper demonstrates outstanding or above average idea development demonstrating the illustration of an idea, including your own agreement or disagreement with the prompt.	The writer sufficiently defines the topic, even though development is still basic or general.	__/10 pts
Content	The paper demonstrates outstanding or above average evidence of supporting the main point. Paragraphs are well-developed and clear, effectively illustrating the concept.	The writer demonstrates sufficient support of the main point, but could use more supporting details.	__/15 pts

Organization	The organization is clear and showcases the central theme. The presentation of information is compelling.	The organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader through the text without too much confusion.	__/15 pts
Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, Conventions	The writer demonstrates an outstanding word choice selection, flow and cadence, with well-built sentences and strong grasp of standard writing conventions.	The writer demonstrates sufficient selection of words. The text tends to be more mechanical and contains some errors of standard writing conventions.	__/5 pts
Prewrite	Attaches a prewrite example showing forethought in developing ideas for the essay.	Only partially demonstrate effective prewriting strategy	__/5 pts

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1.7: Assignment- Illustration Essay—Final Draft

For this assignment, review the feedback from your peer review. Work your way through the revising and proofreading stages of your writing process, and submit your final version of the essay.

Assignment Instructions

1. Review the grading rubric as listed on this page.
2. Review the feedback posted from your peer review
3. Work through the revising and proofreading stages of the writing process.
4. Create a final version of your Illustration/Example Essay according to the following formatting guidelines. Papers submitted that do not meet these requirements will be returned to you ungraded
   - 3–4 typed, double-spaced pages (about 600–750 words), 12 pt font size, Times New Roman
   - MLA formatting (see the MLA Format page as needed)
   - Submitted as either a .doc, .docx, .rtf file.
5. Submit your final version of your Illustration/Example Essay as a single file upload.

Rubric

Grading Rubric: Illustration/Example Essay—Final Draft

Criteria	**Rating: Meets Expectation**	**Approaching Expectation**	**Point Total: 100**
Ideas	The paper demonstrates outstanding or above average idea development demonstrating the illustration of an idea, including your own agreement or disagreement with the prompt.	The writer sufficiently defines the topic, even though development is still basic or general.	__/30 pts
Content	The paper demonstrates outstanding or above average evidence of supporting the main point. Paragraphs are well-developed and clear, effectively illustrating the concept.	The writer demonstrates sufficient support of the main point, but could use more supporting details.	__/30 pts
Organization	The organization is clear and showcases the central theme. The presentation of information is compelling.	The organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader through the text without too much confusion.	__/30pts
Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, Conventions	The writer demonstrates an outstanding word choice selection, flow and cadence, with well-built sentences and strong grasp of standard writing conventions.	The writer demonstrates sufficient selection of words. The text tends to be more mechanical and contains some errors of standard writing conventions.	__/10 pts

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1.8: Assignment- Cause-and-Effect Essay—Prewriting and Draft

For this assignment, you will work through the prewriting and drafting stages of your writing process in a cause-and-effect essay.

Cause-and-Effect Essay Prompt

Choose one of the following questions, and answer it in an essay developed by analyzing causes *or* effects. The question you decide on should concern a topic you care about so that the examples are a means of communicating an **idea;** not an end in themselves.

People and Their Behavior

1. Why did one couple you know marry or divorce?
2. Why is a particular friend or relative always getting into trouble?
3. Why do people root for the underdog?
4. How does a person's alcohol or drug dependency affect others in his or her family?

Art and Entertainment

1. Why do teenagers like rock music?
2. Why is a particular television show so popular?

Contemporary Issues

1. Why is a college education important?
2. Why do marriages between teenagers fail more often than marriages between people in other age groups?

Education

1. The best courses are the difficult ones.
2. Students at schools with enforced dress codes behave better than students at schools without such codes.

Politics and Social Issues

1. Drug and alcohol addiction does not happen just to "bad" people.

Media and Culture

1. The Internet divides people instead of connecting them.
2. Good art can be ugly.
3. A craze or fad reveals something about the culture it arises in.
4. The best rock musicians treat social and political issues in their songs.

Rules for Living

1. Lying may be justified by the circumstances.
2. Friends are people you can't always trust.

Writing Your Cause-and-Effect Essay

Prewriting

STEP 1: To get started writing, first pick at least one prewriting strategy (brainstorming, rewriting, journaling, mapping, questioning, sketching) to develop ideas for your essay. Write down what you do, as you'll need to submit evidence of your prewrite.

Drafting

STEP 2: Next, write a draft of your essay.

1. Develop an enticing title.
2. Use the introduction to pull the reader into your thesis with a singular experience.
3. Avoid addressing the assignment directly. (Don't write "I am going to write about the causes and effects of ____…"—this takes the fun out of reading the work!)

4. Think of things said at the moment your perspective on the topic became clear. Perhaps use a quote, or an interesting part of the experience that will grab the reader.
5. Let the story reflect your own voice. Is your voice serious? Humorous? Matter-of-fact?
6. Organize the essay in a way that may capture the reader, but don't string the reader along too much with "next, next, next."
7. To avoid just telling what happens, make sure you take time to show significant details and reflect on why topic—and your experience with it—is significant.

Assignment Instructions

1. Review the grading rubric as listed on this page.
2. Choose a writing prompt as listed above on this page.
3. Create a prewriting in the style of your choice for the prompt.
4. Develop a draft according to the following guidelines. Papers submitted that do not meet the requirements will be returned to you ungraded.
    - Minimum of 3 typed, double-spaced pages (about 600–750 words), Times New Roman, 12 pt font size
    - MLA formatting
5. Submit your prewriting and draft as a single file upload.

Requirements

Be sure to:

- Develop an essay developed by analyzing causes *or* effects or the prompt
- Decide on something you care about so that the narration is a means of communicating an **idea**
- Include *characters*, *conflict*, *sensory details* as appropriate to help your essay come alive
- Create a *sequence* of *events* in a *plot* to support the logical flow of your essay
- Develop an enticing title
- Use the introduction to pull the reader into your singular experience
- Avoid addressing the assignment directly (Don't write "I am going to write about…" – this takes the fun out of reading the work!)
- Let the essay reflect your own voice (Is your voice serious? Humorous? Matter-of-fact?)
- Avoid "telling" your reader about what happened. Instead, "show" what happens using active verbs and/or concrete and descriptive nouns and details.

If you developed your prewriting by hand on paper, scan or take a picture of your prewriting, load the image onto your computer, and then insert the image on a separate page after your draft.

Rubric

Grading Rubric: Cause-and-Effect Essay—Prewriting and Draft

Criteria	**Rating: Meets Expectation**	**Approaching Expectation**	**Point Total: 50**
Ideas	The paper demonstrates outstanding or above average idea development demonstrating cause and effect.	The writer sufficiently defines the topic, even though development is still basic or general.	__/10 pts
Content	The paper demonstrates outstanding or above average evidence of supporting the main point. Paragraphs are well-developed and clear, showing how one thing led to another, and why.	The writer demonstrates sufficient support of the main point, but could use more supporting details.	__/15 pts

Organization	The organization is clear and showcases the central theme. The presentation of information is compelling.	The organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader through the text without too much confusion.	__/15 pts
Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, Conventions	The writer demonstrates an outstanding word choice selection, flow and cadence, with well-built sentences and strong grasp of standard writing conventions.	The writer demonstrates sufficient selection of words. The text tends to be more mechanical and contains some errors of standard writing conventions.	__/5 pts
Prewrite	Attaches a prewrite example showing forethought in developing ideas for the essay.	Only partially demonstrate effective prewriting strategy	__/5 pts

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1.9: Assignment- Cause-and-Effect Essay—Final Draft

For this assignment, review the feedback posted from your peer review, work your way through the revising and proofreading stages of your writing process, then submit your final version.

Assignment Instructions

1. Review the grading rubric as listed on this page.
2. Review the feedback from your peer review.
3. Work through the revising and proofreading stages of the writing process.
4. Create a final version of your Cause-and-Effect Essay according to the following guidelines. Papers submitted that do not meet the requirements will be returned to you ungraded.
   - 3–4 typed, double-spaced pages (about 600–750 words), 12 pt font size, Times New Roman
   - MLA formatting
   - Submitted as either a .doc, .docx, .rtf file.
5. Submit your final version of your Cause-and-Effect Essay as a single file upload.

Rubric

Grading Rubric: Cause-and-Effect Essay—Final Draft

Criteria	**Rating: Meets Expectation**	**Approaching Expectation**	**Point Total: 100**
Ideas	The paper demonstrates outstanding or above average idea development demonstrating cause and effect.	The writer sufficiently defines the topic, even though development is still basic or general.	__/30 pts
Content	The paper demonstrates outstanding or above average evidence of supporting the main point. Paragraphs are well-developed and clear, showing how one thing led to another, and why.	The writer demonstrates sufficient support of the main point, but could use more supporting details.	__/30 pts
Organization	The organization is clear and showcases the central theme. The presentation of information is compelling.	The organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader through the text without too much confusion.	__/30 pts
Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, Conventions	The writer demonstrates an outstanding word choice selection, flow and cadence, with well-built sentences and strong grasp of standard writing conventions.	The writer demonstrates sufficient selection of words. The text tends to be more mechanical and contains some errors of standard writing conventions.	__/10 pts

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1.10: Assignment- Argument Essay—Outline

For this assignment you are not required to write a complete draft of your Argument Essay. Instead, you are to select a topic for your Argument Essay and write a detailed outline of your essay based on the model below.

Argument Essay Prompts

In this assignment choose a specific issue in which two credible parties have documented the following:

- Clearly opposing positions, and
- Clear agendas.

Choose the position, or side that you agree with, and argue that position using:

- Three separate pieces of evidence, or lines of reasoning, to support your position
- Research to support each line of reasoning (example, testimony, and fact/data, or any combination) that supports your position
- Research about the opposing position's views
- Presentation of the opposing views, along with lines of reasoning to refute them

Final Draft Essay Requirements

This assignment will require a clear thesis statement, or "issue statement" that covers your:

- Statement of position; and
- Forecast (essentially a "preview") of your lines of reasoning

The assignment also requires:

- A minimum of three credible outside sources formatted on a source page (MLA, Works Cited)
- MLA citation style for the paper
- Minimum of four (4) FULL pages not including the Works Cited page

? ? Writing Tip #1

This Argument Essay is a Classical Argument Essay aimed at both arguing the author's thesis and refuting the opponent's thesis. It is NOT a Persuasive Essay, where the purpose is to pursuade without necessarily arguing against an opposing perspective. The difference is that an argument essay tries both to persuade and refute against an opposing view.

With this in mind, you should not choose a generic issue that has no credible opposing view – like "energy conservation" – for a Classical Argument essay. One can try to write a persuasive essay that makes an appeal to a reader to conserve energy. But unless you can find a credible opponent with an active agenda opposing your appeal ("We should NOT conserve energy"), then you cannot write a Classical Argument essay.

? ? Writing Tip #2

It can be helpful to look into current legislation under debate everywhere from your city council, state legislature or even at the federal level. But be careful with large issues. Students often like to take them on, but they can be too unwieldy for a short assignment like this.

Writing Your Argument Essay

STEP 1: To get started writing, first pick at least one prewriting strategy (brainstorming, rewriting, journaling, mapping, questioning, sketching) to develop ideas for your essay. Write down what you do, as you'll need to submit evidence of your prewrite.

STEP 2: Next, write outline for your essay.

Assignment Instructions

1. Review the grading rubric as listed on this page.
2. Choose a writing prompt as listed above on this page.

3. Create a prewrite in the style of your choice for the prompt.
4. Create an outline using the outline below as a potential guide, or other possible outlines presented in the course. Papers submitted that do not meet the requirements will be returned to you ungraded.
5. Submit your detailed outline as a single file upload.

Argument Essay Outline

Below is a sample of a possible organization for your outline—look in the text for other ideas. This example starts with the opposing viewpoint first—you may want to do that, or include the rebuttal throughout, or the rebuttal at the end.

1. Introduction and thesis statement
2. Opponent's first claim
    - One sentence summary of opponent's source support (To be most helpful for your paper later on, these one-sentence summaries should include a sentence about the claim as well as information about where you got this information, including the author, title, and source.)
3. Opponent's second claim
    - One sentence summary of opponent's source support
4. Your first claim
    - One sentence summary of your source support #1
    - One sentence summary of your source support #2
5. Your second claim
    - One sentence summary of your source support #1
    - One sentence summary of your source support #2
6. Your third claim
    - One sentence summary of your source support #1
    - One sentence summary of your source support #2
7. Conclusion: Summation of arguments and why should we care? What's at stake?

Requirements

Be sure to:

- Choose a specific issue in which two credible parties have documented clearly opposing positions and clear agendas
- Choose the position you agree with and argue that position using the following:
    - Three separate lines of reasoning;
    - Each line of reasoning will support your position with research (example, testimony, and fact/data, or any combination) that supports your position; and
    - Research about the opposing position's views
    - Present the opposing views and refute them.
- Include a two-part thesis with:
    - Statement of position; and
    - Forecast of your lines of reasoning
- Develop an enticing title that implies your position.
- Use a sympathetic appeal and/or cited research in the introduction to establish the issue.
- Avoid addressing the assignment directly. (Don't write "I am going to argue about…" Instead, introduce the issue in a more compelling way that makes the reader care.)
- Your voice should be professional and scholarly.
- Package your source material with appropriate signaling and commentary.

Grading Rubric: Argument Essay Outline

1. Introduction and thesis statement
2. Opponent's first claim

- One sentence summary of opponent's source support (To be most helpful for your paper later on, these one-sentence summaries should include a sentence about the claim as well as information about where you got this information, including the author, title, and source.)

3. Opponent's second claim
   - One sentence summary of opponent's source support
4. Your first claim
   - One sentence summary of your source support #1
   - One sentence summary of your source support #2
5. Your second claim
   - One sentence summary of your source support #1
   - One sentence summary of your source support #2
6. Your third claim
   - One sentence summary of your source support #1
   - One sentence summary of your source support #2
7. Conclusion: Summation of arguments and why should we care? What's at stake?

Rubric

Grading Rubric: Argument Essay—Outline

Criteria	Ratings	Point Total: 50
Introduction	Outline includes a clear thesis statement and ideas for the introduction, as well as a conclusion.	__/10 pts
Content	Outline identifies one line of remaining and gives examples of types of evidence to support this reasoning	__/10 pts
Content	Outline identifies a second line of remaining and gives examples of types of evidence to support this reasoning	__/10 pts
Content	Outline identifies a third line of remaining and gives examples of types of evidence to support this reasoning	__/10 pts
Rebuttal	Outline highlights possible rebuttals and refutations	__/10 pts

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1.11: Assignment- Argument Essay—First Draft

For this assignment, you will work through the drafting stage of your writing process in an argument essay.

Assignment Instructions

1. Review the grading rubric as listed on this page.
2. Choose the position, or side that you agree with, and argue that position using:
    - Three separate pieces of evidence, or lines of reasoning, to support your position
    - Research to support each line of reasoning (example, testimony, and fact/data, or any combination) that supports your position
    - Research about the opposing position's views
    - Presentation of the opposing views, along with lines of reasoning to refute them

- Review the Argument Essay Outline you submitted along with feedback you received from that assignment. Make adjustments to the outline in accordance with the feedback. This may include strengthening lines of reasoning, expanding or improving research sources for supporting evidence, creating a more sympathetic introduction to your position, etc.
- Develop a complete draft of your essay using your improved Argument Essay Outline. It should meet the following requirements. Papers submitted that do not meet the requirements will be returned to you ungraded.
    - A two-part thesis including statement of position; and forecast of your lines of reasoning
    - A minimum of three credible outside sources formatted on a source page (MLA, Works Cited)
    - MLA formatting
    - Minimum of four (4) **full** pages, **not including the Works Cited page**.
- Submit your detailed outline as a single file upload.

Requirements

Be sure to:

- Choose a specific issue in which two credible parties have documented clearly opposing positions and clear agendas
- Choose the position you agree with and argue that position using the following:
    - Three separate lines of reasoning;
    - Each line of reasoning will support your position with research (example, testimony, and fact/data, or any combination) that supports your position; and
    - Research about the opposing position's views
    - Present the opposing views and refute them.
- Include a two-part thesis with:
    - Statement of position; and
    - Forecast of your lines of reasoning
- Develop an enticing title that implies your position.
- Use a sympathetic appeal and/or cited research in the introduction to establish the issue.
- Avoid addressing the assignment directly. (Don't write "I am going to argue about…" Instead, introduce the issue in a more compelling way that makes the reader care.)
- Your voice should be professional and scholarly.
- Package your source material with appropriate signaling and commentary.

Rubric

Grading Rubric: Argument Essay—Draft

Criteria	**Rating: Meets Expectation**	**Approaching Expectation**	**Point Total: 50**

Ideas	The paper demonstrates outstanding or above average idea development, with a thesis that articulates a clear stance about a controversial topic.	The writer sufficiently defines the topic, even though development is still basic or general.	__/15 pts
Content	The paper demonstrates outstanding or above average evidence of supporting the main point with at least three lives of reasoning. Paragraphs are well-developed and clear, demonstrating research about the topic. Research may include examples, testimony, and fact/data that supports your position.	The writer demonstrates sufficient support of the main point, but could use more supporting details.	__/15 pts
Organization	The organization is clear and showcases the central theme. The presentation of information is compelling. Opposing viewpoints are addressed in a logical way, and refuted.	The organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader through the text without too much confusion.	__/15 pts
Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, Conventions	The writer demonstrates an outstanding word choice selection, flow and cadence, with well-built sentences and strong grasp of standard writing conventions.	The writer demonstrates sufficient selection of words. The text tends to be more mechanical and contains some errors of standard writing conventions.	__/5 pts

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1.12: Assignment- Argument Essay—Final Draft

For this assignment, review the feedback posted from your peer review, work your way through the revising and proofreading stages of your writing process, then submit your final version.

Assignment Instructions

1. Review the grading rubric as listed on this page.
2. Review the feedback posted from your peer review
3. Work through the revising and proofreading stages of the writing process.
4. Create a final version of your Argument Essay according to the following. Papers submitted that do not meet the requirements will be returned to you ungraded.
   - Minimum of 4 typed, double-spaced pages (about 800–950 words), Times New Roman, 12 pt font size (not including the Works Cited page)
   - Minimum of 3 credible outside sources formatted on a source page (MLA, Works Cited)
   - MLA formatting
5. Submit your final version of your Argument Essay as a single file upload.

Rubric

Grading Rubric: Argument Essay—Final Draft

Criteria	**Rating: Meets Expectation**	**Approaching Expectation**	**Point Total: 100**
Ideas	The paper demonstrates outstanding or above average idea development, with a thesis that articulates a clear stance about a controversial topic.	The writer sufficiently defines the topic, even though development is still basic or general.	__/30 pts
Content	The paper demonstrates outstanding or above average evidence of supporting the main point with at least three lives of reasoning. Paragraphs are well-developed and clear, demonstrating research about the topic. Research may include examples, testimony, and fact/data that supports your position.	The writer demonstrates sufficient support of the main point, but could use more supporting details.	__/30 pts
Organization	The organization is clear and showcases the central theme. The presentation of information is compelling. Opposing viewpoints are addressed in a logical way, and refuted.	The organizational structure is strong enough to move the reader through the text without too much confusion.	__/30 pts
Word Choice, Sentence Fluency, Conventions	The writer demonstrates an outstanding word choice selection, flow and cadence, with well-built sentences and strong grasp of standard writing conventions.	The writer demonstrates sufficient selection of words. The text tends to be more mechanical and contains some errors of standard writing conventions.	__/10 pts

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1.13: Assignment- Essay Reflection

Now that you have completed your essay, take a few minutes to reflect on the experience.

Assignment Instructions

1. For this assignment, write thorough and thoughtful responses to the following questions:
   - What was most the challenging aspect of creating this essay?
   - What did you learn about yourself as a writer?
   - What might you do differently the next time you write this type of essay knowing what you know now after writing this essay?
2. Write your reflection on each question listed above, using complete sentences. Your final reflection assignment should fit the following guidelines:
   - 250-500 words, 12 pt font size, Times New Roman;
   - Submitted as either a .doc, .docx, .rtf file.
3. Submit your reflections as a single file upload.

Rubric

Sample Grading Rubric

Criteria	Proficient	Developing	Not Evident	Points
Challenges	Discusses the challenging aspects of writing this essay and an overall reflection about the assignment.	Partially complete response about challenges of the paper.	Incomplete description of lessons learned.	__/6
Lessons learned	Includes details about lessons learned from the essay and about what discoveries you made about your personal strengths and weaknesses as a writer.	Partially complete response about lessons learned from the paper.	Missing or incomplete explanation of lessons learned	__/6
Changes for future	Explains how the lessons learned from this essay will affect the way you approach future writing assignments.	Partially complete response about how writing this essay will affect similar essay projects in the future	Missing or incomplete explanation of changes for the future.	__/6
Writing and Organization	Paper is at least 250-500 words; is easy to read and has no or few grammatical errors.	Paper is too long or too short, or contains significant grammatical errors.	Paper is difficult to read.	__/2
Total:				__/20

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1.14: Assignment- Food Reflection

STEP 1: To practice reflection, try this activity writing about something very important—food. First, spend five minutes making a list of every food or drink you remember from childhood.

It might look like this:

- Plain cheese quesadillas, made by my mom in the miniscule kitchenette of our one-bedroom apartment
- "Chicken"-flavored ramen noodles, at home alone after school
- Cayenne pepper cherry Jell-O at my grandparents' house
- Wheat toast slathered in peanut butter before school
- Lime and orange freeze-pops
- My stepdad's meatloaf—ironically, the only meatloaf I've ever liked
- Cookie Crisp cereal ("It's cookies—for breakfast!")
- Macintosh apples and creamy Skippy peanut butter
- Tostitos Hint of Lime chips and salsa
- Love Apple Stew that only my grandma can make right
- Caramel brownies, by my grandma who can't bake anymore

STEP 2: Then, identify one of those foods that holds a special place in your memory. Spend another ten minutes free-writing about the memories you have surrounding that food. What makes it so special? What relationships are represented by that food? What life circumstances? What does it represent about you? This response doesn't need to be formatted in any particular way—just write about what memories and feelings come to mind. It should be at least 200 words.

Sample Response

Here's one sample response below. Note that he starts by writing about the first item on the food list, but then goes on to write about his mom and his relationship with his dad. There is no right way to write your about your food item—you too should feel free to let your reflective writing guide you.

> My mom became a gourmet chef in my eyes with only the most basic ingredients. We lived bare bones in a one-bedroom apartment in the outskirts of Denver; for whatever selfless reason, she gave four-year-old the bedroom and she took a futon in the living room. She would cook for me after caring for other mothers' four-year-olds all day long: usually plain cheese quesadillas (never any sort of add-ons, meats, or veggies—besides my abundant use of store-brand ketchup) or scrambled eggs (again, with puddles of ketchup). We would eat them together on the futon in the living room, sometimes watching the evening news, and on rare occasions, watching re-runs of my favorite shows.
>
> When I was 6, my dad eventually used ketchup as a rationale for my second stepmom: "Shane, look! Judy likes ketchup on her eggs too!" But it was my mom I remembered cooking for me every night—not Judy, and certainly not my father. So I even surprised myself when I said, "I don't like that anymore. I like barbecue sauce on my eggs." That's what Judy served me nearly every weekend until I was ten years old. I never touched the barbecue sauce.

STEP 3: Write a paragraph reflecting on this activity (at least 75 words). Was it easy to write about one of the foods on your list? Were you surprised in any way by your own response? What did you enjoy or dislike about this activity? Why? What lessons can you learn about yourself as a writer from participating in this activity?

Rubric

Sample Grading Rubric

Criteria	Proficient	Developing	Not Evident	Points
Childhood foods	Response includes a freewrite list with at least ten childhood foods or drinks	Response includes a partial list of childhood foods and drinks	Incomplete list	__/3

Memory freewrite	Writes at least 200 words about the context or memory associated with a childhood food or drink. The paragraph is easy to read and follow.	Response is too short, hard to follow, or off-topic.	Missing or incomplete freewrite	__/8
Reflection	Includes a reflection paragraph about the writing assignment that examines what was good or bad about the freewrite activity, and why. At least 75 words.	Reflection is too short or does not dive into enough detail about the assignment.	Incomplete or missing reflection	__/4
Total:				__/15

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1.15: Assignment- Compare

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1.16: Assignment- Compare

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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1.3: Habits for Success
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1.6: Time Management and Scheduling
1.7: Avoiding Procrastination
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1.1: Why It Matters- Success Skills

What does it take to succeed in college?

In this module, we will examine why students choose to embark on the adventure of college, how different people define success (in and out of college), the kinds of skills and work that are required in college, and the many factors that contribute to success in college.

It's also important to recognize, though, that some students do not succeed in college; 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.

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." These explanations for success or failure are rarely accurate. Considerable research into college success reveals that **intellect usually has nothing to do with having difficulty in or failing college courses**.

This section will explore the specific strategies you can use to improve your learning and the sometimes weird culture of higher education that you need to master in order to succeed. The good news about behaviors that help us succeed in college is that:

- **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 other areas of our lives, including the workplace, and in our relationships with people, including friends and family.

✔ ✔ Watch It

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.

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

Click here to download a transcript for this video

As mentioned in the video, eight traits found to aid successful leaders are passion, hard work, practice, pushing through tough times, serving others, having ideas, being focused, and staying persistent. All of these are things that you can put into practice immediately. With them, you'll see improvement in your school successes and beyond.

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- Richard St. John: Secrets of success in 8 words, 3 minutes. **Authored by**: TED. **Located at**: https://youtu.be/Y6bbMQXQ180. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

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1.2: Introduction to Habits for Success

What you'll learn to do: identify common habits that lead to success in college



People go to college for a range of different reasons, and so college success means different things for different people. Traditionally, college was a place some young adults went after high school to explore courses and majors before settling into a job path. According to a 2015 UCLA survey[1], most people currently go to college for one or more of 7 main reasons

1. To be able to get a better job
2. To gain a general education and appreciation of ideas
3. To become a more cultured person
4. To be able to make more money
5. To learn more about things that interest me
6. To get training for a specific career
7. To prepare for graduate or professional school

Take a moment to think about the reasons *you* are here:

1. Why college? Why now?
2. How do you define success in college?
3. What do you imagine college life to be like?
4. Do you think you are ready for college? Why or why not?
5. What have you done to prepare for college?
6. What do you think college professors expect from students?
7. What do you think going to college means for your future?

Regardless of your personal goals and expectations, doing well in college means learning new behaviors and understanding a new culture. Professors and college administrators, for example, will expect you to behave in certain ways, often without any explicit instructions on their part. 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.

In this section, we examine the strategies you can employ to understand the expectations of college and achieve success in your endeavors.

---

1. Kevin Eagan et al., The American Freshman: National Norms Fall 2015 (Los Angeles: Higher Education Research Institute, UCLA, 2015) ↵

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1.3: Habits for Success

Learning Objectives

- Define college success and examine strategies to achieve success in college

A Personal Definition for Success

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 Ph.D. 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.

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 good grades and awards		
Get reductions on my car insurance		
Prove to my employer that I can work hard		
Keep my parents happy		
Make social or professional connections		
Get a better job after graduation		

Each of us has a different combination of answers to the questions above, but nearly every student in college answers yes to at least one of these questions. At the same time, 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.

Deciding to go to college has an **opportunity cost**. An opportunity cost is based on the economic principle that there are limited resources available and choices must be made. Examples of resources would be things like time and money. If you are spending time doing something, you must give up doing something else you want to do. That is the opportunity cost of your choice. Going to college will have an opportunity cost in your life. An important question to ask at the beginning of your college venture is: what are you willing to trade-off for going to college?

Opportunity costs are tied to the idea of return on investment. Once you make an investment of your time and money in college, what investment are you hoping to get in return? How you define success in relation to your college experience impacts how you see the concept of return on investment. Some ways to gauge the return on your college investment include the following: job opportunities after college, financial benefits, social network/connections made while attending college, development of communication and other "soft skills," and personal enrichment and/or happiness.

What kinds of trade-offs do you think succeeding in college will require of you? How do you think you might explain these trade-offs to someone who isn't in college or never attended college?

? ? Try It

https://assess.lumenlearning.com/pra...1-afd574e23989

Strategies to Achieve Success

Most students want to be successful in their courses, yet not all college students are. We've talked already about common misconceptions about not being "smart enough" for college. Some students suffer from **impostor syndrome**, or a feeling that they are impostors and don't belong in college. Impostor syndrome is real and challenging.

? ? Link to Learning

Watch this clip about impostor syndrome to learn more about how it can affect college students and what to do about it.

Instead of worrying about whether you are smart enough or belong in college, you might focus on some concrete strategies you can employ to increase your success in college. We suggest you embrace and master the following eight 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 discussions.
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.
8. Join a study group or find a study buddy.

If you find yourself worrying about succeeding in college, ask yourself instead if you can implement or improve your use of some of these strategies.

Can you make more time for learning? One approach is to create a regular study schedule and make sure you allow yourself ample time. Only break away from your committed schedule if an extreme situation prevents you from sticking to it.

? ? A Note about study Time

Most college success experts agree that students should study **two hours** outside of class for every hour in class.



Figure 1. Studying with a group is a great way to make friends, but also talk through concepts and solidify your understanding of course material.

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 classes. Studying in a group or with a buddy gives you a chance to ask questions and talk about concepts.

You can also add a tutor to your personal study or to your study group. 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, such as tutoring centers, instructor office hours, and online help.

Link to learning

This Ted talk video by Alain de Botton stresses the external factors that enable “success” or “failure” and encourages us to try to resist society’s definitions of success and strive to author our own ambitions. Click here to download a transcript for this video.

Glossary

impostor syndrome: impostor syndrome is the consistent fear that one does not belong or that one is not good enough; someone suffering from impostor syndrome may worry about being “exposed” as a fraud or fake

opportunity cost: the “cost” of choosing one alternative versus another; if I go running instead of hanging out with my friends, I incur the opportunity cost of not socializing

office hours: office hours are a specific time faculty set aside to meet individually with students who want extra help, have questions, or seek mentoring; some faculty ask students to make an appointment while others have drop-in office hours

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1.4: Utilizing Your Support Network

Learning Objectives

- Explain the importance and value of campus support networks to student life

Campus Support Networks

Whether you live on campus or commute, it's important to find your place on your campus. Institutions provide a range of student activities, and participation in these activities isn't just for enrichment and enjoyment. Participation in campus activities has a correlation with academic success. The biggest challenge can be deciding how much time to spend on activities outside the classroom and which activities yield the greatest personal reward.

Benefits of Participating in Student Life



Figure 1. Becoming involved in campus activities is a great way to grow your support network.

How is it that becoming involved in student life can have such a positive impact on student satisfaction and academic success?

The National Survey of Student Engagement—a survey measuring student involvement in academic and co-curricular activities—shows that student success is directly linked to student involvement in the institution. Co-curricular activities include all the different activities on campus that students may be involved in—from athletics to Greek life to clubs. Survey results show that the higher the level of student involvement is, the higher student grades are and the more likely students are to re-enroll the next term. The following lists some of the many benefits and rewards that result from participation in campus and student life.

- **Personal interests are tapped**: Co-curricular 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 may be 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. (Keep track of your activities and experiences in a working resume!)
- **Fun leads to good feelings**: Students typically pursue co-curricular 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 co-curricular activities, they usually interact with others, which means meeting new people, developing social skills, and being a part of a community. Having friends who share your interests and can support you as you navigate the inevitable struggles of college is critical to your success.
- **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 co-curricular 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 co-curricular 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 co-curricular activities on campus can come at a real price and even hamper your success.

? ? Try It

https://assess.lumenlearning.com/pra...2-1d4b70b9c758

Major College Resources and How To Use Them

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.

Office Hours

Office hours are not just a time when professors are in their offices working. They are hours professors set aside specifically to work with students. Every faculty member is different. Some hold regular office hours each week; others require students to make appointments in advance; still others offer students the opportunity to chat in more informal settings like the student center or the local coffee shop. Regardless, seeking out your professor during office hours can pay huge dividends. The professor will get to know you and recognize you as a student who is interested in taking that extra step to be successful.

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"

Advising



Figure 2. Use campus resources such as the library, but also counseling, tutoring, and advising services as they are available.

Most colleges and universities assign an academic advisor to each student. The adviser may be associated with your major. There may also be an office or department that provides advising. This advisor can be tremendously helpful in aiding you to choose a major, select the right courses, and map out your class schedule.

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 advisors, and more. You can research what kinds of special support are available and be ready to take advantage of them.

? ? Academic Support

Read this excerpt from college counselor Patricia Munsch, as she emphasizes the importance of seeking out advisors, faculty, and others to create your own "team" of support.

As a student I utilized a faculty member in my department for semester course selection, and I also went to the department chairperson to organize two different internships to explore different career paths. In addition, I sought mentorship from club advisors as I questioned my career path and future goals. In my mind I had a team of people providing me support and guidance, and as a result I had a great college experience and an easy transition from school to work.

I recommend to all students that I meet with to create their own team. As a counselor I can certainly be a part of their team, but I should not be the only resource. Connect with faculty in your department or in your favorite subject. Seek out internships as you think about the transition from college to workplace. Find mentors through faculty, club advisors, or college staff. We all want to see you succeed and are happy to be a part of your journey.

As a counselor I am always shocked when students do not understand what courses they need to take, what grade point average they need to maintain, and what requirements they must fulfill in order to reach their goal—graduation! Understand that as a college student it is your responsibility to read your college catalog and meet all of the requirements for graduation from your college. I always suggest that students, starting in their first semester, outline or map out all of the courses they need to take in order to graduate. Of course you may change your mind along the way, but by setting out your plan to graduation you are forcing yourself to learn what is required of you.

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 range 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 campuses 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 website or other college directories for information about the many, many services that can be part of your college experience.

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1.5: Introduction to Time Management

What you'll learn to do: describe the importance of time management to success in college



Do you ever wonder where the hours in the day go? Do some days seem to just fly by—leaving you feeling like there just isn't enough time to do everything you need to do?

Students today often struggle to balance school, work, family, social life, and more. Trying to keep up with everything can become stressful or anxiety-producing. Is there a way to be more productive and to accomplish what we need to, in less time and with less stress?

There are many strategies out there for organizing our daily activities. Using skills to arrange our time can help relieve our stress and allow us to take care of a variety of things in our lives. There is nothing quite like sitting down after a long day and feeling like you were productive. Smiling with a sense of satisfaction and accomplishment, you can cross off the items on your to-do list, knowing that you made the most out of the day.

In this section, we'll explore useful ways to organize your days—and even your weeks—to get the most mileage out of your time.

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1.6: Time Management and Scheduling

Learning Objectives

- Explore time management and scheduling strategies

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.

Watch It

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.

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

Click here to download a transcript for this video

Fixed Time vs. Free Time

Sometimes it helps to take a look at your time and divide it into two areas: fixed time and free time. Fixed time is time that you have committed to a certain area—it might be school, work, religion, recreation or family. There is no right or wrong to fixed time and everyone's is different. Free time is just that—it is free. It can be used however you want to use it; it's time you have available for activities you enjoy. Someone might work 9 am-2 pm, then have class 3 pm-4:30 pm, then have dinner with family 5 pm-6 pm, study 6 pm-7 pm and then have free time from 7 pm-9 pm. Take a look at a typical week for yourself. How much fixed time do you have? How much free time? How much fixed and free time would you like to have?

We all have exactly 168 hours per week. How do you spend yours? How much time **will** you and **can** you devote to your studies?

Especially for students new to college, there are additional demands on your time. There is also the time it takes to adjust to college culture, college terminology, and college policies. Students may need to learn or relearn how to learn and some students may need to learn what they need to know. What a student in their first college semester needs to know may be different than what a student in their last college semester needs to know. First semester students may be learning basic expectations and the location of classrooms or other campus resources. Students in their last semester may be learning about applying for their degree, how to confirm they have all of their requirements completed for their goal, commencement information, or how to find a job. Whatever it is students may need to learn, it takes time.

Creating a Schedule

Given how difficult it can be to balance free time with the academic demands of college (along with all the other demands on your time), you should think about how you might create a schedule for managing your time. 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.

Create a Long-Term Schedule

With a long-term planner, you can eliminate a lot of unpleasant surprises. Long-term planning allows you to avoid scheduling conflicts—the kind that obligate you to be in two places at the same time three weeks from now. You can also anticipate busy periods, such as finals week, and start preparing for them now. Goodbye, all-night cram sessions. Hello, serenity.

First, find a long-term planner, or make your own. Many office supply stores sell academic planners that cover an entire school year. You can also create your own planner. A big roll of newsprint pinned to a bulletin board or taped to a wall will do nicely. Also search online stores for free or cheap software or smartphone apps designed for long-term planning.

The long-term plan should include information from your class syllabi, along with test dates, lab and study sessions, no-classes days or holidays, and planned and other events for the current and next terms. Include the due dates for all of the assignments in all of your
courses. This step can be a powerful reality check, but remember that the purpose of using a planner is not to make you feel overwhelmed by all of the things you have to do, rather, its aim is to help you take a first step toward recognizing the demands on your
time. Armed with the truth about how you use your time, you can make more accurate plans.

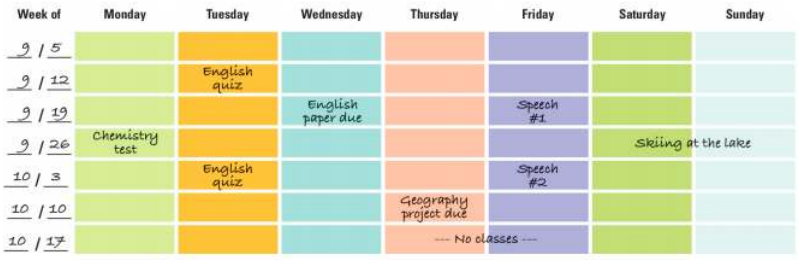


Figure 1. Long-term planners like this allow you to visualize upcoming deadlines and prepare accordingly.

Once you know the major deadlines and demands on your schedule, you can break down big assignments and projects into smaller assignments and subprojects, each with its own due date. When planning to write a paper, for example, enter the final due date in your long-term planner. Then, set individual deadlines for each milestone in the writing process—creating an outline, completing the research, finishing the first draft, editing the draft, and preparing the final copy. By meeting these interim due dates, you make steady progress toward completing the assignment throughout the term. That sure beats trying to crank out all those pages at the last minute.

Create a Daily Schedule

Using your long-term schedule as a reference, you can make a daily schedule or checklist to get you through the important tasks of the day. Sometimes this is helpful to plan the night before, so you can start your day with intention.

Start by brainstorming tasks of everything you want to get done. Then estimate the amount of time you need for each task, and rank each task by priority. Then schedule in time on your calendar to complete the tasks, starting with the most important. Don't be discouraged if you don't accomplish everything in one day, but praise yourself for every right step in moving toward accomplishing your goals.

? ? 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 to 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.

Making the Best Use of Your Study Time

Regardless of your schedule, you want to make the best use of your study time. The following strategies are designed to help. Don't feel pressured to use all of these or to tackle them in order. As you read, note the suggestions you think will be helpful, but pick one to use now. When that strategy becomes a habit, select another one to practice. Repeat this cycle for maximum success.

- **Study difficult (or boring) subjects first**. If your chemistry problems put you to sleep, then get to them first—while you are fresh. We tend to give top priority to what we enjoy studying, yet the courses that we find most difficult often require the most creative energy. Save your favorite subjects for later. If you find yourself avoiding a particular subject, get up an hour earlier to study it before breakfast. With that chore out of the way, the rest of the day can be a breeze.
- **Be aware of your best time of day**. Many people learn best in daylight hours. If this is true for you, then schedule study time for your most difficult subjects (or face time for the most difficult people) before nightfall.
- **Use waiting time**. Five minutes waiting for a subway, 20 minutes waiting for the dentist, 10 minutes in between classes. Waiting times add up fast. Have short study tasks ready to do during these periods, and keep your study materials handy. For example, carry 3 × 5 cards with facts, formulas, or definitions and pull them out anywhere. A cell phone with an audio recorder can help you use commuting time to your advantage. Make a recording of yourself reading your notes. Play it back during your drive or bus or subway ride.

- **Study two hours for every hour you're in class** . Students in higher education are regularly advised to allow two hours of study time for every hour spent in class. If you are taking 15 credit hours, then plan to spend 30 hours a week studying. That adds up to 45 hours each week for school—more than a full-time job. The benefits of thinking in these terms will be apparent at exam time. Keep in mind that the 2-hours-for-1 rule doesn't distinguish between focused time and unfocused time. In one 4-hour block of study time, it's possible to use up two of those hours with texting, breaks, daydreaming, or doodling. With study time, quality counts as much as quantity.

? ? Try It

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1.7: Avoiding Procrastination

Learning Objectives

- Identify strategies to avoid procrastination

Some would say that 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?

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!

Watch It

The following video explores three kinds of procrastinators: thrill-seekers, avoiders, and the indecisive. Knowing how your brain works to produce procrastination may help you nip it in the bud.

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

You can view the transcript for "Procrastination: I'll Think of a Title Later" here (opens in new tab).

Strategies to Combat Procrastination

So, now you have some understanding of how and why certain strategies are effective for overcoming procrastination. So, 1) control your stimuli, 2) create good habits and plan efficiently, and 3) just get started on your task. Here are some other suggestions to trick your brain and avoid 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.

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.

? ? Try IT

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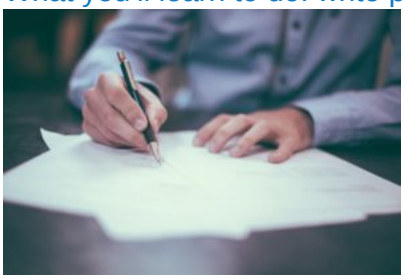
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1.8: Introduction to Communication and Professionalism

What you'll learn to do: write professionally and effectively in your college communications



Whether you are sending an email to your adviser, writing a paper, or delivering a presentation, effective communication is essential to your success in college. College will require you to communicate professionally and effectively in a range of different contexts.

In this section, you will learn about some basic strategies for improving your communication skills in college, including preparing for writing assignments, avoiding plagiarism, writing emails, and participating in discussions.

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1.9: Communication and Context

Learning Objectives

- Describe strategies for effective and appropriate communication in college

In college, you will find yourself writing for a variety of purposes and in a variety of contexts. You may write a lab report for a chemistry class with a very different structure than a literary analysis for a literature class, for example. You will also be writing to peers to organize group work, to faculty to ask questions, to administrative staff about advisement, and even to deans to ask for waivers and raise serious concerns. Each writing situation is an opportunity for you to demonstrate your professionalism and communicate effectively.

Writing Emails

1. Introduce yourself and identify yourself (including the meeting time and section number of your class for a professor; a student in a particular major to the department chair, etc.)
2. Explain the purpose of the email (I am writing to request an extension; I am writing to request an appointment)
3. Thank the person for considering your request
4. Proofread!

In a college setting, whether you're in an online class or a face-to-face classroom, email is one of the most common ways you'll interact with your professors and other staff on campus.

Many students make the mistake of thinking emails are very informal, but when you communicate by email, you should use a professional tone, one that you would in a professional setting. In both academic and professional settings, emails are one of the most common forms of communication. With that in mind, it's important to develop some good strategies for writing emails.

Emails are as important to making a good impression as a face-to-face conversation. It is critical to be concise and clear. It is important to try to avoid making careless mistakes or using a tone that is too informal. Use the proper subject line, attachment, respectful title, greeting, tone, grammar, and punctuation. A poorly written email may look like this:

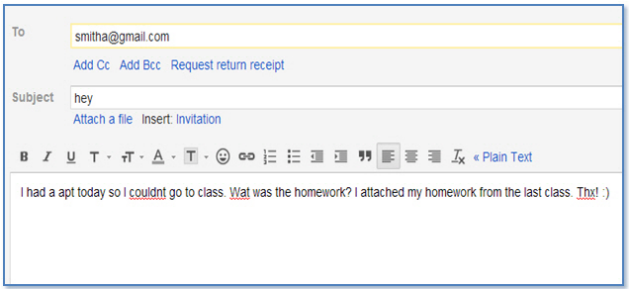


Figure 1. This email has several typos and is not written in the appropriate formal tone for an instructor.

There are several errors in the above example. The subject line does not appropriately describe what the message will contain nor is it capitalized. The student forgot to attach the homework. The message is also missing a greeting, and there is poor grammar and spelling. The smile at the end is unnecessary as well. The author has not reflected on who would be reading the document, that person's position, or in what context he or she would be reading the message.

Let's consider instead an email written to a professor. Remember, your professor teaches many students and will not necessarily remember which class you are in. Professors are also busy, so writing a clear, informative email is likely to receive the quick response that you want. Remember the following:

1. Introduce yourself and identify the class you are in (including the time and section number)
2. Explain the purpose of the email
3. Thank the professor for considering your request
4. It's also helpful to include your student ID along with your full name in the signature of your email
5. Don't forget to be specific and informative in the subject line of your message

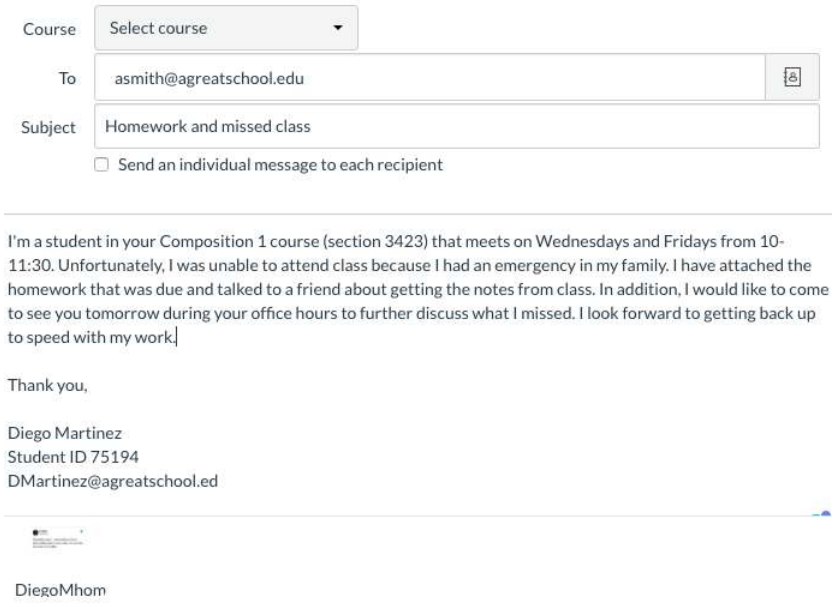


Figure 2. This is a much better email, as it is written professionally and politely, uses proper grammar, and shows an effort to take responsibility.

Notice that this email reflects the audience and tone of the message. The above message is directed toward an academic professional; therefore, the author uses the correct title, greeting, and salutation. The author also writes in full sentences, is respectful, correctly attaches the document, and has a specific subject line.

? ? Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20202

? ? The Importance of attendance

A note on attendance: some college classes require attendance and even count participation towards your final grade. Others don't. Research indicates that students who miss class are often over-confident and don't realize what they may have missed or how their absence may impact their mastery of the material. In college, when you need to miss class, it's up to you to make up for what you missed. That's the case, regardless of why you missed class.

It is **not** effective to write to a professor to ask if you missed anything important. Instead, check first with a peer and ask for notes or a recap of class. You can also check the syllabus and ask the professor about any changes to the course schedule for the day. Finally, go see the professor during office hours to discuss the material further.

All messages need not be uniform. Some stylistic freedom is allowed in the greeting, body, and salutation of the email. For example, it's acceptable to write **good morning** or **good afternoon**, instead of **dear**. It is also acceptable to write **sincerely** instead of **thank you**. However, it's inappropriate to add emoticons, incorrect abbreviations, or faces made with punctuation marks in professional emails, especially to people you don't know well.

REMEMBER: You should take email correspondence seriously. Take the time to reread your emails, and reflect on the effectiveness of the words and style in which you choose to write. Programs like Grammarly are helpful

? ? Extension Template

If you ever find yourself needing to ask for an extension from an instructor, consider using this extension request template and make the necessary adjustments so that it fits your situation. Remember to be professional in the request, but understand that your request may not be granted. The earlier you can communicate the need for an adjustment with your instructor, the better.

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1.10: Writing in College

Learning Objectives

- Describe effective methods for approaching different kinds of college writing assignments

The Importance of Writing in the Workplace

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. 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]

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. Even your non-English professors care about and appreciate good writing.

Understanding the Assignment

There are four kinds of analysis you need to do in order to fully understand an assignment: determining its purpose, understanding how to answer an assignment's questions, recognizing implied questions in the assignment, and recognizing the expectations of the assignment, which vary depending on the discipline and subject matter. Always make sure you fully understand an assignment before you start writing!

Determine the Purpose

The wording of an assignment should suggest its purpose. Any of the following might be expected of you in a college writing assignment:

- Summarizing information
- Analyzing ideas and concepts
- Taking a position and defending it
- Combining ideas from several sources and creating your own original argument.

Understand How to Respond

College writing assignments will ask you to answer a *how* or *why* question – questions that can't be answered with just facts. For example, the question "*What* are the names of the presidents of the US in the last twenty years?" needs only a list of facts to be answered. The question "*Who* was the best president of the last twenty years and *why?*" requires you to take a position and support that position with evidence.

Sometimes, a list of prompts may appear with an assignment. Usually, your instructor will not expect you to answer all of the questions listed. They are simply offering you some ideas so that you can think of your own questions to ask.

Recognize Implied Questions

A prompt may not include a clear 'how' or 'why' question, though one is always implied by the language of the prompt. For example:

"Discuss the effects of the No Child Left Behind Act on special education programs" is asking you to write *how* the act has affected special education programs.

"Consider the recent rise of autism diagnoses" is asking you to write *why* the diagnoses of autism are on the rise.

? ? Getting Started

Before beginning the writing process, always establish the following:

- Is there an assigned topic or are you free to choose your own?
- What about your subject interests you?
- Why is your subject worth reading about?
- Double-check that your subject is not too broad – narrow it down if necessary.
- Determine the purpose of the work.
- Determine the readers of the work and their level of knowledge about the topic.
- Determine where your evidence will come from.
- Decide what kind of evidence would best serve your argument.
- Identify the required style (MLA, APA, etc.) of the paper.
- Be aware of length specifications.
- Consider if visuals might be helpful in your paper.
- Will someone be reviewing drafts of your paper? Who?
- Note your deadline and how much time you have for each stage of the writing process.

This Assignment Calculator can help you plan ahead for your writing assignment. Just plug in the date you plan to get started and the date it is due, and it will help break it down into manageable chunks.

Recognize Expectations

Depending on the discipline in which you are writing, different features and formats of your writing may be expected. Always look closely at key terms and vocabulary in the writing assignment, and be sure to note what type of evidence and citations style your instructor expects.

? ? A research Tip: Avoiding Plagiarism

All college classes will expect you to do your own work. Using another person's words, images, or other original creations without giving proper credit is called **plagiarism**.

Oftentimes, as we prepare to address an assignment, we look at other material to help us with our thinking. This is research, and it's a great thing! Professors always do research! When we do research to help us clarify our thinking, however, we need to be sure to acknowledge the sources that we have consulted and the ways in which our ideas have been influenced by others.

We use different citation guides (like APA and MLA) to format citations and lists of references. Sometimes students aren't sure how to do these references correctly, and so they leave out the citations altogether. That's never a good idea. Even if you aren't sure how to create a perfect citation, always include references to all the material you've consulted. Otherwise, you could be committing plagiarism: taking someone else's work (words and/or ideas) and presenting it as your own—the equivalent of cheating on a test. In order to be sure you don't accidentally leave out a source, remember to keep track of what you consult as you begin research for a project or assignment.

The Writing Process

Have you ever received a writing assignment, thought "this won't take long" and then stayed up all night writing the night before your assignment was due because it ended up taking a lot longer than you thought it would? If you have, you're not alone. Many beginning writers struggle to plan well when it comes to a writing assignment, and this results in writing that is just not as good as it could be. When you wait until the last minute and fail to engage in every step of the writing process, you're not doing your best work.

Writing itself is a process through which you ask questions; create, develop, hone, and organize ideas; argue a point; search for evidence to support your ideas…and so on. The point here is that writing really involves creative and critical thinking processes.

Like any creative process, it often starts in a jumble as you develop, sort, and sift through ideas. But it doesn't need to stay in disarray. Your writing will gain direction as you start examining those ideas. It just doesn't happen all at once. Writing is a process that happens over time. And like any process, there are certain steps or stages.



Figure 1. Writing is a recursive process, meaning that you will work through most of these steps, but not necessarily in this exact order, and revisit most of them throughout the process.

These are some of the major stages in a strong writing process:

1. Thinking about your assignment
2. Prewriting
3. Gathering information and evidence
4. Organizing and drafting
5. Revising and editing

The writing process is not linear, but recursive, meaning you will need to move forward through some steps and then circle back to redo previous steps. In other words, while we still think of writing as a process taking place in a series of steps, we now understand that good writers tend to switch frequently among the different steps as they work. An insight gained while editing one chapter might convince the writer that an additional chapter is needed; as a result, she might start another drafting phase—or even decide to divide one chapter into two or three, and begin reorganizing and developing new drafts.

In short, while it is very useful to think of writing as a process, the process is not a clear, always-the-same series of steps. Instead, it is a sometimes messy, forward-and-backward process in which you strive for simplicity but try to appeal to your audience, create but also organize, enjoy yourself, if possible, but also follow some rules, and eventually create a finished product that works.

? ? Try It

practice: purpose and process

Writing Through Fear

Writing is an activity that can cause occasional anxiety for anyone, even professional writers. Start early and use strategies, like those mentioned below, to help you work through the anxiety.

? ? Writing Anxiety

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 2. Don't let fears get in the way of your writing assignment—there are tips and tools that can help!

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.

? ? Link to Learning

The writing centers at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and the University of Richmond, as well as the news site Inside Higher Ed, also have helpful articles on writing anxiety.

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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. ↵

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1.11: Introduction to Using Technology in Writing

What you'll learn to do: effectively use digital tools to convey your ideas



College requires lots of traditional essays, but it will also require you to use a range of technological tools and to convey your ideas in the form of digital writing. You will need to learn to use your institution's LMS (learning management system) to read and download assignments, engage in online discussions, and contact your professor. You will probably be required to take quizzes and upload essays. And you may also be asked to create presentations, videos, web pages and/or photo essay.

When you enter the world of digital writing, the same principals will apply: You have to think about your audience and purpose, and you have to consider how you can use the digital tools at your disposal, including text, images, and/or sound, to express your ideas and persuade or inform your reader or viewer.

The following pages will offer some important tips on composing texts in digital environments and link you to some additional resources, which can be helpful as you work with the technology. We'll also review some of the basics of using Microsoft Word and Google Docs. The more you know about these programs, the easier it will be to use them to your advantage and showcase your critical thinking and creativity.

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1.12: Word-Processing Skills

Learning Objectives

- Understand how to access and use word-processing tools

Word-Processing Essentials

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 sometimes purchase it for a reduced rate through your college bookstore or campus technology center.

Free Alternatives to Word

Word is the most common word processor, but it's expensive, especially if it didn't come with your computer. Some classes will explicitly require you to use Microsoft Word for your classwork. Otherwise, you're free to use whatever program you wish. Google's Google Docs and Apple's Pages, are two other widely-used examples. Here are some **free** options to explore as an alternative to Word:

- **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.
- **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.

Using Microsoft Word

When you first open Microsoft Word, you'll be given the option to choose from various templates. Some of these may be useful for your classes, particularly newsletters, brochures, and resumes, but you will most frequently be working in a simple Word Document. Once inside the document, familiarize yourself with the various tools to help you format your paper.

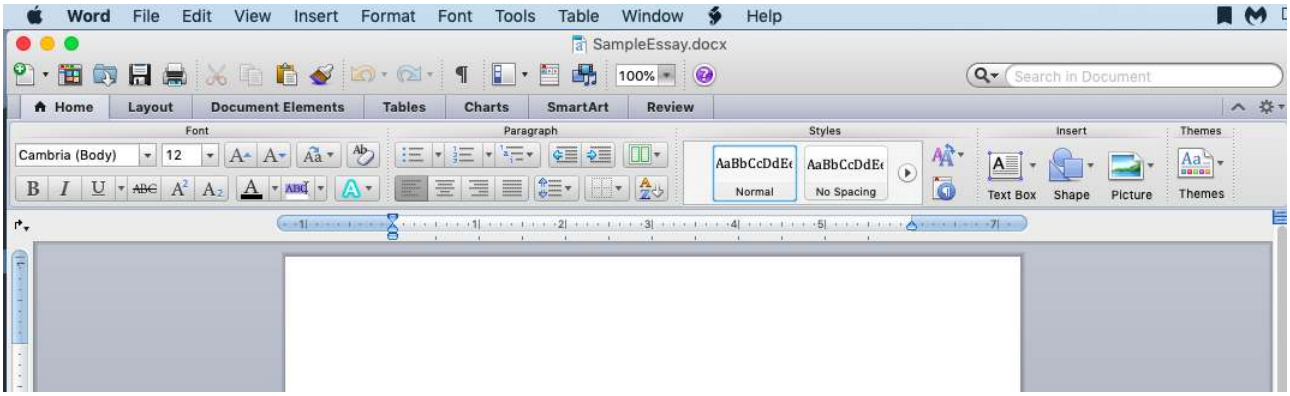


Figure 1. Take some time to investigate the various tools and options inside of Microsoft Word and use these to your advantage when you write.

- Visit the "Format tab" or the "Layout" tab in the toolbar if you need to adjust the sizing of your font or margins
- Use the home tab of the toolbar to adjust the font, font size, and address basic formatting needs, such as adding a numbered list, bullet points, columns, or images.
- Use the tools tab to check for spelling and grammar issues, track changes during editing, or check the word count (although you can also highlight text and see a tally of the word count in the bar at the bottom of the document).

✔ ✔ Watch it: Getting to Know Word

Let's start by reviewing the program as a whole, and what it's capable of.



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You can view the transcript for "Word: Getting Started" here (opens in new window).

Visit each of the links below to review important features and uses of Microsoft Word:

Basic Skills

- Creating and Opening Documents
- 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 particularly handy for revising documents.
- 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

Intermediate Skills

- 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.

? ? Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20204

Advanced Skills

- 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 2016.
- 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 afterward.
- Change Default Settings: If the first thing you do each time you open a new document, is to 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. (This video is for Word 2013)

Using Google Docs

Working in Google Docs is similar to working in Microsoft Word. The only requirement is that you need a Google login to save and share your documents, and most college and university email addresses come synced with a Google log-in. You can access Google Docs from inside your Google Drive, going directly to the website, or by clicking on the Drive button in the upper-right hand corner of your Google account.

Inside of the Google Drive, you can create Google Docs, Google Sheets (like an Excel document), Google Slides (similar to Microsoft PowerPoint), and more. One advantage of Google Docs is that they are made to be collaborative, so it’s very easy to share materials with classmates and your instructor. Note that some LMSs will require you to download your Google Doc as a PDF or Word document before you upload it; the video below explains how to do that (.37).

Once inside of a Google Doc, you’ll see that it is very similar to Microsoft Word. If there are features you don’t see but would like to include in your document, it may be worth searching for “add-ons” (or searching YouTube for tutorials) to enhance your document.

✔ ✔ Watch It

This video shows the basics of getting started with Google Docs and how to share them.



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: pb.libretexts.org/ec1/?p=98

You will need to know how to create hanging indents for your Works Cited or References pages in Google Docs. You can easily do this by choosing Format > Align & Indent > Indentation Options > Hanging Indent. Here is a quick tutorial to help with hanging indents.

You can view the transcript for “How to Create, Edit, and Share Files With Google Documents-Overview” here (opens in new window).

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1.13: Discussion Boards

Learning Objectives

- Explain techniques for effective communication in discussion boards

Discussion Boards (or Forums)

Many college classes utilize discussion boards (or forums) on their learning management platforms (Blackboard, Canvas, etc.). You may or may not have engaged in this kind of writing before. Discussion boards serve to facilitate discussion, but the discussion occurs online and usually asynchronously (not at the same time). What that means is that a student or the professor may post a question or a prompt, and others respond later. Like any kind of writing, there is a format and protocol for writing on discussion boards.

- **Use a specific subject line.** Using a phrase such as "response to Jacob" for your subject doesn't tell other readers anything about the content of your response. Be brief, yet specific (e.g., Disagreement with Jacob about Literacy in Generation Z)
- **Keep to one main idea or topic per response.** If you want to offer two different ideas, do separate posts.
- **Differentiate between starting a discussion thread and responding to someone else's posting.** Most discussion boards use what's called a "threaded discussion," which means that responses are indented under an initial posting. This type of indentation provides a visual cue to a reader, allowing him to rapidly distinguish the different discussion topics or threads.
- **Write informally but not sloppily.** There is no need for fancy language or sentence structure but check your spelling before you finalize the posting. Most systems have a spell-check function. If you're not a good typist, you may want to compose your response with a word processor and then paste or upload it into the discussion board. This is also a good idea in case there are technological issues, which can cause you to lose a post. If you create your post in a word-processing program, you can save a back-up copy of your post.
- **Do not dominate the discussion.** There's no need to respond to absolutely every posting from every participant. Respond selectively. Often, a course instructor will let you know how much online participation she expects.
- **Be polite, and apply the rules of etiquette.** Use standard capitalization and punctuation; do not use all caps, as this is considered "shouting" online; use symbols sparingly to indicate tone when you think that words alone may not convey your meaning fully or accurately.
- **Remember that a lot of people may have access to your posts on a discussion board:** other students, your instructor, college technical staff, administrators, etc. Write accordingly and professionally. Be sure to check with any guidelines from your professor about appropriate language use, and be thoughtful and generous when engaging in discussions of sensitive topics like race, religion, gender, and politics.

Try It

Content is even more important than conventions. Most college courses include discussions as a learning tool, a means for students to offer insights, test out new theories, and apply and share their ideas. Using the interaction below, review the following types of responses to understand what constitutes a good quality posting.

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

So, how do you write an excellent post in a college course?

- **Review the purpose of the discussion.** Is there a particular question you're expected to answer? Is the discussion space intended to be a place for *you* to ask questions? Make sure you're responding as expected in the discussion space.
- **Work with the background reading required for the discussion.** Annotate the text with your own ideas and questions as you read; summarize the main ideas to test your own understanding; stretch your understanding by applying concepts and theories to new contexts. Most discussions are designed as spaces to test out and debate ideas.
- **Realize that discussion is a give-and-take situation, a conversation.** That means that you should participate frequently during discussions, offering your own ideas and responding to others. You can enter the conversation at different points, with ever-changing purposes and roles, but you need to be there on a consistent basis.
- **Realize that each participant can choose from among many discussion roles and functions.** You can post initial ideas, respond to ideas, summarize ideas, point out similarities and differences or trends among ideas, ask questions, add examples,

extend the conversation in different directions, and bring the conversation back “on track.”

Watch It

This video reviews effective strategies for participating in online discussion boards.

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

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

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1.14: Social Media

Learning Objectives

- Describe strategies for effective, safe, and professional social media use in college

Social Media

While it used to be that social media was the distraction from homework, now, your professors are finding ways to incorporate social media into your classes. Professors may require students to make Facebook posts or Tweet about certain topics related to a course, and, some courses even have their own Facebook pages.

While most of us have some experience with social media, our use of social media for personal purposes may be very different from the uses of social media in an academic or professional setting. Consider the purpose of your assignment and the specifics of your audience when using social media for schoolwork. Below are a few best practices for using Twitter.

Twitter is a social networking tool that allows individuals to send short text messages known as tweets. Tweets originally began by maxing out at 140 characters; now tweets up to 280 characters are permitted.

Writing Tweets: The Basics

Keep your tweets:

- **Short**
  280 characters maximum. Twitter counts down from 280, and lets you know how many characters you have left to use once you start getting close.
- **And Even Shorter**
  If you want others to forward your tweet (re-tweet), you may want to use fewer than 280 characters. Remember that Twitter provides a stream of short updates for those people, organizations, or issues you want to follow, and gaining a following (via re-tweets) is often a goal of those who use Twitter. On average, try to reserve at least 20 characters so your message can be re-tweeted.
- **Meaningful**
  Pare down the information to keywords, and put what you consider to be the most important information first. Phrases will suffice. While there is no need to use complete sentences or formal writing practices, try to write with care. Sloppy, error-filled tweets don't give your Tweets credibility.

Here are some additional tips to keep in mind as you give tweeting a try:

- **Use the hashtag symbol (#) *without a space* before the word or words you want to emphasize and make more searchable**. If you're emphasizing more than one word, also put those words together *without* spaces. For example, if you want to emphasize a statement that you're making about grade schools banning soda, you might do it in this way:

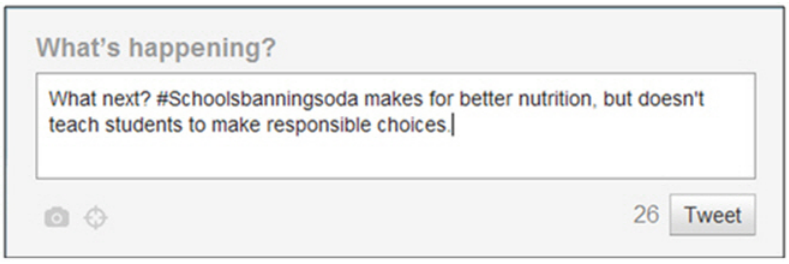


Figure 1. This tweet shows how the hashtag is used to give context, and also makes it possible to search for other comments related to schools banning soda.

- **Incorporate links in your tweets as a way to offer more information than that allowed by the 280-character limit**. You might link to your website, blog, or any other meaningful or appropriate site.
- **Remember that the image you insert into your profile appears by each of your tweets**. If you have an interesting image, readers' eyes will gravitate toward your tweet.
- **You can comment on others' tweets**. To respond to (or tag) another person's tweet, use the @ sign and the person's name *without* any spaces. Replies using the @ sign are public on Twitter. For example, if you wanted to respond publicly to John

Smith's tweet, you might start your tweet in this way: @JohnSmith. You can place an @ reply anywhere in the tweet—it doesn't necessarily have to be at the start. The response you send to John Smith using the @ sign will appear on your Profile page and on John Smith's @Mentions space.

Your Digital Footprint

Your digital footprint is the path you leave on the web. When people, including potential employers, search your name on the web, what will they find? It's a good idea to have a digital footprint, to put your resume and a collection of your work on the web. There are many opportunities for you to share your writing on the web. Today, we have forums for sharing essays, videos, work history, and pictures of our children. This provides us with a wonderful opportunity to share our creativity with the world. However, it's important to be mindful of your goals when you share on the web and to remember that information you put on the web is there for anyone to see and will remain there even after you may forget what you posted.

Digital Safety and Security

You want to be careful about the kind of information you share. Remember, potential employers can search for you on Facebook, and if you post your phone number on the web for anyone to see, you might receive unwanted phone calls. Be careful about revealing personal information that might compromise your digital security.

As you create things like Facebook and Twitter accounts and web pages for your writing, think about what you want your digital footprint to be like. What will potential employers find when they search for more information about you? Do you want to make your information more secure? Social media accounts give you privacy options, and websites give you security options related to who can see your site.

? ? Try It

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1.15: Introduction to Critical Thinking and Reflection

What you'll learn to do: recognize the importance of reflection as an intellectual process



Psychologist and educational reformer John Dewey once noted, "We do not learn from experience. We learn from reflecting on experience." Throughout college, you will build an intellectual scaffolding that will not only prepare you for a career but also help you understand your identity and your place in the world. Critical thinking will help you think carefully and deeply about your work. Reflection is the critical thinking skill that connects that scaffolding, building bridges between information and understanding, theory and practice, isolated knowledge and collective insight.

Reflection can be practiced and improved. By understanding the thinking processes and tools that comprise effective reflection, you will be taking the first step toward greater understanding of not only yourself but also the complex world in which we live.

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1.16: Critical Thinking

Learning Objectives

- Explore the concept of critical thinking

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 relates to nearly all tasks, situations, topics, careers, environments, challenges, and opportunities—it's not restricted to a particular subject area.

Critical Thinking

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."

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20206

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 do not rely on quick, first-order level thinking, but instead use second-level or higher-order thinking skills that require them to think more deeply before jumping to conclusions. They can evaluate their own opinion and judge whether ideas are their own. They are also willing to examine their own beliefs, possessing a manner of humility that allows them to admit a lack of knowledge or understanding when needed. They are fair-minded and open to changing their mind. Perhaps most of all, they actively enjoy learning, and seeking new knowledge is a lifelong pursuit.

Sharpen Your Critical Thinking

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 a myriad of issues. It is an 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*

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	Going along with the group
Challenging reasoning	Blind acceptance of authority
Uncovering biases	Believing everything you read

✔ ✔ Watch It



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You can view the transcript for "Why Critical Thinking (Study Skills)" here (opens in new window).

Critical thinking is fundamentally a process of questioning. 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.

An Example of Critical Thinking

Let's use a simple example of applying logic to a critical-thinking situation. In this hypothetical scenario, Professor Brown 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.

Professor Brown 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, Brown's characteristics as described above don't guarantee that he will do a good job. What else might you want to know? How about whether Brown has already held a political office? If so, was he effective? How about Brown's reputation for personal integrity? Just because he works as a professor does not mean he has experience or skill with the ethical issues of public office. Does he have the leadership skills required to be an effective public leader? Just because he teaches college students does not mean Brown has effective leadership skills. 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 formulate 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?



Figure 1. Critical thinkers ask questions to understand the full context of a situation.

Problem-Solving With Critical Thinking

Critical thinking is not just an academic exercise. For most people, a typical day is filled with critical thinking. We use critical thinking to solve problems all the time. For example, consider the following situation. Gisella is doing well in college, and most of her college and living expenses are covered, but there are some gaps between what she wants and what she feels she can afford. She uses critical thinking to analyze her income, savings, and budget to better calculate what she will need to stay in college and maintain her desired level of spending.

Remember, when you apply the skills of a good critical thinker to your academic work or to the problems in your life, your challenge will be less of a hurdle. If you are curious, reflective, knowledge-seeking, open to change, probing, organized, and ethical, you'll be in a good position to find intelligent solutions.

Glossary

critical thinking: clear, reasonable, reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do

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1.17: What is Reflective Thinking?

Learning Objectives

- Understand the connection between reflection and learning

Reflecting on Learning

According to the old saying from Confucius, “To know what you know and what you do not know, that is true knowledge.” Reflection is an act that helps you better determine your own true knowledge about something. For many students, acknowledging their limitations or what they don’t understand about certain material can be key to real learning. Without such practices, we may be faking our way through learning, which isn’t really learning at all. Inversely, we should strive to better and honestly understand our strengths, as well as our growth and progress. You have probably had friends who are good at a particular school subject, and when they are asked how they know so much about it or how they do so well at it, they say something like “It’s just easy for me” or “I’ve always been good at it.” But those answers oversimplify what learning is. If those students reflected on the question more, they might find interesting answers that help them more deeply consider themselves as learners. Writing can help us do that kind of deeper reflection.

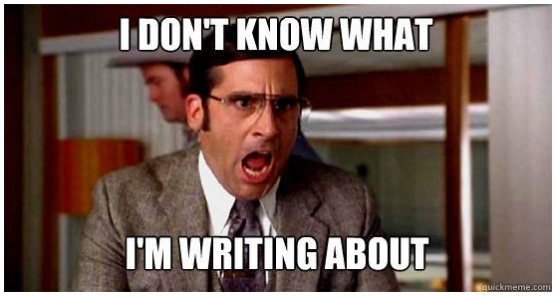


Figure 1. Reflection involves thinking and writing about your writing.

While reflection certainly is a mental act, many people write to help make sense of their thoughts. And writing about your own writing is a deeply metacognitive practice that can help you more broadly as a learner.

Many people may view reflection as thinking about an event that has happened, but that is only part of it. Reflection can be about something that happened in the past, is happening now, or will/might happen in the future. For example, as a college student, you might reflect on a math test you took last month, how your current homework assignment is puzzling you, and how a math class might impact you next semester. It is important to see reflection as a continuing process because it is a valuable part of learning and growing in all disciplines and in all aspects of life.

Learn By Doing: Reflection

Thinking about your own writing and being aware of your own strengths and weaknesses as a writer can help you improve. See if you can guess at the following types of knowledge types you may review while reflecting.

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290965000592956998/embed

Reflecting Across the Disciplines

If reflection seems like an act unique to your writing class, think about other courses and majors and how we see instances of reflection. Consider health fields and professions. Early in their educations, future nurses, doctors, and other health professionals are taught the importance of reflection in their work. People such as nurses and doctors regularly reflect on the condition of their patients, the care they provide, potential treatments, and future care. Writing allows health care professionals, for example, to keep a reflective log of patients (think about why nurses and doctors rely on those charts and patient records so much). This type of thinking requires practice, which is why reflection is part of the courses these students take. For most people, it is not enough to just reflect in the mind.

? ? Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20207

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1.18: Reflective Writing

Learning Objectives

- Examine the components of reflective writing

Reflective Writing

Reflective writing includes several different components: description, analysis, interpretation, evaluation, and future application. Reflective writers must weave their personal perspectives with evidence of deep, critical thought as they make connections between theory, practice, and learning. The steps below should help you find the appropriate balance among all these factors.

1st Step: Review the assignment

As with any writing situation, the first step in writing a reflective piece is to clarify the task. Reflective assignments can take many forms, so you need to understand exactly what your instructor is asking you to do. Some reflective assignments are short, just a paragraph or two of unpolished writing. Usually the purpose of these reflective pieces is to capture your immediate impressions or perceptions. For example, your instructor might ask you at the end of a class to write quickly about a concept from that day's lesson. That type of reflection helps you and your instructor gauge your understanding of the concept.

Other reflections are academic essays that can range in length from several paragraphs to several pages. The purpose of these essays is to critically reflect on and support an original claim(s) about a larger experience, such as an event you attended, a project you worked on, or your writing development. These essays require polished writing that conforms to academic conventions, such as articulation of a claim and substantive revision. They might address a larger audience than you and your instructor, including, for example, your classmates, your family, a scholarship committee, etc. It's important before you begin writing, that you can identify the assignment's purpose, audience, intended message or content, and requirements.

2nd Step: Generate ideas for content

As you generate ideas for your reflection, you might consider things like:

- Recollections of an experience, assignment, or course
- Ideas or observations made during that event
- Questions, challenges, or areas of doubt
- Strategies employed to solve problems
- A-ha moments linking theory to practice or learning something new
- Connections between this learning and prior learning
- New questions that arise as a result of the learning or experience
- New actions taken as a result of the learning or experience

3rd Step: Organize content

Researchers have developed several different frameworks or models for how reflective writing can be structured. For example, one method has you consider the "What?" "So what?" and "Now what?" of a situation in order to become more reflective. First, you assess what happened and describe the event, then you explain why it was significant, and then you use that information to inform your future practice.[1][2] Similarly, the DIEP framework can help you consider how to organize your content when writing a reflective piece. Using this method, you *describe* what happened or what you did, *interpret* what it means, *evaluate* its value or impact, and *plan* steps for improving or changing for the future.

The DIEP Model of reflective writing

The DIEP model (Boud, Keogh & Walker,1985) organizes the reflection into four different components:



Figure 1. The DIEP model for reflective thinking and writing has you first describe the situation, interpret it, evaluate it, then plan what to do with that new information.

Remember, your goal is to make an interpretive or evaluative claim, or series of claims, that moves beyond obvious statements (such as, "I really enjoyed this project") and demonstrates you have come to a deeper understanding of what you have learned and how you will use that learning.

In the example below, notice how the writer reflects on her initial ambitions and planning, the a-ha! moment, and then her decision to limit the scope of a project. She was assigned a multimodal (more than just writing) project, in which she made a video, and then reflected on the experience:

? ? Student Example

Keeping a central focus in mind applies to multimodal compositions as well as written essays. A prime example of this was in my remix. When storyboarding for the video, I wanted to appeal to all college students in general. Within my compressed time limit of three minutes, I had planned to showcase numerous large points. It was too much. I decided to limit the scope of the topic to emphasize how digitally "addicted" college students are, and that really changed the project in significant ways.

4th Step: Draft, Revise, Edit, Repeat

A single, unpolished draft may suffice for short, in-the-moment reflections, but you may be asked to produce a longer academic reflection essay, which will require significant drafting, revising, and editing. Whatever the length of the assignment, keep this reflective cycle in mind:

- briefly describe the event or action;
- analyze and interpret events and actions, using evidence for support;
- demonstrate relevance in the present and the future.

✓ ✓ Watch IT

The following video, produced by the Hull University Skills Team, provides a great overview of reflective writing. Even if you aren't assigned a specific reflection writing task in your classes, it's a good idea to reflect anyway, as reflection results in better learning.

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

You can view the transcript for "Reflective Writing" here (opens in new window).

? ? Try It

Check your understanding of reflective writing and the things you learned in the video with these quick practice questions:

https://h5p.cwr.olemiss.edu/h5p/embed/60

1. Driscoll J (1994) Reflective practice for practise - a framework of structured reflection for clinical areas. *Senior Nurse* 14 (1):47–50 ↵
2. Ash, S.L, Clayton, P.H., & Moses, M.G. (2009). Learning through critical reflection: A tutorial for service-learning students (instructor version). Raleigh, NC. ↵

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1.19: Putting It Together- Habits for Success

In this module, you learned about some of the key resources you can utilize and habits you can develop to be a successful college student, particularly in your writing courses. As you work your way through higher education, remember the following ideas:

- You can define what success looks like for you, and set goals to achieve it
- There are people, resources, and tools available to help you—don't hesitate to ask for help
- Make a schedule and manage your time wisely
- Use critical thinking skills to evaluate new information and to solve problems
- Reflection means exploring the "so what" rather than just the "what"
- You can reflect meaningfully on past events, present events, or future events
- Reflection happens across all academic disciplines and into your career

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 1. Most individuals will have a different definition of what success looks like to them.

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.

? ? Link to Learning

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, which focus on having high expectations, getting involved in research and hands-on activities, building community with those around you, and connecting with supportive faculty. It's an inspiring talk for any college student, no matter what your major may be. You can also read the transcript.

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1.20: Discussion- What is Success?

For this activity, create your own definition of success. Dictionary.com defines success as “the favorable outcome of something attempted.” For many students in college, success means passing a class, earning an A, or learning something new. Beyond college, some people define success in terms of financial wealth; others measure it by the quality of their relationships with family and friends.

Here is an example of a brief, philosophical definition of success:

To laugh often and much; to win the respect of intelligent people and the affection of children; to earn the appreciation of honest critics and endure the betrayal of false friends; to appreciate beauty, to find the best in others; to leave the world a bit better, whether by a healthy child, a garden patch or a redeemed social condition; to know even one life has breathed easier because you have lived. This is to have succeeded. –Ralph Waldo Emerson

Ultimately, before we can know if we are successful, we must first define what success means for ourselves.

STEP 1: Develop a 200-400 word post defining what success means to you in college and beyond. To help you write this entry, consider some of the following:

- Find a quote (or make one up) that best summarizes your definition of success. Note the author of the quote, and use quotation marks as appropriate.
- Why does this quote best represent your personal definition of success?
- What people do you consider to be successful and why?
- What is your definition of success?
- What will you do to achieve success?
- What is the biggest change you need to make in order to be successful in college?
- How will you know you’ve achieved success?

Note that if you do not feel comfortable sharing personal information, focus your entry on the generic definition of success and someone you view as successful, then write it about them and how and why you consider them to be successful.

STEP 2: Respond in two separate posts to two classmates (in at least 75 words). Explicitly address their examples and try to extend, complicate, or redirect their points in a substantive, knowledge-demonstrating way. Be sure to cite relevant concepts and key terms from the module.

Example Post

Discussion entry assignments tend to be more flexible than other types of writing assignments in college, and as a result they can be tailored to your own experiences as long as they answer the primary questions asked in the assignment.

One model of a successful entry about this topic can be found below. Feel free to include your own experiences and examples from real life as they pertain to the issue at hand.

Habits for Success Journal Entry

by Sandy Brown

I found this quote online, and I thought it was both funny and true: “Success is often the result of taking a misstep in the right direction” by Al Bernstein. I’m not sure exactly who Mr. Bernstein is, but he hit the nail right on the head. It seems like the best things in my life have come from some initial screw-up or unintended action on my part.

I enrolled in college the first time right after I graduated high school, but it just didn’t work out for me. My dad offered me a job instead, when he saw how miserable I was, since his office manager had just quit. I’d been helping out at his place all my life, but I didn’t know anything about managing the books. I made some silly mistakes, and some sort of serious ones, but I figured things out pretty quickly.

Now that my dad is looking towards retirement, I’m come back to school to get formal recognition of the work I’ve been doing for the past fifteen years. I originally thought I just wanted to get a Payroll Accounting certificate, but my adviser here talked me into pursuing a full AA degree. I’m glad I made that decision, but it’s been hard. I came home everyday the first week too exhausted to speak to my family. Withdrawing from a couple of classes was the right thing for me to do, even if it means I’ll only be a part-time student for now.

For me, success will be getting my first accounting job after I graduate with my degree and pass the certification exam. I want my future employer to recognize not only the years of experience I have but also the formal education I get with my AA. Success is also being a good role model for my daughters. I don't want them to just settle for "good enough" like I did when I became an adult, and want them to work hard in order to get to a place where they're comfortable.

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1.21: Assignment- College Reflection

STEP 1: To practice reflection, try this activity writing about your first week at college and how college is similar and/or different from what you expected. You can fill it out in the chart shown below, or just write down your thoughts in paragraphs, but complete it in three steps:

First, spend five minutes brainstorming what you expected college to be like. Think about these kinds of things:

Things to Consider	Expectations	Reality	Observations
What did you expect the students to be like?			
What did you expect the teachers to be like?			
What did you expect the workload to be like?			
What did you expect the classroom environment to be like?			
What did you expect the campus climate/community to be like?			
What did you expect your living environment to be like (for those living on campus)?			
What did you expect your commute to be like (for those commuting to campus)?			
What did you expect it to feel like to be a college student?			
Anything else?			

Next, spend five minutes brainstorming what college has actually been like for you so far.

Finally, reflect on how your expectations for college differ from your actual experiences. How off base were you? How accurate were your expectations? What areas of college have met your expectations?

STEP 2: Pick one or two rows from the chart and discuss the similarities and/or differences between your expectations for college and the reality of your experience. Think also about what equipped you to be accurate in your expectations. For example, maybe you knew what to expect because "I have an older sister who attends this institution and she told me exactly what to expect" or maybe you were stepping into the unknown—"I am the first in my family to attend college and I had no idea what to expect."

This response doesn't need to be formatted in any particular way—just write, think, and reflect. Your response should be at least 200 words (about two single-spaced paragraphs).

STEP 3: Write a paragraph reflecting on this activity (at least 75 words, about one short paragraph). Was it easy to think about and discuss your expectations about college? Were you surprised in any way by your own response? What did you enjoy or dislike about this activity? Why? What lessons can you learn about yourself as a writer from participating in this activity?

Rubric

Criteria	Proficient	Developing	Not Evident	Points

College expectations and reality	Response includes a freewrite chart with at least five items	Response includes a partial list of	Incomplete list	__/3
Freewrite	Writes at least 200 words about the differences/similarities between expectations for and reality of college. The writing is easy to read and follow.	Response is too short, hard to follow, or off-topic.	Missing or incomplete freewrite	__/8
Reflection	Includes a reflection paragraph about the writing assignment that reflects on the freewrite activity and offers some thoughts about lessons learned. At least 75 words.	Reflection is too short or does not dive into enough detail about the assignment.	Incomplete or missing reflection	__/4
			Total	__/15

Sample Response

Here's one sample response below. Note that he starts by writing about the first item on the food list, but then goes on to write about his mom and his relationship with his dad. There is no right way to write your response —you too should feel free to let your reflective writing guide you.

My College Experience

> One thing that surprised me about college was the high cost of books. I had prepared to pay for my books by working over the summer as a lifeguard. It was a hot, boring job, but I knew I needed to be responsible. My family is invested in my education, but they also expect me to pay for some of my college expenses (like books) myself, and I thought I was prepared.
>
> Imagine my surprise when I got to the bookstore and saw that the cost of my math textbook was more than $150. I knew from friends that students used and rental books were often available and cheaper, so I sought out that option. I was even more shocked to discover that a rental of the math textbook cost $120. The savings for a rental was only $30, and if I lost or damaged the book, I would be out the full cost. Now, I know myself and I can get distracted. The chances that I lose the book aren't so small.
>
> In high school, books were supplied to us by the school. Now that I'm in college, I'm responsible for paying tuition and for covering the cost of textbooks. It's a lot more than I expected. I guess I may need to do a lot more lifeguarding!

Reflection

It was pretty easy to write this response. I knew right away that I wanted to write about the textbook issue. I mean, I had heard about the cost of books, but that really surprised me. And it was just my math book, and I don't even care about math – it's a required course! Maybe that's why this was pretty easy for me to write, actually. I was kind of annoyed about how much the book cost! Maybe one takeaway is that when I care about something, it's easier to write about it.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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2.1: Why It Matters- Reading Strategies

Why should we analyze academic reading strategies?



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 if your ability or freedom to read were stripped from you. What would you miss out on?

Rhetorical readers understand that authors make choices about content, structure, and style based on the rhetorical context in which they are operating. Furthermore, rhetorical readers recognize their own context for reading, match their reading strategies with the text, and vary their reading process according to their purpose for reading. Since academic reading and writing represent an evolving conversation in which both the author's and the reader's rhetorical context come into play, it is important for college students to know how to read rhetorically. Additionally, college reading encompasses a wide variety of texts, offering students opportunities to expand their vocabularies.

Consider what you would like to be able to do that your current reading ability doesn't allow for right now. In what areas could your reading skills improve? Perhaps you'd like to learn more vocabulary words, better understand scientific articles, or better recognize arguments in what you read. What benefits will stronger reading habits bring you in the next few years?

In this module, you will learn what rhetorical reading is as well as strategies for becoming an active rhetorical reader. You'll also take a closer look at types of readings you may encounter during your college experience.

✓✓ Watch It

The following video demonstrates what life is like when half of adult society is excluded from reading.

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

You can view the transcript for "For these women, reading is a daring act" here (opens in new window).

The video discussed 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?

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2.2: Introduction to Reading Strategies

What you'll learn to do: analyze and utilize 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!

Watch It

Watch this video to learn more about the amazing effects of reading on your brain.

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

You can view the transcript for "Reading Can Change Your Brain!" here (download).

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 recommended amount of time college students should devote to studying outside of class is two-three hours per credit hour each week. In other words, a student enrolled in 15 credit hours should spend 30-45 hours per week studying, and much of that time will be devoted to reading. In fact, the path to a college degree means hundreds and hundreds of hours of reading.

This section will help you use those hours most productively by introducing strategies for active reading, which will help streamline your learning process. In the next couple of pages, you will learn some tips to maximize your reading efficiency so you have a better sense of what to do before, while, and after you read. These strategies include previewing, skimming, questioning, and annotating.

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2.3: Strategies for Active Reading

Learning Objective

- Describe active reading strategies

Good writing begins with good reading. Every time you read, you're exposed to someone else's ideas and to their way of writing: their word choice, vocabulary, knowledge base, use of language, and so forth. You can become a better reader by reading every day and practicing effective reading skills.

Reading effectively means reading in a way that helps you understand, evaluate, and reflect on a written text. As you might guess, these skills are very important to college students. No matter what field you're going into, you'll be doing a lot of reading. The more effectively you read, the easier it will be, the less time it will take, and the more you'll enjoy the experience.

These tips can help make your reading more effective:

- Create an optimal setting for reading—pick the best time, place, and conditions. Create a reading environment that helps decrease distraction.
- Engage in pre-reading strategies before starting to read
- Read material efficiently: pick up a piece of material, engage actively with it, and finish.
- Annotate written texts—write directly *on* the texts and/or take notes as you read. By doing this, you can enter into a discussion with the text, interacting with it.
- Research or investigate content you don't fully understand.
- Work to discover the central meaning of the piece. Ask questions like:
  - What is the author's point?
  - What is the text trying to say?
  - What story is the author telling?
  - How does the author create and build this meaning?
- Reflect on what the text means, internalizing the meaning:
  - How am I responding to this text?
  - Why am I responding that way?
  - What does the text make me think about?
  - What does this information mean to me?



Figure 1. Although reading anywhere you can is a great idea, active reading generally requires sitting down with a pen or computer in a distraction-free environment and taking notes so that you can fully engage with the text.

Active Reading Strategies

You have already learned that college requires active reading, not passive reading. But it is hard to keep our minds focused on a task all the time. Further, it is difficult to get away from the excitement and "noise" of a college life.

Read Thoroughly and in a Distraction-Free Environment

It is a good idea to read multiple times, especially items such as prompts, texts for analysis, materials for exams, etc. Reading multiple times will enhance your ability to cognitively process the material. If you can do your reading in a distraction-free environment, that will also increase your ability to make sense of the material and to commit it to memory.

Annotate Your Texts

Readings in college are meant to marked-up. You cannot make the most of your reading experiences if you do not synthesize complex parts, write questions that arise, or note connections. And don't simply highlight parts you find interesting—highlighting certainly isn't a bad strategy, but it doesn't advance active reading in and of itself. If you are using an online text, you can use programs to take online notes, or take notes on your readings in a separate notebook.

Think of your reading experience as you would a conversation with someone, especially someone you might not know well. If all that happens is the other person talks to you while you sit passively, you may well get some information, but you would be unable to get clarification, ask questions, or think about the larger context, just for starters. Conversation works best when multiple people are active participants. Think of reading in a similar way.

Use Your Personal Knowledge to Your Advantage

Though college involves a lot of reading on subjects or topics that are new to you, your prior knowledge can still help. Try to connect readings to what you already know, even if that isn't a lot. For example, you might be reading for your Biology class and remember a relative's heart attack. What you learned as your family member went through the treatment could help you contextualize the reading. One trick to helping you retain knowledge during reading is to apply the information you read to what you already know about a topic.

Don't Bite Off More Than You Can Chew

You probably learned long ago that you can't read the 200-page text that is the basis for your book report the day before the paper is due; however, you might not have thought much about shorter readings. Remember, reading in college is more difficult than it was in high school, so even that 20-page chapter might be more work than it sounds like.

Since you will be annotating and thinking critically about the material, it might be a good idea to stop once in a while or break up even shorter pieces. Of course, you should probably be able to read a six-page article in one sitting, but you might want to go back at a later time to re-read it. You know your reading and thinking capacities better than anyone else, but don't push ahead if you find yourself not reading critically or not retaining information. This is why it is important to get to reading assignments early and leave time to come back to them if you need to do so.

The Reading-Process Loop

On the next page are strategies for a reading process loop—previewing, questioning, annotating, and reviewing—that will help you better think about and understand what you are reading. Don't forget, reading is a recursive act, which means you can move back and forth through different steps as you work. Keep reading and thinking about what you have read until you feel comfortable with the material.

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2.4: Previewing

Learning Objectives

- Use previewing as a reading strategy

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



Figure 1. Think of previewing a text as similar to watching a movie preview.

According to research, previewing a text can improve comprehension (Graves, Cooke, & LaBerge, 1983, cited in Paris et al., 1991). It can set a purpose for reading and help you prepare for what's coming.

Depending on the genre, your approach to previewing may vary:

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

How To Use It

To preview a text before you read, first ask yourself whether the text is fiction or nonfiction.

- If the text is fiction or biography, 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, look at text features and illustrations (and their captions) to determine the subject matter and to recall prior knowledge, to decide what you already know about the subject. Previewing also helps you figure out what you don't know and what you want to find out.

How to 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.

Scanning and Skimming

Scanning

The technique of scanning is a useful one to use if you want to get an overview of the text you are reading as a whole – its shape, the focus of each section, the topics or key issues that are dealt with, and so on. In order to scan a piece of text you might look for sub-headings or identify key words and phrases which give you clues about its focus. Another useful method is to read the first sentence or two of each paragraph in order to get the general gist of the discussion and the way that it progresses.

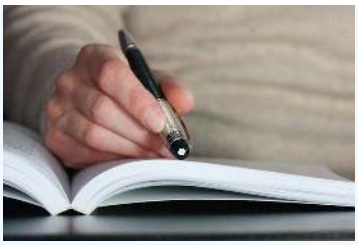


Figure 2. Identifying sub-headings and key words as you scan a particular text can help you to get an overview of the bigger ideas and themes.

Scanning is also used to find a particular piece of information. Run your eyes over the text looking for the specific piece of information you need. You may run your eyes quickly down the page in a zigzag or winding S pattern. If you are looking for a name, you note capital letters. For a date, you look for numbers. Vocabulary words may be boldfaced or italicized. When you scan for information, you read only what is needed. If you see words or phrases that you don't understand, don't worry when scanning.

Using internet tools such as a search bar or Ctrl + F can be useful when scanning.

Skimming

Skimming is used to quickly gather the most important information, or "gist" of a text. Run your eyes over the text, noting important information. Use skimming to quickly get up to speed on the basic content coverage; it's not essential to understand each word when skimming. As you skim, you could write down the main ideas and develop a chapter outline.

When you preview, you look for sign-posts by doing the following things:

- Scan for titles, headings, and subheadings
- Skim the first paragraph or introduction
- Skim the last paragraph or summary
- Scan the first sentence after each heading
- Skim the abstract (if provided)
- Make a note of graphic aids such as figures, tables, charts, graphs, and images
- Make a note of typographical aids such as bold-faced or highlighted words and phrases
- Scan any supplemental material at the beginning or end of the text, such as chapter outlines, chapter objectives, discussion questions, or vocabulary lists

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.

✔ ✔ Watch It

This video explains the advantages of previewing a text and how to do it successfully.

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290903862690496098/embed

You can view the transcript for "How to Preview a Text" here (opens in new window).

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2.5: Questioning

Learning Objectives

- Use questioning as a reading strategy

Being an active reader means that you should be actively thinking about and interacting with the text you read, as if it were a conversation. Just like a conversation includes a back and forth dialogue between two speakers, when you read a text, there should be a dialogue between you and the author. Imagine that you were in an argument with a friend. While they speak, you'd be thinking about what they are saying while also formulating a response in your own mind, or thinking of questions to counter the things they are saying. When you read, you similarly want to think of it as a conversation, where you think about what the author is saying while developing your own thoughts and questions about what you read. Asking questions is an excellent way to think critically about a text and to be an engaged reader.

Before Reading



Figure 1. Asking questions about a text helps you to stay engaged with the reading material.

Before beginning to read, you may ask:

- What is your purpose for reading?
- What do you predict the text will be about?
- How do you feel about the topic?
- What biases might you have about the topic because of your feelings towards it?
- What do you already know or think you know about the topic?
- What do you need to know about the topic?
- What do you want to know about the topic?
- What do you predict the text will tell you about the topic?

During Reading

While you read, you may construct questions using one of these six basic question types:

- Who
- What
- When
- Where
- Why
- How

For example, you might ask:

> What does the author mean by _____?
> How does this relate to _____?
> Why is this _____?

Or you may make statements such as:

I don't understand_____.
I was confused by _____.

After Reading

After reading, ask questions to help you process and reflect on the material.

- What did you learn?
- Is there anything that was unclear? Write down some guide questions and go back and reread difficult passages with these questions in mind.
- Did you find what you needed? If not, what else do you need to know?
- Did you find the author's style persuasive? Why or why not?
- Do you agree with what you read? Why or why not?
- How does what you read compare to other things you've read on this topic?
- What ideas stuck with you? Which ones do you want to investigate more?

✔ ✔ Watch It

This video gives an overview of the types of questions you should ask while reading.

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

You can view the transcript for "Questioning" here (opens in new window).

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2.6: Annotating

Learning Objectives

- Explain strategies for annotating texts

To annotate is to actively engage a text by pausing to reflect, mark up, and add notes as you read. It can increase comprehension, help you remember what you've read, and save you time by not requiring you to re-read as often. The simplest ways to annotate include marking up the text by highlighting, underlining, bracketing, or placing symbols in the text or the margins, but simply highlighting is insufficient. Highlighting tells you that you thought something was important in the moment you read it, but when you go back later, you won't know *why* you thought it was important. As you annotate, you'll also want to add keywords, phrases, or questions, and make connections to the content.

While annotating, look for opportunities to:

- Summarize important ideas in your own words.
- Add examples from real life, other books, TV, movies, and so forth.
- Define words that are new to you.
- Mark passages that you find confusing with question marks.
- Write questions that you might have for later discussion in class.
- Comment on the actions or development of characters.
- Comment on things that intrigue, impress, surprise, disturb, etc.
- Note how the author uses language.
- Draw a picture when a visual connection is appropriate.
- Explain the historical context or traditions/social customs used in the passage.

Watch It

Watch this video lesson to learn about the value of annotation and how to do it.

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

You can view the transcript for "Creating an Annotation System" here (opens in new window).

Try It

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Annotating a Textbook

Most textbooks are organized in similar ways, with chapters, sections, headings, visuals, and activities. Use this structure to help you break down the content in manageable chunks and to look for important concepts, facts, key terms, and theories contained within the text. Look for any sidebars and special features, and be sure to complete any practice questions or activities.

One great way to annotate a textbook is to create your own study questions based on the reading. After reviewing your notes, create study questions about important theories, facts, people, dates, and terms, then use the questions to quiz yourself.

Note-Taking strategies

There are several recommended note-taking strategies for textbook reading such as SQ3R or Cornell Notes.

SQ3R

SQ3R stands for:

- Survey
- Question
- Read
- Recite

- Review

In this method, you first survey the text by glancing over the headers and major points. Then you turn the headings or the main ideas from the summary into questions about the reading. So if a header says, “Annotating a Textbook,” you could write, “What are methods for annotating a textbook?” Next, you read to find the answer. Then you try to recite your answer out loud in your own words, without looking at your notes. Then you can continue on, but remember to review your notes when you are done with your reading.[1]

Cornell Notes

Cornell notes are often used during a lecture but can also be used while reading a text. You begin by creating two columns on your paper—draw a vertical line about 1/3 of the way across a paper. On the right-hand side, you write down notes as you listen or read. In the left-side column, you add in questions and elaborate on the things you wrote on the other side. It follows this general structure:

- Record: write down notes from the reading or lecture on the right side of the paper
- Question: write down questions or keywords on the left side of the paper that connect to the notes on the other side.
- Recite: Cover the detailed notes on the right side of the paper and ask yourself the questions from the left side, or use the keywords to see how much you can recite from the reading or notes.
- Reflect: Think deeply about the notes and try to make connections between what you already know and what you learned.
- Review: Review your notes frequently—before class, after class, before an exam, etc.[2]

Annotating a Work of Fiction

When annotating a work of fiction, such as a novel or short story, look for key elements, such as:

- Characters: The **protagonist** is the main character and the focus of the story. They may be the hero, or anti-hero, someone who is flawed but still fulfills the role of the hero. There may also be an **antagonist**, someone who is opposed to the main character.
- Setting: The setting is a place and time where the story unfolds. The setting may be current, historical, or invented.
- The Plot: Many stories follow a predictable plot formula, which involves first setting the stage, introducing a conflict that causes action leading up to a climax, then falling action and resolution.



Figure 1. Identifying the 5 stages of a plot will help you as you annotate works of fiction.

- The Point of View: The point of view is the teller of the story.



Figure 2. Recognizing which point of view is being used is another helpful tool in annotating.

- Themes: Themes are the major ideas expressed in a story. Every story has one or more themes that it develops, such as “human endeavor is ultimately futile” or “working class unity leads to successful resistance to oppression.”

Annotating an Essay or Nonfiction Book

Reading (and writing!) essays is an essential part of your college experience. Essays and books are usually organized around a central idea or argument, known as a thesis statement. And even though a book is longer with more room to develop ideas, both books and essays share a similar structure that has an introduction, body, and conclusion.

When annotating an essay or nonfiction book, first look for these things:

1. Find the stated or implied thesis statement, also referred to as the author’s central argument. A thesis consists of a specific topic and a position statement on the topic. All of the other ideas in the text support and develop the thesis, so it’s really important to

identify the thesis as you read. You'll get lots of practice identifying and writing thesis statements and topic sentences throughout this course.
2. Identify topic sentences. Topic sentences are the main ideas of a paragraph.
3. Identify key supporting details. Supporting details help develop and explain the topic sentences.
4. Identify transitional words and phrases. These can work as signposts to better help you understand the author's argument. They often highlight examples and comparisons with the main argument. Look for words like:
    - Example (e.g. for example, for instance)
    - Time or Sequence (e.g. first, second)
    - Comparison (e.g. however, on the other hand)
    - Concession (e.g. admittedly, granted)
    - Addition (e.g. furthermore, in addition)
    - Cause and Effect (e.g. as a result, consequently)
    - Conclusion (e.g. therefore, in conclusion)
    - Summary (e.g. in summary, in other words)

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1. Textbook Reading Systems. *Cornell University*. http://lsc.cornell.edu/wp-content/uploads/2015/10/Textbook-Reading-Systems.pdf↵
2. The Cornell Note-taking System. The Learning Strategies Center. Cornell University. http://lsc.cornell.edu/study-skills/...taking-system/ ↵

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2.7: Summarizing and Paraphrasing

Learning Objectives

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

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

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

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

How to Write Summary Statements

Use these processes to help you write summary statements:

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

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

Tips for Summary

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

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

Watch It

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

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

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

? ? Try It

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

Paraphrasing

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

✓ ✓ WAtch IT

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

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

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Glossary

paraphrasing: rewriting a passage of text in your own words

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

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2.8: Outlining and Mapping

Learning Objectives

- Use outlining as a reading strategy

When summarizing a reading, it is often a good idea to make an outline. This can be especially helpful for summarizing the important details from a textbook, as the general organization is already laid out for you. Outlining and mapping can help you break down a text into the most important ideas and concepts, but it also useful for organizing your own thoughts before you begin to write. An outline will:

- Present information in an organized and logical manner
- Focus on main ideas and key details
- Show how information is related
- Cover a lot of material in a small space

Watch It

This video explains how to create an outline, and covers these main rules:

1. Parallelism: Headings of the same level are of the same kind (a noun, a verb, etc.)
2. Coordination: Headings of the same level are of the same rank
3. Subordination: Information moves from general to specific by indenting from left to right
4. Division: Each heading must have at least two subheadings in order to be divided

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You can view the transcript for "How to Make an Outline" here (opens in new window).

Just as outlining is helpful for understanding the organization of a piece of text, mapping can help you visualize the important components of a passage. Mapping is similar to outlining in that the goal is to write out the main ideas and key supporting details of a text or map out ideas for something you want to write.

To create a concept map:

1. Write down the name of the text (or concept) you want to map.
2. Draw a box for the main idea.
3. Draw boxes for supporting ideas.
4. Draw more boxes for supporting details.
5. Draw arrows connecting the boxes. Organization flows vertically in this example, but concept maps can be organized horizontally, or even with the main idea in the center and supporting ideas and details surrounding it.

Watch It

In this video, you'll see how you can use a concept map to visually analyze a text.

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You can view the transcript for "Creating a Concept Map" here (opens in new window).

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2.9: Reviewing

Learning Objectives

- Describe strategies for effective review

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

For example, when you're ready to study for an exam, you should:



Figure 1. Using a variety of resources as you review will help to solidify your knowledge.

1. Review your notes
2. If provided, review the chapter objectives and outline
3. Review important information, such as theories, facts, names, dates, and terms
4. Review any vocabulary flashcards you created
5. Review any study questions you created
6. Review your answers to study questions and activities

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 upon a concept 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?

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

Reviewing in Action

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 Cornell 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?	• 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?	• 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 favor 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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2.10: Introduction to Specialized Reading Strategies

What you'll learn to do: utilize specialized reading strategies

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, annotating, 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.

Reading #1: Throughput

Analyze this chart showing a typical throughput structure of income (sales) and expenses. TVC stands for total variable cost, OE are operating expenses, NP is net profit, and T represents throughput.

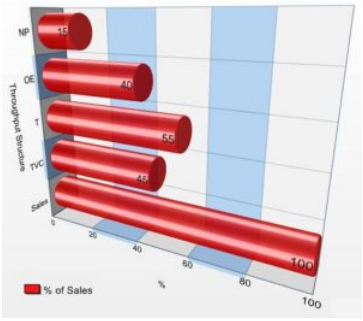


Figure 1. Chart of an example of Throughput Accounting structure.

Reading #2: 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.

Reading #3: 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. 4p+5<29

$$\begin{array}{r} 4p+5 < 29 \\ \underline{\quad -5 \quad -5} \\ \frac{4p}{4} < \frac{24}{4} \\ p < 6 \end{array} \tag{2.10.1}$$

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

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2.11: How to Read Effectively in Various Disciplines

Learning Objectives

- Explain tips for reading effectively in various disciplines (sciences, social sciences, and math)

Reading Online

It's more and more likely that you'll have to do a large portion of your reading for college online (like this!). Because it is sometimes harder to focus on online readings when there are so many distractions readily available at your fingertips, it's important to be extra thoughtful as you work through online text. Just as you would with a traditional textbook, take the time to minimize distractions. Use programs such as Mercury Reader, task-trackers, timers, and blockers to reduce unwanted distractions. Preview the text by scrolling through a section, making note of headers and keywords. Be careful when clicking on hyperlinks that you don't end up losing sight of your initial reading. Navigate through the material in an intentional way. Take notes and annotate or outline either on your device, or with a pen and paper. These strategies will assist you with reading, no matter the subject area.

Reading in the Sciences

Reading in the sciences is likely different than reading in the humanities or for some of your other classes.

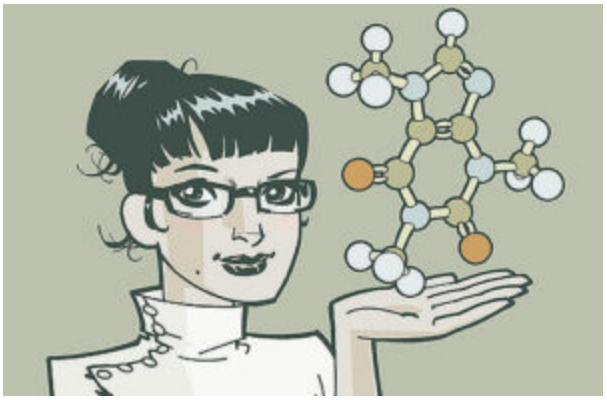


Figure 1. Reading in science courses requires learning common patterns in scientific texts.

Explore the Textbook and Assignments

In a science textbook, it's helpful to develop a base understanding of how the material is organized. Go over the course outline and the table of contents and compare the two. In addition, explore the lab manual, if you have one.

You also 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 your readings.

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

In the sciences, it is especially helpful to take notes, and learn basic terminology and vocabulary. Studying scientific root prefixes and suffixes and using context clues can help you understand new words.



Figure 2. Look for common patterns in your reading to better understand the material in your science readings.

Analyze For Comprehension

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 than in 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.

Reading in the Social Sciences

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

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

The beginning and end are frequently 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.

Mechanics of reading and note-taking

Read the text and make marginal notes indicating what seemed like the strongest parts of the text. When you have completed a once-through of 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.)

? ? Thinking Analytically about readings

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 keywords. 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?

Reading for Math Class

Unlike some classes where you are able to skim over some readings to look for specific information, readings for a math class require careful reading of every word. Math textbooks rely heavily on practice problems, so you will typically find a few paragraphs of explanation and introduction, then problems. You want to make sure you have a pencil and paper in hand, and even if you think you know how to do the problem, it's a good idea to work through every example. Be sure to plan enough time for this,

and work slowly through each step. Write down your notes during each step as well, so if you are confused about anything, you'll be able to pinpoint which step is giving you a hard time. Here are some tips for working through 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.

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2.12: Reading Scholarly Articles

Learning Objectives

- Explain how to effectively read scholarly articles

Reading Scholarly Articles

For many college assignments, you will be asked to find and read scholarly articles to support arguments in your own writing. Scholarly articles are those written by professionals in their fields of study, intended for other professionals in that field, and published in a venue that professionals in the field use. Professional articles are also often peer-reviewed articles, meaning that other scholars have reviewed the article before publication.

Journal articles generally share these common characteristics:

- Published quarterly or semi-annually in print journals or online
- Follow strict guidelines for organization, writing, and citations
- Include information organized into sections with headings
- Are long and in-depth; 10-20 pages is normal.
- May include graphs or tables but few, if any, images or advertisements.
- Include specialized or field-specific language.
- Present information objectively, without bias.
- Include reference lists and in-text citations.

Scholarly journal articles are different than conventional articles from newspapers, magazines, and websites. They often can be very challenging to read.

Journal articles follow different rules based on the subject or discipline they address. Those written for the humanities use MLA and CMS style and are structured like an essay, while other journal articles follow APA guidelines for organization, writing, and citation.

MLA and CMS

Journal articles written in MLA (Modern Language Association) or CMS (Chicago Manual of Style) are generally organized like an essay, with or without headings, and have the following sections:

- Introduction
- Body
- Conclusion
- Bibliography or Works Cited
- Appendices (if necessary)

These articles use MLA or CMS citation style for layout, citation, and documentation. They make and support arguments, they pay close attention to good prose and writing style, and they include cited references. These types of articles are used in English, History, Modern Languages, and Philosophy studies.

APA Style

APA Style is more commonly used in the sciences and research articles written in the fields of Education, Medicine, Natural Sciences, or Social Sciences. They focus less on prose and writing style, and more on using precise language and specialized terminology. They present studies, propose and test hypotheses, cite relevant research, and describe the results of an experiment. They are generally organized as follows:

- Abstract: Summarize the article
- Key Words
- Introduction
  - Describe the topic
  - Identify the problem
  - Provide a literature review

- Define the theoretical approach
- State the hypothesis

- Method
  - Describe the model used
  - Describe what was done
- Results
  - Share data (often with tables and figures)
  - Describe results
- Discussion (and/or Conclusion)
  - Interpret the results
  - Draw conclusions
  - Identify limitations
  - Share ideas for future areas of study
- References
- Appendices (if necessary)
- Table and/or figures (if necessary, may also be included in the body of the article)

Watch It

This video reviews each of the components of scholarly journal articles and will walk you through a few examples.

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290915998870528678/embed

You can view the transcript for "Annotating a Journal Article" here (opens in new window).

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2.13: Reading Visual Aids

Learning Objectives

- Use reading strategies to glean information from visual aids

What is a Visual Aid?

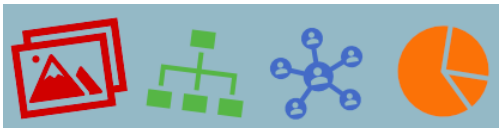


Figure 1. Take the time to read and analyze visual aids included in your reading.

A visual aid is an image or graphic used to display information. Visual aids can be found in just about every kind of print and electronic media; they can appear within the body of the text, in boxes or sidebars, or in appendices. They often convey information that is supported by the surrounding text, but sometimes they present novel information.

Reading Visual Aids

When reading, it's a good idea to pause and examine any visual aids you see. Common types include:

Tables: Tables are text-based graphics that display information using words and numbers arranged in columns and rows.

Bone Classifications

Bone classification	Features	Function(s)	Examples
Long	Cylinder-like shape, longer than it is wide	Leverage	Femur, tibia, fibula, metatarsals, humerus, ulna, radius, metacarpals, phalanges
Short	Cube-like shape, approximately equal in length, width, and thickness	Provide stability, support, while allowing for some motion	Carpals, tarsals
Flat	Thin and curved	Points of attachment for muscles; protectors of internal organs	Sternum, ribs, scapulae, cranial bones
Irregular	Complex shape	Protect internal organs	Vertebrae, facial bones
Sesamoid	Small and round; embedded in tendons	Protect tendons from compressive forces	Patellae

Table 6.1

Figure 2. Tables are great for organizing large amounts of information in a digestible way. You could use this table to quickly find out that flat bones are thin and curved, attach to muscles and protect internal organs, and include the sternum, ribs, scapulae, or cranial bones.

Graphs: Graphs display information on a grid using an x/y axis. There are different types of graphs, such as line graphs and bar graphs.

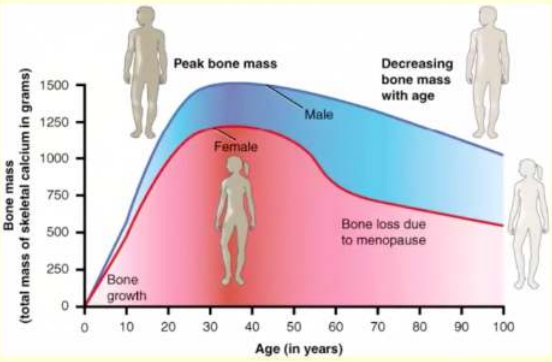


Figure 6.23 Graph Showing Relationship Between Age and Bone Mass Bone density peaks at about 30 years of age. Women lose bone mass more rapidly than men.

Figure 3. This line graph shows age on the x-axis and bone mass on the y-axis. When these points are plotted, you can find out the bone mass for males and females at different ages. For instance, the average bone mass of a 30-year-old male is 1500 grams, whereas the average bone mass of a 30-year-old female is just under 1250 grams.

Charts: Charts use shapes to convey information, such as percentages, timelines, or processes. There are different types of charts, such as pie charts and flow charts.

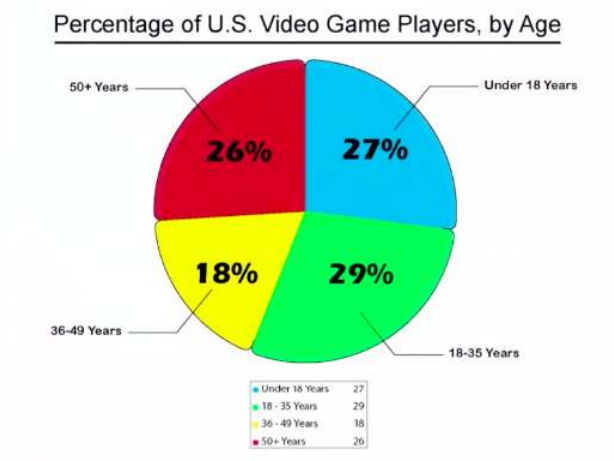


Figure 4. Pie charts are great for visually showing groups of information. In this pie chart, we can see that the percentage of people above the age of 50 who play video games is almost equal to those below the age of 18.

Diagrams: Diagrams are schematic drawings that show how something works, such as a physical structure, a process, or even a concept.

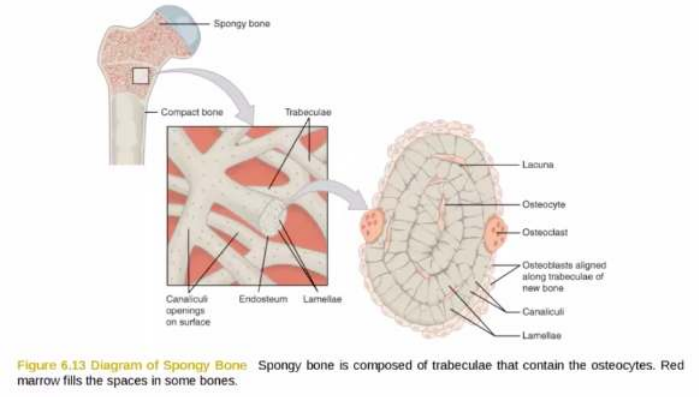


Figure 5. This diagram shows the structure of spongy bone.

Pictures: There are different kinds of pictures that can be used as visual aids, such as political cartoons and drawings of people, places, things, and events.



Figure 6. Here's an example of a British eighteenth-century political cartoon by James Gillray that you might find in a history textbook. The cartoon depicts a deposed aristocratic bowing humbly and saying, "I am your very humble servant," while the revolutionary rudely replies, "Kiss my butt." Gillray satirizes the decline in manners brought about by the French Revolution.

Maps: Maps are used to describe a territory or identify a location. Look to the map legend for important information.

Photographs: Photographs are also used as visual aids to convey information about people, places, things, and events. The types and uses of photos can vary greatly because of the different types of devices used to take them, such as cameras, telescopes, microscopes, and even MRI machines.

✔ ✔ Watch It

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.

//plugin.3playmedia.com/show?mf=1291625&p3sdk_version=1.10.1&p=20361&pt=375&video_id=AZd9CdTU8XU&video_target=tpm-plugin-pu25l3uy-AZd9CdTU8XU

You can view the transcript for "Reading Data Tables & Graphs" here (download).

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2.14: Introduction to Rhetorical Context

What you'll learn to do: define and identify rhetorical context



In college, reading is active rather than passive. Instead of merely receiving information and ideas through reading, college students must act upon the information they are reading. Furthermore, college students must consider the rhetorical context in which the material they are reading was composed as well as the rhetorical context in which they will read and respond. So what exactly does rhetorical context mean? Read on to find out.

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2.15: Rhetorical Context

Learning Objectives

- Explain the concept of rhetorical context

What is Rhetoric?

The definition of **rhetoric** commonly used is "the art of persuasion," although it also has a larger meaning that includes the way we communicate—specifically the words, language, and techniques used to convey a persuasive message. For example, the rhetoric you use to send an email to a friend is different than the rhetoric you use to compose an essay for your class.

Rhetoric is about strategic choices and approaches to communication whether textually, verbally, or even aurally and visually. When we communicate to different types of audiences about the same topic, we make strategic decisions on what details to include or omit, what types of evidence or support to use, and so on.

Think It Over

Let's imagine that you spent a little bit of time last weekend studying, but mostly you were party-hopping and celebrating because your school's football team won the championship.

- When you speak to your **best friend** about your weekend, you are likely to provide details about how many parties you went to and what exactly you did at the parties, including gossip about mutual friends.
- When you speak to **your grandmother** about that same weekend, you might mention your study group meeting on Sunday afternoon, the take-out dinner you had on Friday night, and perhaps briefly mention that you celebrated the team's win with friends.
- When you speak to **your supervisor** at your on-campus job, you are likely to discuss the big football win (Go Team!), your looming exam schedule, and how your study and exam schedule will impact your availability to work for the rest of the term.

Watch It

Click on the video below to learn more about rhetoric and why it is important to your writing. Note that there are no captions, as all text is shown on the screen.

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

Rhetorical Context

All versions are accurate representations of your weekend, but you make strategic choices about which details to include or not include based on the particular rhetorical situation of your discussion. **Rhetorical context** refers to the circumstances surrounding an act of reading and/or composition. That is, how and what you communicate is shaped by:

- The writer, author, creator, also known as the rhetor
- The audience, including primary, secondary, and tertiary audiences
- The topic of the communication
- The purpose, which often can be broken into a primary, secondary, and tertiary purpose
- The context and culture within which the communication is taking place.

The context and culture impact the rest of the rhetorical situation (rhetor, audience, topic, purpose).

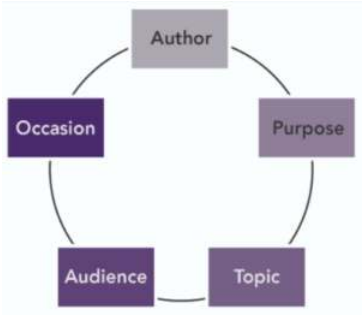


Figure 1. Understanding the rhetorical context of any given communication includes being aware of the author, their purpose, the topic, the audience, and the occasion, or setting.

Keep in mind that anytime anyone is trying to make an argument, they are doing so out of a particular context. And that context influences and shapes the argument that is made. Let's take a closer look at each of the components of the rhetorical context:

Author

Here the "author" of a text is the creator, the person utilizing communication to try to effect a change in their audience. An author doesn't have to be a single person, or a person at all – an author could be an organization. To understand the rhetorical situation of a text, one must examine the identity of the author and their background.

- What kind of experience does the author have in the subject?
- What values does the author have, either in general or with regard to this particular subject?
- How invested is the author in the topic of the text? In other words, what affects the author's perspective on the topic?

Audience

The audience is any person or group who is the intended recipient of the text, and also the person/people the text is trying to influence. To understand the rhetorical situation of a text, one must examine who the intended audience is by thinking about these things:

- What is the audience's demographic information (age, gender, etc.)?
- What is/are the background, values, interests of the intended audience?
- How open is this intended audience to the author?
- What assumptions might the audience make about the author?
- In what context is the audience receiving the text?

Topic

This is simply the topic, or subject matter, covered in the reading. What is it about? What information is presented? And in what format or medium is the argument being made: image? written essay? speech? song? protest sign? meme? sculpture?

Purpose

What is the author hoping to achieve with the communication of this text? What do they want from their audience? What does the audience want from the text and what may they do once the text is communicated? Both author and audience can have purpose and it's important to understand what those might be in the rhetorical situation of the text you are examining. An author may be trying to inform, to convince, to define, to announce, or to activate, while an audience's purpose may be to receive notice, to quantify, to feel a sense of unity, to disprove, to understand, or to criticize. Any and all of these purposes determine the 'why' behind the decisions both groups make.

Occasion

Nothing happens in a vacuum, and that includes the text you are trying to understand. The occasion, also known as the setting or situation, describe the circumstances of the text. It was written in a specific time, context, and/or place, all of which can affect the way the text communicates its message.

To understand the rhetorical situation of a text, examine the setting of both audience and author and ask yourself if there was a particular occasion or event that prompted the particular text at the particular time it was written.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20221

Glossary

rhetoric: language used to persuade

rhetorical context: the circumstances surrounding an act of reading and/or composition

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2.16: Evaluating Rhetorical Context

Learning Objectives

- Identify the rhetorical context of a passage

For example, suppose in a music education course you are asked to read the following speech and then compose an opposing argument:

It is high time for music education to enter the digital age. In its current form, high school music education focuses almost exclusively on large instrumental and vocal ensembles grounded in classical music and conducted by one individual, typically the school's music teacher. However, today's average teenager listens to music for four hours a day, most of which is created digitally and produced through computer software, drum kits, and keyboards. Additionally, teens are taking to the internet themselves, recording their own work and sending it out to the world, with approximately 12,000 covers of songs being uploaded every 24 hours. As a former high school band conductor and current music professor at a state university, I train professional musicians and study music education curriculum, and I believe that current music classes are not providing what most students desire and what most future professionals need. As a consequence, high school students are abandoning school music classes. Initiative 952, with its emphasis on digital recording and production, would entice students back to music class and set them on a lifelong love of musicianship. I respectfully urge the board to vote yes on Initiative 952 and fund the education of tomorrow's musicians.

To understand the rhetorical context of the speech, you must ask yourself the following questions:

1. Who is the author, speaker, or composer?
2. What is the author trying to accomplish? What is his or her purpose?
3. What is the author writing about? What is his or her topic?
4. Who is the audience?
5. What is the occasion, or external motivation, for writing?

In the speech above, the **author** is a music professor who was formerly a high school band director. His **purpose** in writing this speech is to persuade school board members to fund Initiative 952. His **audience** includes, narrowly, school board members and, more broadly, anyone interested in music education. His **topic** is changing the focus of high school music education to digital composition through the funding of an initiative. The **occasion** for the speech is a meeting at which the school board will vote on funding the music education initiative.

Now, how does knowing the speech's rhetorical context help you in writing an opposing argument? Let's consider your rhetorical context.

1. Who are you as a reader of a text and an author of a response?
2. What is your purpose in reading and then writing?
3. What are you reading and writing about?
4. Who is your audience?
5. What is the occasion, or external motivation, for your reading and writing?

Your assignment requires you to **read** and respond as an **author** opposing the original speech. Your **purpose** is to persuade readers that the speech's argument is flawed. Your **topic** will be the speech and the proposed initiative. Your **audience** is your professor. The **occasion**, for you, is a course assignment and probably the desire to do well on the paper.

How can you use the rhetorical context of the music professor's argument to help you meet the rhetorical context of your assignment?

Knowing that the author is a music professor, you decide to Google him to learn more about him. On his university's website, you learn that his specialty is contemporary, digital music. You wonder if his scholarly interests might have affected his position on this argument and begin to consider ways that you could address his bias in your own paper. You also note that several other professors in his department are specialists in classical music and decide to investigate what they have written on the topic, finding several have written in support of the classical approach to music education. Your own professor has emphasized using academic sources, so you decide to use some of the classical music specialists as sources for your paper.

You also find the author's LinkedIn page where he mentions an online product he has developed to bring digital tools to music classrooms. Since the occasion of his writing is a school board meeting where members could potentially vote to purchase such a product, you wonder if his motivation for funding the initiative might be linked to his desire to sell his product. Since your assignment requires you to oppose his argument, you decide to raise the possibility that the speechwriter may be motivated by selling digital tools rather than improving music education.

Watch It

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.



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: pb.libretexts.org/ec1/?p=150

You can view the transcript for "The Rhetorical Situation" here (opens in new window)."

As a reader, pay attention to these factors:

- 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?

Examining the rhetorical context in which a writer is operating helps you understand an author's biases and agendas as well as the influences surrounding the writer that may have affected his or her composition. Examining the rhetorical context in which you, as a reader/responder, are operating helps you situate the text rhetorically, become aware of your own position, and respond to the text appropriately.

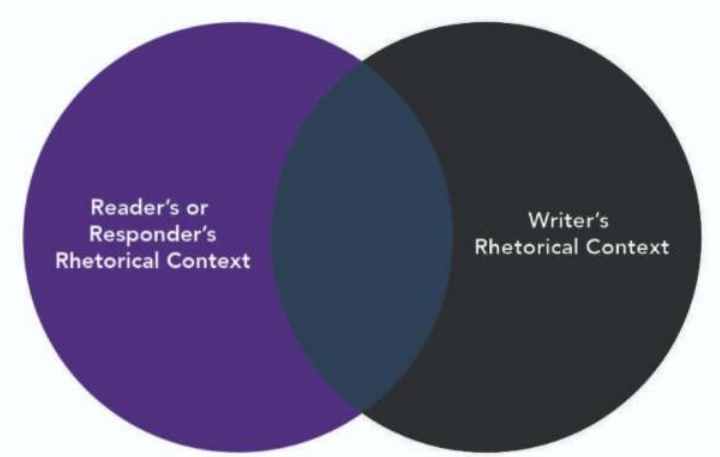


Figure 1. Both the writer and the reader are influenced by their unique rhetorical contexts for any given situation.

? ? Try It

Below is an excerpt from the advance text of a speech then-Senator John F. Kennedy gave just a few days before he won the election to become the 35th U.S. president. Read the excerpt, and then answer the questions.

We live in a fast-moving nation. But one thing constant from the birth of our Republic has been our faith in education and our determination to make it available to all our citizens.

It was Aristotle, more than 2,000 years ago, who said: "The neglect of education ruins the constitution of the country." And Thomas Jefferson echoed these principles when he wrote to a friend in 1786 that "the most important bill is that for the diffusion of knowledge among the people. No other sure foundation can be devised for the preservation of freedom and happiness."

Thus the value and importance of education was at the foundation of Western thought—and was again present at the foundation of the American Republic. . . .

Today I want to discuss education with you—the current crisis in our educational system is a crisis caused by our failure to meet our responsibilities over the past 8 years; and tell you what I think we must do in the future to build an educational system to meet our expanding needs. . . .

Where, then, have we failed in the past eight years? And what must we do for the future?

First, we have failed to provide adequate classrooms for our expanding school population. Today we have 131,000 classrooms fewer than we need—and, at our current rate of construction shortage is actually increasing. The result is double shifts, obsolete, overcrowded, and even dangerous classrooms.

In one community a dog kennel was converted into a school where four classes were being held. In an adjoining town the school superintendent said, "I only wish I had a dog kennel to use." In another area the school board is renting 2 windowless, cinder block factories to house 883 children—while in other cities kindergarten children are being taught in firetraps. . . .

Second, we have failed to provide enough well-trained and well-paid teachers. Today we need 135,000 more teachers. Almost three million schoolchildren are being taught by teachers working on substandard certificates. And as our school population expands in the next decade, one-and-a-half million more teachers—one-third of all our college graduates—will be needed to keep our educational system going. We are not attracting bright young men and women into teaching because the salaries which we pay our teachers are shamefully low. . . .

Therefore, I propose the enactment of a Student Loan Insurance Act—modeled on the highly successful program which has been adopted by my native State of Massachusetts. Under this program the Federal Government—in return for a small premium—would guarantee student loans made by colleges and universities. Thus colleges would be able to secure funds adequate to meet the pressing financial needs of all of its students—so that no able student would have to leave school because he could not pay his expenses. Although a small special revolving fund would be required, Federal payments would be made only in the unlikely event of default. Basic responsibility for repayment would be in the hands of the student, and the loan

program itself would be administered by the individual college or university. In this way we can make sure that no bright young American is denied a college education. . . .

Abraham Lincoln once said that “He has the right to criticize who has the heart to help.” We of the Democratic Party criticize our educational system—and the leadership which has permitted it to falter—because we have the heart to help, and, even more, the programs and the leadership which can build an educational system of which all Americans can be proud.[1]

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...sessments/5599

1. John F. Kennedy: "Speech by Senator John F. Kennedy, Beverly Hilton Hotel, Los Angeles, CA - (Advance Release Text)," November 2, 1960. Online by Gerhard Peters and John T. Woolley, The American Presidency Project. www.presidency.ucsb.edu/ws/?pid=25930. ↵

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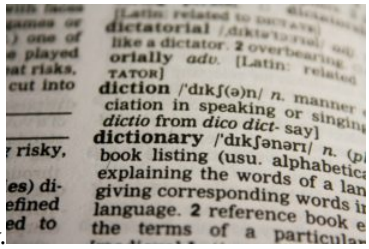
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2.17: Introduction to Vocabulary-Building Reading Strategies

What you'll learn to do: use context clues and other reading strategies to learn and retain new words

The basic tool for the manipulation of reality is the manipulation of words. If you can control the meaning of words, you can control the people who must use the words. – Philip K. Dick

One of the key distinctions between college-level reading and reading you have done for school before is the much wider breadth and broader scope of college reading. Being well-read helps you become a better critical thinker in the long run. In this section, you'll learn some specific strategies for helping you build your vocabulary.



You've probably taken hundreds of vocabulary quizzes and tests before coming to college. Well, put your mind at ease: we aren't going to ask you to memorize lists of SAT words. This section focuses on how you can approach reading tasks methodically to expand your vocabulary along the way. It goes without saying that the more you read, the more words you will learn. However, in addition to just upping your reading load, context clues and word parts can help you build your vocabulary.

Finally, you will learn the best methods for dealing with specialized or technical vocabulary. In college, you'll probably take classes about topics and concepts you don't know anything about yet. Reading rhetorically (and strategically) can help ensure that you get the most out of those courses.

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2.18: Using Context Clues

Learning Objective

- Identify strategies for using context clues to define words

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

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

What is Jabberwocky?

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

"**Jabberwocky**"

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

? ? Learn by doing

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

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

Type	Explanation	Example
Definition Clue	A definition clue is a word or phrase that defines the unfamiliar word. Look for words or phrases that introduce a definition for the unfamiliar word, such as is defined as, means, and refers to. Also, look for punctuation marks that set off a definition, such as quotation marks, parentheses, and brackets.	Telepathy is defined as the ability to communicate information to another person without the use of any known senses or communication devices.
Synonym Clue	A synonym clue is a word or phrase that has a similar meaning to the unfamiliar word. Look for words or phrases that introduce a synonym, such as in other words, or, that is to say, and also known as. Also, look for punctuation marks that set off a synonym, such as commas, parentheses, dashes, and brackets.	The cheerleader appeared vapid— spiritless —as he delivered his pitiful performance in front of the stands.
Contrast/Antonym Clue	A contrast clue is a word or phrase that has the opposite meaning of the unfamiliar word. In other words, it's an antonym. Look for words or phrases that introduce a contrast, such as however, but, instead of, on the other hand, on the contrary, whereas, in contrast, unlike, although, and even though.	Lions are solitary creatures that prefer to hunt alone, but hyenas are gregarious creatures that hunt in packs.

Type	Explanation	Example
Example Clue	An example clue is a word or phrase that provides an example to illustrate the unfamiliar word. Look for words or phrases that introduce examples, such as for example, for instance, to illustrate, like, and such as.	The manager disliked obsequious behavior, such as fawning and kowtowing.
Experience Clue	An experience clue draws upon personal experience or background knowledge to help you infer the meaning of the unfamiliar word. Look for a word, phrase, or sentence that includes a familiar experience or information you already know.	Television audiences are familiar with disingenuous ads that make grand promises.
Adjacent Clue	An adjacent clue is a word or phrase in a nearby sentence that explains the meaning of the unfamiliar word.	Nanotechnology is becoming more widespread in society. As computer chips continue to shrink, manufacturers are placing them in everything from clothing, to building materials, to even the human body.

Let's look at a few more examples:

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

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link to Learning

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

Glossary

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

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2.19: Learning New Vocabulary

Learning Objective

- Describe strategies for enhancing your vocabulary



Figure 1. If you encounter unfamiliar words, look them up, use them, and make learning new vocabulary a part of your normal reading habits.

There are several proven benefits from improving your vocabulary, but how should we go about learning new words in the most effective way? By using the following vocabulary-building strategies, you are guaranteed to develop a strong vocabulary and keep improving it every day.

Read Voraciously

It's undeniable that reading is the most effective way to get new vocabulary. When you read, you see words being used in context—and that's what makes it much more effective than, for example, merely memorizing word lists.

With context information surrounding each new word, there's a good chance you can guess its meaning just by understanding the overall text. Finding out the meaning of words in such a way is the natural way of learning language–and reading provides the best opportunity to get exposed to this natural way of learning.

If you're not able to infer the meaning of new words when reading, it's probably because there are too many unknown words in the text. In that case, try reading easier materials. The key to good reading is making it a pleasurable activity. Don't be afraid of coming across unknown words, but make sure the text is appropriate for your reading level.

Try It

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Make Friends with the Dictionary

A dictionary is the first indispensable resource to improve your vocabulary. It's only by looking up a word in a dictionary that you will learn its precise meaning, spelling, alternate definitions, as well as additional useful information about it. A thesaurus is also a valuable resource for learning by finding connections between words, such as their synonyms and antonyms.

Consider adding a good dictionary and thesaurus to your bookshelf. Here are some recommendations:

- Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary
- The New Oxford American Dictionary
- The Oxford American Writer's Thesaurus

For online dictionaries, there are many free options with great extra features. Even if you have a good dictionary in print already, you can't miss having a good online dictionary at your disposal:

- OneLook: has a reverse lookup function (get the word from its definition) and works as a "meta-dictionary," showing you definitions from other major online dictionaries.
- Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary: a well-established and well-regarded name in the realm of dictionaries.
- VisuWords: a dictionary that shows words as a mind-map
- Ninjawords: searches the free dictionary Wiktionary. What makes this site interesting is that you can look up multiple words simultaneously. Moreover, the results pages can be bookmarked, making them good personal reference pages.
- Thinkmap Visual Thesaurus: if you're a fan of mind mapping, you will certainly enjoy viewing related words represented in a visual map format.

Answers.com, Dictionary.com, The Free Dictionary, and many others: all of them are good resources—try each one at least once to help you make up your mind.

? ? tech tip

Most modern Web browsers make it really easy to define a word without even going to a dictionary to search for the word.

Here are some extensions and methods for you to try out:

Chrome: Google Dictionary

Firefox: Oxford Dictionary Pop-Up

Microsoft Edge: Right-click the word and click "Ask Cortana." A search panel will slide in showing the definition.

Apple Safari: Right-click the word and select the "Look Up" option. MacOS will look up the word in its own built in dictionary.

There are many other ways to use your Web browser to build your vocabulary. Spend some time searching the Web to find the tools that work best for you.

Use It or Lose It

Don't settle after you learn a new word by reading it or looking it up in the dictionary: these are good starts, but it's by **using the new words** that you truly commit them to your long-term memory.

Be creative and try to use your newly learned words in as many ways as possible:

- Write them down.
- Say them aloud.
- Create sentences with them, mentally or in writing.
- Try to use them in a conversation.
- Discuss them with friends.

It's also important to be aware of your own language style: every time you catch yourself using common or nonspecific words such as "nice," try coming up with richer and more precise expressions instead.

Learn One New Word a Day

If you learn just one new word every day, you'll soon notice they add up pretty quickly.

Many websites provide free word-of-the-day services. Here are some to try:

- Merriam-Webster's Online Word of the Day: delivers the most useful words of all. It's also the most feature-rich: it provides audio explanation, pronunciation, and word history.
- WordSmart Wordcast: provides difficulty level, comprehensive details, and audio pronunciation for the word.
- Dictionary Word of the Day: another fine service, perhaps not as complete as Merriam-Webster's or WordSmart, but still worth checking out.

Vary Your Interests

Do something different from your daily routine: hunting, fishing, or blogging—any activity that isn't part of your normal life—can become a great way to learn new words, as every niche has its own jargon and unique ways of communicating. Read books and

magazines that are different from the ones you're used to. Watch foreign-language movies. Take up new hobbies; hang out with different people.

? ? Try It

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2.20: Enhancing Your Vocabulary

Learning Objective

- Describe strategies for enhancing your vocabulary
- Use structural analysis to understand the meanings of words

Learn Common Roots and Word Etymology

Modern English represents a cornucopia of different languages. In fact, if you limited yourself to words with only specifically "English" origin, you would have a pretty small vocabulary.

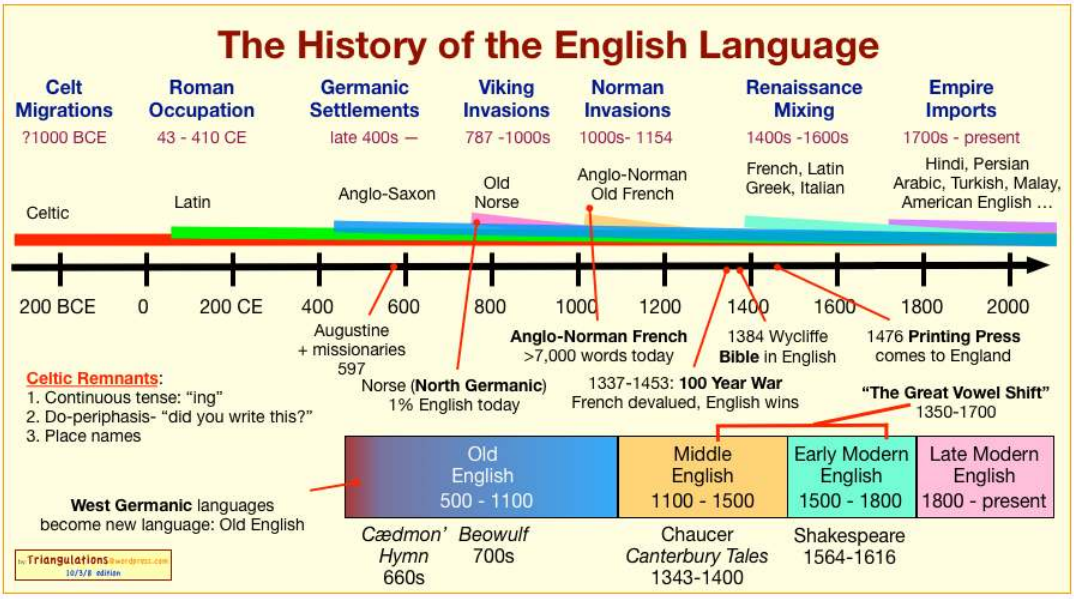


Figure 1. This timeline shows that the English language as we know it today evolved over hundreds and thousands of years.

If you learn basic root words, especially Latin and Greek roots, you will be able to break apart words to figure out what they mean. Take a look at this List of Greek and Latin roots in English. You might be surprised.

? ? learn by doing: explore latin roots

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

Understand 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.

Just to pick an example, when you understand that the prefix “ortho” means straight or right, you start to find connections between seemingly unrelated words, such as orthodontist (a specialist who straightens teeth) and orthography (the correct, or straight, way of writing).

Understanding the logic behind words always pays off in terms of learning and recalling. Consider these examples: “breakfast” means “interrupt the night’s fast,” and “rainbow” means “bow or arc caused by rain.” While these meanings may be trivial to native English speakers, having such insights about words, foreign or otherwise, never fails to deepen your connection to them.

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, pianissimo, pianississimo,* etc.

English only has one infix:

- “abso-friggin-lutely”
- “get it to-freaking-gether”

✓ ✓ Put It to Work

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.

To practice 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

Maintain a Personal Lexicon

By keeping a personalized list of learned words, you’ll have a handy reference you can use to review these words later. It’s very likely you’ll want to go back and refresh your memory on recent words, so keeping them in your own list is much more efficient than going back to the dictionary every time.

Even if you never refer back to your lexicon again, writing words down at least once will greatly enhance your ability to commit them to your permanent memory. Another excellent learning aid is to write an original sentence containing the word — and using your lexicon to do that is a great way of enforcing this habit. You can also add many other details as you see fit, such as the date you first came across the word or maybe a sequential number to help you reach some word quota you define.

There are many ways you can keep your personal word list; each has its own advantages and disadvantages, so make sure to pick the format that works best for you. You may prefer to keep it as a simple text file in the computer, or in a regular paper notebook, or maybe as flash cards in a shoe box.

One option is a computer spreadsheet for its handy features such as searching, sorting, and filtering.

✔ ✔ Watch It

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.

//plugin.3playmedia.com/show?mf=1291626&p3sdk_version=1.10.1&p=20361&pt=375&video_id=AR5pnxui13E&video_target=tpm-plugin-znwmonse-AR5pnxui13E

You can view the transcript for "Build Your Vocabulary- 1948" here (download).

Though dated, this video does offer good advice for how to develop a stronger working vocabulary. How would you update these tips to the twenty-first century?

Follow a Process

To make vocabulary improvement a permanent habit in your everyday life, you should make it as habitual, automatic, and tightly integrated into your daily workflow as possible—otherwise you won't do it when your days get too busy.

In that regard, one particularly useful concept is the one of maintaining a "Word Inbox." By having a predefined place you use to capture the words you come across, you can process them much more efficiently.

Your process can be as simple as you wish—the key is to specify it beforehand and then follow it. By knowing exactly how and how often to process your inbox, you stay on top of your vocabulary improvement process, even when there are other pressing matters crying out for your attention.

Leverage Every Resource You Can

The internet is a gold mine of resources for vocabulary building. Here are a few to get you started, though many more exist:

There are plenty of vocabulary applications you can try. There are many vocabulary-related books you can explore. There is a wealth of free literature on sites such as Project Gutenberg. If you use the Firefox browser, there are many ways to integrate dictionary lookup functions, such as the plug-ins Answers.com and DictionarySearch. You can find specialized vocabulary lists, such as these feeling words or descriptive words. You can even learn some classy, Shakespearean insults!

The point is that you're only limited by your willingness to learn: let curiosity be your guide and you will never run out of resources to learn from.

? ? Try It

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2.21: Introduction to Types of Reading Material

What you'll learn to do: 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.

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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2.22: Distinguishing Features of Reading Types

Learning Objectives

- Differentiate between the goals and purposes of various genres of texts

The types of reading you do in college will depend on your major and your elective options. It helps to be able to identify the type of source you're being asked to read in each class. That way, you have some expectations about why you're reading it, what you should expect to learn from it, and how to read it effectively.

Literature

Literature includes poetry, fiction, creative non-fiction, and drama.

Primary goal: to entertain.

Distinguishing Features

- Artistic use of language
- Plot = action
- Characters

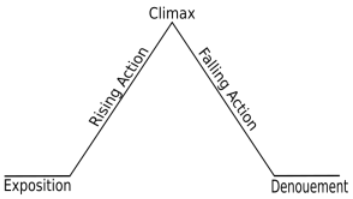


Figure 1. Many fictional stories follow a dramatic arc like this one.

Works of fiction and drama usually follow a similar plot structure, called a **dramatic arc**. "Exposition" provides the setting and background information. "Rising action" is where the events of the story start to get complicated. The "climax" is where the drama reaches its most dramatic moment. "Falling action" then shows the fallout from the climax, and "resolution" (also known as a *denoument*) is the closing action where the issues of the plot are fully resolved.

Examples

- the *Harry Potter* series of books, by J. K. Rowling
- the plays and sonnets of William Shakespeare

Journalism

Journalism is news, usually focused on current events.

Primary goal: to inform.

Because of this purpose, the writing is **neutral**: it shows no opinion, just facts.

Distinguishing Features

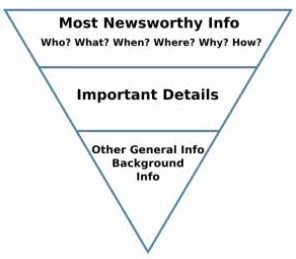


Figure 2. The Inverted Pyramid structure of news articles.

The **inverted pyramid** is a metaphor used by journalists to illustrate how many news articles are organized. Many blogs and editorials follow this structure, in addition to most newspaper pieces.

This upside-down pyramid consists of three parts. The widest part at the top represents the most substantial, interesting, and important information the writer means to convey, while the lower parts illustrate that other material should follow in order of diminishing importance.

This format is useful for two reasons. First, readers can leave the story at any point and understand it, even if they do not have all the details. Second, readers get a sense of how important different content is, depending on where it appears in the article.

Journalism relies on research. They refer to sources by name, but don't have separate citations at the end of the piece.

Examples

- articles from *The New York Times*
- stories from the evening news

Academic Journals

An **academic** or **scholarly journal** is a peer-reviewed periodical that focuses on a narrow field of study. Academic journals serve as forums for the introduction and presentation for scrutiny of new research, and the critique of existing research.

Primary goal: to distribute new ideas.

Distinguishing features

Academic journal articles are generally written by experts in a particular field. They assume that readers have a depth of knowledge about the subject matter, as well.

Textbooks

You're likely quite familiar with these already. Whether in ebook or print form, textbooks are commonly associated with formal education.

Primary goal: to educate.

Distinguishing Features

A textbook is an organized body of material useful for the formal study of a subject area. A good textbook is distinguished by:

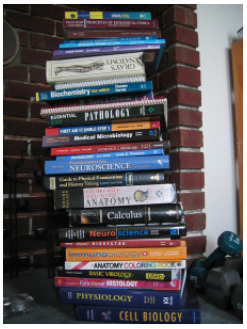


Figure 3. Several different components are included in textbooks to better help the reader.

A discrete, well-bounded scope: all the material should relate to a solid understanding of the subject, usually mixing theory and practice for each topic as it covers the subject domain.

- **Use of examples and problems**: the student should be able to better grasp each presented concept by following examples, and then applying the concept in structured exercises or problems.
- **An internally consistent style**: after the first few sections, there should be little or no surprises for the student in terms of layout and presentation of material. The text's user can get comfortable with the layout, the tempo of the presentation, and the pattern of figures, illustrations, examples, and exercises.
- **Utility for future reference**: once reviewed, the textbook should isolate material that is useful to the future application of subject knowledge in well-organized appendices and tables.

- **A structure that makes sense**: the textbook is not just a collection of useful material, it is a guide to the student for an order of review which will aid in mastering the subject area.

Reference Works

Reference works include books, such as encyclopedias, dictionaries, atlases, almanacs, and bibliographies. Reference works also include subject-specific books, like legal dictionaries and diagnostic manuals. Reference works also include websites like Wikipedia, WebMD, and the Oxford English Dictionary Online.

Primary goal: to find particular information and answer specific questions.

Distinguishing Features

Reference works usually have a direct, informative style that emphasizes facts. In addition, reference works:

- Are often arranged alphabetically, chronologically, or using some other overarching organizational method.
- Are usually written by a team of experts with authors writing on their areas of specialization.
- Are frequently updated to deliver the most current information and synthesize it with what came before.
- Often include cross-references (print) or hyperlinks (web) to connect readers to additional information in the same subject area.
- May be written in an especially terse, shorthand style to fit as much information as possible into a small space.

Examples

- The Dictionary of American Biography
- The Merck Manual
- The Oxford Dictionary of the Renaissance
- W3schools.com
- Merriam-webster.com

Now that you are familiar with these basic genres, let's take a look at a few examples and see if you can determine which reading is from which genre.

? ? Try It

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2.23: Comparing Genres

Learning Objectives

- Analyze characteristics from different genres of text

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



Figure 1. Based on which sources you read, you can learn about different information and opinions in relation to cars.

Example 1

Example 1

"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.

Your Observations

Question for consideration:

As you read through the passage above, what distinguishing features about the text stand out to you?
[reveal-answer q="484834"]Show Suggested Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="484834"]Features you noted might include:

- separate "Learning Objectives" and "Introduction" section
- use of the word "students" in Learning Objectives
- bulleted list in Learning Objectives
- hyperlink on phrase "internal combustion engine"

- long sentences
- complex and varied sentence structure
- formal tone

[/hidden-answer]

Example 2

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?

Example 2

“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.

? ? Your Observations

Question for consideration:

As you read through the passage above, what distinguishing features about the text stand out to you?
[reveal-answer q=”870382″]Show Suggested Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a=”870382″]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

[/hidden-answer]

Example 3

Example 3

“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.

? ? Your Observations

Question for consideration:

As you read through the passage above, what distinguishing features about the text stand out to you?
[reveal-answer q=”915485″]Show Suggested Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a=”915485″]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

[/hidden-answer]

Example 4

Example 4

“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.

? ? Your Observations

Question for consideration:

As you read through the passage above, what distinguishing features about the text stand out to you?
[reveal-answer q="785537"]Show Suggested Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="785537"]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

[/hidden-answer]

Example 5

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

Example 5

"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.

? ? Your Observations

Question for consideration:

As you read through the passage above, what distinguishing features about the text stand out to you?
[reveal-answer q="948704"]Show Suggested Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="948704"]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

[/hidden-answer]

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2.24: Characteristics of Genres

Learning Objectives

- Explain differences between the characteristics of various genres of texts

Even though the previous examples 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.

The full source demonstrates some features common to textbooks:



Figure 1. A textbook source like OpenStax CNX will use very direct, factual language to educate readers.

- 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.

The full article demonstrates some features common to journalism:



Figure 2. News sources do their best to inform readers with facts and images.

- 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*.

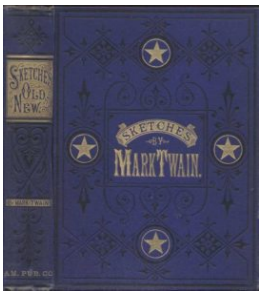


Figure 3. Mark Twain wrote this short story with the intent to entertain.

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.

The full story demonstrates some features common to reference material:



Figure 4. Wikipedia is a popular reference-based website.

- 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.

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



Figure 5. An academic uses a highly structured format to present new information to readers.

- 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.

? ? Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20230

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2.25: Putting It Together- Rhetorical Reading

Now that you have learned strategies for active and rhetorical reading, apply them in your own work. As you read, remember to do the following:

- Consider the author's rhetorical context;
- Consider your rhetorical context as the reader;
- Preview the text, and make predictions;
- Read actively, questioning the author's ideas and annotating the text;
- Summarize the text after reading, and discuss it with others;
- Use context clues to help you understand the meaning of new words;
- Read voraciously and strategically.

Remember that academic reading and writing are an evolving conversation in which you are an active participant. Rhetorical reading helps you understand the thoughts of others and develop your own ideas, insights, and vocabulary.

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.



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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2.26: Discussion- Reading Analysis and Summary

Select a reading from The Conversation website. Use the categories at the top of the page or the search bar to find something that sounds interesting to you.

STEP 1: Answer the questions below about your reading. Post these questions along with the URL to the article you chose to the discussion forum.

1. What type of reading is this? What genre is it?
2. What is the rhetorical context of the article? Identify the writer, audience, topic, purpose, and context.
3. What is a vocabulary word you learned or found interesting in this article? How was it used in the article, and what is its definition?

Finally, write a summary of your reading selection. This summary should be no longer than 1/3 the length of the original source. (For instance, if your reading selection is 15 paragraphs long, your summary will be no longer than 5 paragraphs long.)

STEP 2: Respond in two separate posts to two classmates (in at least 75 words). Explicitly address their examples and try to extend, complicate, or redirect their points in a substantive, knowledge-demonstrating way.

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2.27: Assignment- Annotating and Outlining

For this assignment, you will write an annotation, using an article of your choosing from this Reading Anthology. Remember, annotating means actively engaging with a text by pausing to reflect, mark up, and add notes as you read. Review the page on annotation in this module if you need a refresher.

STEP 1: First, pick out five passages you find noteworthy and add your thoughts and ideas about each passage, as shown here:

Passage #	Quotation and Location	My Comments / Ideas
1	*Direct quote (paragraph #)*	Add your comments here
2	*Direct quote (paragraph #)*	Add your comments here
3	*Direct quote (paragraph #)*	Add your comments here
4	*Direct quote (paragraph #)*	Add your comments here
5	*Direct quote (paragraph #)*	Add your comments here

STEP 2: Next, write a bulleted outline of the article you read (review the page on outlining and mapping, as needed). If the work you chose is fictional, include the characters, setting, plot, point of view, and themes. If it is an essay or nonfiction work, look for the thesis statement, topic sentences, and supporting details.

STEP 3: Finally, write a paragraph reflecting on how annotating the piece you read contributed to your understanding of it.

Sample Grading Rubric

Criteria	Proficient	Developing	Not Evident	Points
Annotates five passages	Identifies five direct quotes or passages from the text and adds thoughtful commentary in at least a few sentences, highlighting why that passage is important, interesting, or noteworthy.	Does not identify five quotes, or does not sufficiently add commentary to the highlighted passages.	Incomplete annotation	__/8
Bulleted outline	Creates an outline modeled after those seen in the course. If it is an essay, students should identify the thesis statement, topic sentences, and supporting details in the outline. if it is fictional, students identify the characters, setting, plot, point of view, and themes	Does not fully create the outline, misses key bullet points, or excludes important details in the outline.	Missing or incomplete outline	__/8

Annotation Reflection	Includes a thoughtful reflection about how annotating the reading contributed to understanding the work, and why.	Does not explain why the reflection was valuable in enough detail.	Incomplete or missing reflection	__/4
Total:				__/20

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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3.2: Introduction to Thesis Statements and Topic Sentences
3.3: Thesis Statements
3.4: Topic Sentences
3.5: Introduction to Effective Paragraphs
3.6: Paragraph Development- Supporting Claims
3.7: Paragraphs and Paragraph Transitions
3.8: Introductions
3.9: Conclusions
3.10: Introduction to Audience Awareness
3.11: Audience Analysis
3.12: Tone, Language, and Appeal
3.13: Introduction to Writing Strong Sentences
3.14: Sentence Construction
3.15: Using the Active Voice
3.16: Putting It Together- Writing Essentials
3.17: Discussion- Thesis Statements and Supporting Claims Assignment
3.18: Discussion- Take a Stance

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3.1: Why It Matters- Writing Essentials



Why analyze the structure and essentials of writing?

A scholarly approach to the writing process usually entails writing a rough draft, through which you work out an ambitious thesis and the scope of your argument, and then starting over with a wholly rewritten second draft containing a more complete argument anchored by a refined thesis. During drafts, you will identify any holes in your arguments, and look closely at paragraph construction, the introduction and conclusion, and continue to revise the paper until you have a clear and coherent argument.

While you will approach an argumentative essay differently than, say, a narrative essay about a specific event, there are certain features that all of these styles or methods have in common:

- A clear **thesis statement,** usually provided at the beginning of the essay
- Clear and logical **transitions**
- Focused **body paragraphs** with evidence and support
- Appropriate **format and style** if you use source material
- A **conclusion** that expands upon your thesis and summarizes evidence
- Clear writing that follows standard conventions for things like **grammar**, **punctuation**, and spelling.

In this module, we'll take a closer look at each of these components of essential writing.

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3.2: Introduction to Thesis Statements and Topic Sentences

What you'll learn to do: identify, analyze, and create effective thesis statements



Being able to identify the purpose and thesis of a text while you're reading it takes practice, but it is an essential skill to successful writing. Powerful thesis statements are an effective and important element of almost every writing assignment in college.

Before we begin crafting our own thesis statements, we'll begin by practicing finding thesis statements. When trying to isolate the thesis in a piece of text, 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.

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3.3: Thesis Statements

Learning Objectives

- Identify strong thesis statements

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

We often use the word "argument" in English courses, but we do not mean it in the traditional sense of a verbal fight with someone else. Instead, you "argue" by taking a position on an issue and supporting it with evidence. Because you've taken a position about your topic, someone else may be in a position to disagree (or argue) with the stance you have taken. Think about how a lawyer presents an argument or states their case in a courtroom—similarly, you want to build a case around the main idea of your essay. For example, in 1848, when Elizabeth Cady Stanton drafted "The Declaration of Sentiments," she was thinking about how to convince New York State policymakers to change the laws to allow women to vote. Stanton was making an **argument**.

Some consider all writing a form of argument—or at least of persuasion. After all, even if you're writing a letter or an informative essay, you're implicitly trying to persuade your audience to care about what you're saying. Your thesis statement represents the main idea—or point—about a topic or issue that you make in an argument. For example, let's say that your topic is social media. A thesis statement about social media could look like one of the following sentences:

- Social media are hurting the communication skills of young Americans.
- Social media are useful tools for social movements.

A basic thesis sentence has two main parts:

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

Example Thesis Statements

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

Topic: Regular exercise regime

Angle: Leads to multiple benefits

Thesis: Adult college students have different experiences than typical, younger college students.

Topic: Adult college students

Angle: Have different experiences

Thesis: The economics of television have made the viewing experience challenging for many viewers because shows are not offered regularly, similar programming occurs at the same time, and commercials are rampant.

Topic: Television viewing

Angle: Challenging because shows shifted, similar programming, and commercials

Identifying the Thesis Statement

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. The most important step in getting a good understanding of an essay or book is to find the thesis statement.

A thesis consists of a specific topic and an angle on the topic. All of the other ideas in the text support and develop the thesis. The thesis statement is often found in the introduction, sometimes after an initial "hook" or interesting story; sometimes, however, the thesis is not explicitly stated until the end of an essay, and sometimes it is not stated at all. In those instances, there is an implied thesis statement, in which you can generally extract the thesis statement by looking for a few key sentences and ideas.

Most readers expect to see the point of your argument (the thesis statement) within the first few paragraphs. This does not mean that it has to be placed there every time. Some writers place it at the very end, slowly building up to it throughout their work, to explain a point after the fact. Others don't bother with one at all but feel that their thesis is "implied" anyway. Beginning writers, however, should avoid the implied thesis unless certain of the audience. Almost every professor will expect to see a clearly discernible thesis sentence in the introduction.

Thesis statements vary based on the rhetorical strategy of the essay, but thesis statements typically share the following characteristics:

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

✔ ✔ Watch It

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 most likely paraphrased the thesis statement.

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

You can view the transcript for "How to Identify the Thesis Statement" here (download).

Writing a Thesis Statement

Remember your thesis should answer two simple questions: What issue are you writing about, and what is your position, or angle, on it?

A thesis statement is a single sentence (or sometimes two) that provides the answers to these questions clearly and concisely. Ask yourself, "What is my paper about, exactly?" to help you develop a precise and directed thesis, not only for your reader, but for you as well.

A good thesis statement will:

- Consist of just one idea
- Make your position clear
- Be specific
- Have evidence to support it
- Be interesting
- Be written clearly

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

Following are some typical thesis statements:

- Although many readers believe Romeo and Juliet to be a tale about the ill fate of two star-crossed lovers, it can also be read as an allegory concerning a playwright and his audience.
- The "War on Drugs" has not only failed to reduce the frequency of drug-related crimes in America but actually enhanced the popular image of dope peddlers by romanticizing them as desperate rebels fighting for a cause.
- The bulk of modern copyright law was conceived in the age of commercial printing, long before the Internet made it so easy for the public to compose and distribute its own texts. Therefore, these laws should be reviewed and revised to better accommodate modern readers and writers.
- The usual moral justification for capital punishment is that it deters crime by frightening would-be criminals. However, the statistics tell a different story.

- If students really want to improve their writing, they must read often, practice writing, and receive quality feedback from their peers.
- Plato's dialectical method has much to offer those engaged in online writing, which is far more conversational in nature than print.

Thesis Problems to Avoid

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

- Thesis Sentence too Broad
  - For example, look at the thesis: **Hospice workers need support.** This is a thesis sentence; it has a topic (hospice workers) and an angle (need support). But the angle is very broad. When the angle in a thesis sentence is too broad, the writer may not have carefully thought through the specific support for the rest of the writing. A thesis angle that's too broad makes it easy to fall into the trap of offering information that deviates from that angle.
- Thesis Sentence too Narrow.
  - Consider this thesis: **Hospice workers have a 55% turnover rate compared to the general health care population's 25% turnover rate.** This sentence really isn't a thesis sentence at all, because there's no angle idea to support. A narrow statistic, or a narrow statement of fact, doesn't offer the writer's own ideas or analysis about a topic. A clearer example of a thesis statement with an angle of development would be the following:

? ? Try It

Practice identifying strong thesis statements in the following interactive.

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290916673521810808/embed

Glossary

argument: in writing, the argument is the main stance, claim, or position that is supported with evidence

explicit thesis: a clear and direct statement of the writer's claim

thesis statement: a statement of the topic of the piece of writing and the angle the writer has on that topic

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3.4: Topic Sentences

Learning Objectives

- Identify topic sentences in paragraphs

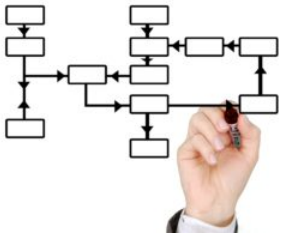


Figure 1. A nicely constructed topic sentence will help the reader to better understand the flow of an essay.

Key Sentences

In academic writing, readers expect each paragraph to have a sentence or two that captures its main point. They're often called "topic sentences," though many writing instructors prefer to call them "key sentences." The phrase "topic sentence" could be misleading, because it makes it seems like it always announces the topic of a paragraph or that it is always one sentence, but those things may not always be true. Calling it a "key sentence" reminds us that it expresses the central idea of the paragraph. And sometimes a question or a two-sentence construction functions as the key.

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

Consider the following examples about epidemiological evidence, meaning evidence related to the study of diseases. Etiological studies refer to the study of the origin of a disease.

Version A:
Now we turn to the epidemiological evidence.

Version B:
If the evidence emerging from etiological studies supports the hypothesis, the epidemiological evidence is also compelling.

Both versions convey a topic; it's pretty easy to predict that the paragraph will be about epidemiological evidence, but only the second version establishes an argumentative point and puts it in context. The paragraph doesn't just describe the epidemiological evidence; it shows how epidemiology is telling the same story as etiology. Similarly, while Version A doesn't relate to anything in particular, Version B immediately suggests that the prior paragraph addresses the biological pathway (i.e., etiology) of a disease and that the new paragraph will bolster the emerging hypothesis with a different kind of evidence (epidemiological). The topic or key sentences make it easy for the reader to keep track of how the essay moves from one paragraph and idea to the next.

Try It: Topic sentences

Read the paragraph about camera flash technology and answer the question below:

When a camera flash is used in a low-light environment, the subject's eyes may appear red in the finished photograph. What is known as "red-eye" is the result of light from the flash reflecting off the pupils of the eyes. The phenomenon of red-eye can be lessened by using the red-eye reduction feature found on many SLR cameras. This feature activates a lamp that shines a small light directly into the subject's eyes. When this happens, the diameter of the pupil is reduced, thus tightening the opening in the iris. Since a smaller pupil means a smaller host for the reflection, the chances of red-eye occurring are greatly reduced.

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...sessments/5605

Topic sentences have a topic and an angle, just like thesis sentences. But the angle of topic sentences usually is smaller in range than that of the thesis sentence. Very often the topic remains the same from thesis to topic sentence, while the angle shifts as the

writer brings in various types of ideas and research to support the angle in the thesis.

Look at this sample below; these are topic sentences created from the thesis sentence. The topic remains the same in all (regular exercise) and the overall angle remains the same (benefits). But the angle narrows and shifts slightly from topic sentence to topic sentence as the writer brings in different supporting ideas and research.

Thesis Sentence	**Topic**	**Angle**
A regular exercise regime creates multiple benefits, both physical and emotional.	Regular exercise	Physical and emotional benefits
Topic Sentence	**Topic**	**Angle**
One physical benefit of having a regular exercise regime is longevity. Recent studies have shown that…	Regular exercise	Physical benefit of longevity
Exercise reduces heart and cholesterol rates when done at least three times per week…	Regular exercise	Physical benefit of reduced cholesterol
Another physical benefit of regular exercise is that it results in stronger heart and lungs…	Regular exercise	Physical benefit of stronger heart and lungs
People who exercise regularly have less trouble with sleep disorders…	Regular exercise	Physical benefit of less trouble sleeping
A benefit that spans the physical and emotional results of regular exercise is the release of endorphins, or substances produced by glands as a byproduct of exercise…	Regular exercise	Physical and emotional benefits of endorphins
In multiple studies, regular exercise has been shown to reduce stress…	Regular exercise	Emotional benefit of reduced stress
Because regular exercise often helps to slow the effects of aging and maintain a good body weight, people who exercise regularly experience the emotional benefits of good self-image and self-confidence in their looks…	Regular exercise	Emotional benefit of better self-image & confidence

Notice that in the examples above, the topic sentence reflects back to the overall thesis (A regular exercise regime creates multiple benefits, both physical and emotional.) and introduces the reader to the specific topic and angle of each paragraph (improving sleep, reducing stress, etc.). An effective topic sentence not only introduces the topic of each paragraph, but it reminds the reader of the overall thesis, driving home the point of the piece of writing.

Realize that all paragraphs do not need topic sentences. Sometimes, you may need multiple paragraphs to help work your way behind the ideas related to one topic sentence because you have a lot of supporting information.

✔ ✔ Watch It

You'll recall that effective annotating includes taking careful notes to extract the main ideas from a reading. In order to find the main ideas, you'll need to know how to identify the thesis statement and topic sentences in each paragraph. This video will walk you through that process, and also highlight some other key components of essays, like supporting details and transitional words and phrases.

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

You can view the transcript for “Annotating an Essay or Book” here (opens in new window).

In our next section, we’ll move beyond the topic or key sentence to all the other pieces that make up a strong paragraph, like supporting details and transitional words and phrases.

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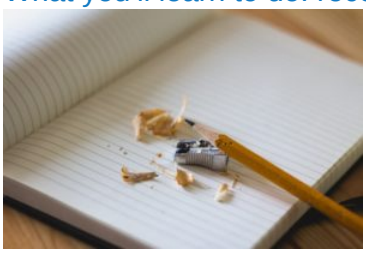
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3.5: Introduction to Effective Paragraphs

What you'll learn to do: recognize and evaluate effective paragraphs



The paragraph is the building block of essay writing. The word itself, according to the **Oxford Dictionary Online**, is defined as "a distinct section of a piece of writing, usually dealing with a single theme and indicated by a new line, indentation, or numbering."

Paragraphs are important for ease of reading; they help to offer ideas in "chunks" that the eye and brain can more easily comprehend (as opposed to offering information in one large block of text, which is hard to read).

In academic writing, paragraphs show changes in ideas or further development of ideas. Typically, paragraphs present mini ideas that develop out of the thesis sentence's main idea. They are the fundamental units of academic writing; without good paragraphs, you simply cannot clearly convey your ideas and claims.

This section will introduce you to strategies and techniques for writing effective paragraphs.

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3.6: Paragraph Development- Supporting Claims

Learning Objectives

- Analyze the types and uses of evidence and supporting details in paragraphs

Main Ideas in Paragraphs

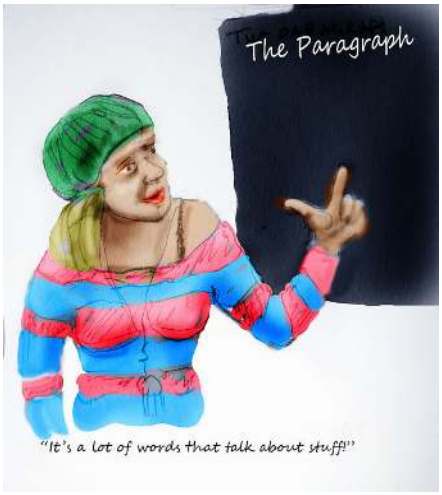


Figure 1. Each paragraph provides supporting details for a unique topic, or key sentence.

A paragraph is composed of multiple sentences focused on a single, clearly-defined topic. There should be 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 or key sentence followed by several sentences of support or explanation.

After the topic or key 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.

Using the Thesis to Organize Paragraphs

While your main claim should guide the entire argument, key ideas included in the thesis statement can be used in topic sentences to guide your paragraphs.

Using the sample thesis statement, "Social media sites like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube have been indispensable tools to young activists from Tahrir Square to Wall Street," the argument might be outlined as follows:

1. Introduction: Social media sites like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube have been indispensable tools to young activists from Tahrir Square to Wall Street.
2. Twitter contributed to
    1. Arab Spring
    2. Occupy Wall Street
3. Facebook contributed to
    1. Arab Spring
    2. Occupy Wall Street
4. YouTube contributed to.
    1. Arab Spring
    2. Occupy Wall Street
5. Conclusion: The Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street movements may not have happened without the use of social media.

In the above outline, Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube are used to divide the body of the essay into three main sections, and then those sections are subdivided into Egypt and the United States. Alternately, you could divide the body of the essay into two main sections—one for Egypt and the other for the United States—and then subdivide by Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube. The resulting outline would look like this:

1. Introduction: Social media sites like Twitter, Facebook, and YouTube have been indispensable tools to young activists from Tahrir Square to Wall Street.
2. Arab Spring
    1. Twitter
    2. Facebook
    3. YouTube
3. Occupy Wall Street
    1. Twitter
    2. Facebook
    3. YouTube
4. Conclusion: The Arab Spring and Occupy Wall Street movements may not have happened without the use of social media.

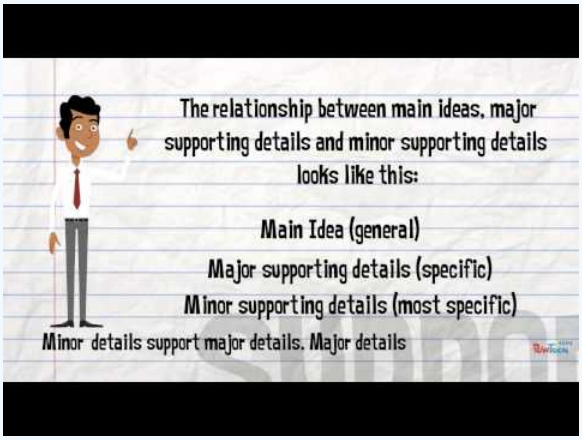
Either of these outlines would be a clear progression from the thesis statement and would help the reader to see how each key idea furthers the main claim.

Supporting Ideas and Details

A text's thesis statement helps guide its overall organization and the development of the topic sentences that will constitute the body paragraphs. Now let's examine the rest of the "stuff" that makes a paragraph work.

✓✓ Watch It

First, watch this video that details the relationship between a topic or key 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 future discussions.



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: pb.libretexts.org/ec1/?p=186

(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:

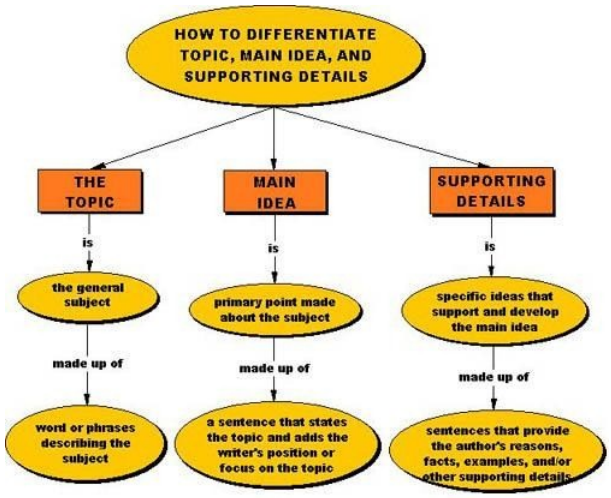


Figure 2. The topic is the general subject, the main idea is the primary point made about the subject, and supporting details help develop the main idea. For example, in a paper about the flu shot, the topic is the flu shot, the main idea would be the importance of getting it, and the supporting details would be statistics about its effectiveness and details about how the vaccine prevents the spread of the flu.

Remember, readers often expect the topic or key sentences to be at the beginning of the paragraph but they don't have to be. Sometimes the paragraph's purpose in a larger piece of writing necessitates that its topic sentence occurs elsewhere.

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

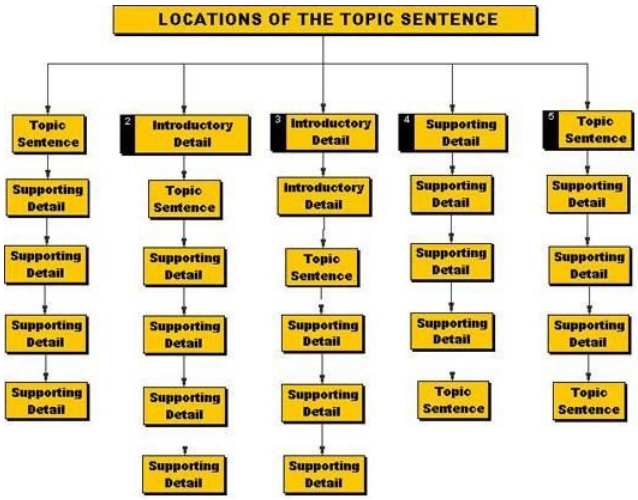


Figure 3. The topic sentence is often included at the beginning of a paragraph, as shown in the first column. But sometimes the topic sentence is located within the paragraph, or even at both the beginning and end of a paragraph, as shown in the last column, to reinforce or reiterate the key concept.

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



Figure 4. The PIE method consists of first pointing out the main idea, illustrating and explaining that idea.

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.

> For example, let's consider an essay written by a college student, Tareq Hajj. He argues that his university should not use a plus/minus grading scale because the proposed scale does not include a higher weight for A+ scores/. In his argument he 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…" because, as he explains, it is "inequitable." The PIE structure of his paragraph has served to support his thesis.

Using 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.

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 stops them from using their phones in class. Secondary sources might include articles about the issue of cell phone usage in class from scholarly or academic journals.

How do authors decide what kinds of evidence to use?

You've likely learned in the past about different types of rhetorical techniques that writers use when making claims in their writing. 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 5. Paragraphs consist of supporting evidence to persuade readers about the accuracy of their thesis statement. This evidence is supported by appeals to readers by using logos, ethos, and pathos.

Logical Appeals (Logos)

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 (Ethos)

Authors using authority to support their claims may draw from different sources as evidence for their claims. These include the following:

- personal anecdotes based on substantial personal experience
- 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 (Pathos)

Authors using emotion might support their claims with some of the same kinds of evidence but employed to achieve different ends. These include the following:

- touching personal anecdotes
- compelling narratives
- emotional or stirring 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.

Regardless of what kind of evidence you use, an effective paragraph will guide the reader with a clear topic sentence that articulates the claim and then use evidence, illustration, support, and discussion to convince the reader.

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3.7: Paragraphs and Paragraph Transitions

Learning Objective

- Describe techniques for effective use of transitions in paragraphs

When to Paragraph

How do you know when "enough is enough"—when you have enough information in one paragraph and have to start a new one? A very rough guide is that you need more than one or two paragraphs per page of type. And how much is too much? There is no simple answer, and paragraphing conventions differ depending on the task and genre. For example, online writing typically requires shorter paragraphs, with multiple short paragraphs on one screen.

It's best to deal with paragraphs as part of the revision step in the writing process. Find places where the information shifts in focus, and put paragraph breaks in those places. You can do your best to paragraph as you draft, but know that you'll address paragraphing more during the revision process.

Overall Paragraph Structure of an Essay

Often, essays are constructed in a format that looks something like this outline shown below. Depending on the purpose of your writing assignment, this format may vary, as we'll see when we dive further into rhetorical styles. You are probably familiar with this general format for the five-paragraph essay. Our hopes in this course are to build off of this basic structure to write essays that are not too rigid or overly structured according to this outline but are thoughtful and organic. Notice the way that paragraphs separate each topic and provide supporting evidence to the topic sentence.

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
   - paragraph 3
     1. Topic sentence outlining third component
     2. Sentences giving explanations and providing evidence to back topic sentence
     3. Concluding sentence – link to next paragraph
3. Conclusion
   - Summary of the main points of the body
   - Restatement of the main point of view
   - Justification/evaluation (if required by task)

Try It

Can you determine the best order for these paragraphs? What clues can you use to figure out the best arrangement?

https://h5p.cwr.olemiss.edu/h5p/embed/97



Figure 1. Just as architects carefully construct buildings, a well-structured essay will help readers to clearly follow and understand your ideas.

Linking Paragraphs: Transitions

In writing traditional five-paragraph essays, you may have been taught very basic transition sentences: “My first point is,” “In conclusion,” etc.

In college, your professors will expect less formulaic writing. Strong transition, words or phrases that indicate linkages in ideas, are the key to taking your writing to the next level and moving from the formulaic to the organic.

When writing your argument, you need to lead your readers from one idea to the next, showing how those ideas are logically linked. Transition words and phrases help you keep your paragraphs and groups of paragraphs logically connected for a reader.

Below are some examples of transition words to help as you transition both within paragraphs and from one paragraph to the next.

Transition Word / Phrase:	**Shows:**
and, also, again	More of the same type of information is coming; information expands on the same general idea.
but, or, however, in contrast	Different information is coming, information that may counteract what was just said.
as a result, consequently, therefore	Information that is coming is a logical outgrowth of the ideas just presented.
for example, to illustrate	The information coming will present a specific instance, or present a concrete example of an abstract idea.
particularly important, note that	The information coming emphasizes the importance of an idea.
in conclusion	The writing is ending.

We divide these transitions into four categories based on what kind of transition you want to make.

Transition Words and Phrases

https://h5p.cwr.olemiss.edu/h5p/embed/4

Making Connections

In general, if you feel your readers may have a hard time making connections, providing transition words (e.g., “due to” or “on the other hand”) can help lead them. Transitions between paragraphs may appear at the end of the first paragraph, at the beginning of the second paragraph, or in both places. If the transition introduces new ideas, it usually appears at the beginning of the second paragraph.

Below is a chart of transition words that are useful for linking ideas within a paragraph:

https://h5p.cwr.olemiss.edu/h5p/embed/100

? ? Try It

Select the most appropriate transitions in the following passage:

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/16742

Smoothing Your Writing

From sentence-to-sentence, paragraph-to-paragraph, the ideas should flow into each other smoothly and without interruptions or delays. If someone tells you that your paper sounds choppy or jumps around, you probably have a problem with transitions. Compare these two sentences:

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

The second example has better transitions between ideas and is easier to read. Transitions can make a huge difference in the readability of your writing. If you have to pick one aspect of your writing to focus on during the revision process, consider focusing on adding effective transitions to help your reader follow your thinking.

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3.8: Introductions

Learning Objectives

- Identify successful strategies for writing introductions

Just because the introduction appears first in an essay, doesn't mean it has to be written that way. Good writing is a recursive process and even when a writer does construct an initial introduction at the beginning of the writing process, they will return to it frequently to see how it fits with the rest of the piece. Regardless of when the introduction is composed, it is important to make it a good one because the introduction sets the stage for the rest of the essay.

Introductions

Even though a nearly infinite number of topics and arrangements are possible in English prose, introductions generally follow one of several patterns. If you're writing a children's story, you'd probably start with "once upon a time" or something similar. If you're writing a research article on biomechanical engineering, you'd probably start with a statement about how previous research has examined the problem of loading soldiers with daypacks on various surfaces, including sand, concrete, and railroad ballast. These examples are poles apart, but their introductions share very similar purposes: they orient their imagined readers to the topic, time, and place.

Many students make the mistake of beginning their essays in overwhelmingly broad or obvious terms. For example, a student writing about the politics of same-sex marriage might begin a paper by saying, "People have been falling in love and getting married for thousands of years." A sentence like this simply postpones the real work of an essay by giving its audience information that any reasonable person would already know. Students usually write overly vague introductions because they have been taught to "start broad" and then "narrow their focus." More experienced writers understand that everything in an introduction needs to contribute substantially to their argument.

There is no strict formula for composing an introduction, but effective introductions often do the following:

- Provide background about a topic
- Locate readers in a specific time and/or place
- Start with a compelling quotation or statistic—something concrete
- Include an ethical appeal, with which you (explicitly or implicitly) show that you've researched your topic and are credible
- Articulate a main claim/thesis (but normally after some buildup)
- Layout the stakes for the piece of writing—that is, why the reader should bother reading on

Sample Introductions

Let's look at some examples of introductions:

The introduction below provides background information and a compelling quotation or statistic. In the following example, notice how just a few sentences can offer background and make the thesis of the essay clear:

- In the early twentieth century, there were just 8,000 cars in the United States and only 144 miles of paved roads. In 2005, the Department of Transportation recorded 247,421,120 registered passenger vehicles in the United States and more than 5.7 million miles of paved highway. The automobile has changed our way of life dramatically in the last century.

The next introduction makes an argument about the role of a musical instrument in 245 BCE by locating readers in a specific time and/or place.

- In 246 BCE, Ctesibius of Alexandria invented a musical instrument that would develop into what we know as the organ. Called a hydraulis, it functioned via wind pressure regulated by means of water pressure. The hydraulis became the instrument played at circuses, banquets, and games throughout Mediterranean countries.

Students often want to know how many sentences an introduction should be. There is no magic formula although some writing instructors have particular guidelines or preferences.

The example below is a single sentence introduction that could work as a very short introduction to a brief paper or could be expanded for a longer essay.

- While IQ tests have been used for decades to measure various aspects of intelligence, these tests are not a predictor of success, as many highly intelligent people have low emotional intelligence, the important human mental ability to reason about emotions and to use emotions to enhance thought.

Notice how this brief introduction packs a great deal of information into one sentence (not always a recommended strategy) but still manages to articulate a main claim/thesis (that IQ tests are not a predictor of success) while also explaining how the tests have been used and why they may be misleading.

The longer introduction below moves from the image of a six-year-old playing with Barbies to a strong thesis about the benefits of pageants.

- When most people think of normal activities for a six-year-old girl, they picture a sea full of Barbie dolls, coloring books and dress-up clothes. Popular shows such as “Toddlers and Tiaras,” which revolves around exaggerated filming of child pageantry, show America one narrow view of what the pageant world is all about. The media distorts how society views pageants, but, in fact, pageants can be viewed on the same positive level as other popular competitive sports. Pageants can be beneficial because they give children contestants useful life lessons.

Keep in mind that some of the examples above are too short to function as complete introductions and are offered to help you think about how you might get your introduction *started.*

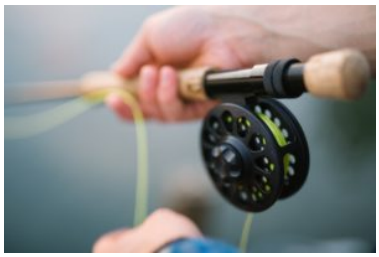


Figure 1. An attention-grabbing opener, sometimes called a hook, is one strategy to use when writing an introduction- similar to how fishermen use hooks to reel in their catch.

Strategies for Good Introductions

Although there is no one “right” way to write your introduction, there are some common introductory strategies that work well. The strategies below are ones you should consider, especially when you are feeling stuck and having a hard time getting started.

Consider opening with an interesting fact, an anecdote, a pithy quotation, an image, or a question to provoke your reader’s interest.

One technique is to provide **information or data** that draw the audience’s attention to the problem or issue. To present her research on electric car usage and ownership, Yuliya Chernova writes:

- Electric cars are still such a novelty that little is known about their owners and how they use the vehicles. But recent research is beginning to unlock some of the mysteries. Plug-in vehicles—those that run entirely on battery power or that combine electric and gasoline drives—represent less than 1% of total U.S. vehicle sales, but in the past three years their numbers have grown rapidly. Sales nearly tripled in 2012 and are on track to nearly double this year, according to the Electric Drive Transportation Association, a trade group. (Chernova, 2013)

Consider employing **anecdotes** that dramatize the problem or issue. Brad Tuttle begins his article, ”The Major Problem with Cheap Electric Cars,” with the following account:

- Mitsubishi is the latest in a long line of automakers to slash prices on an electric car, the unpronounceable, unfortunately named i-MiEV. The model is now the cheapest electric vehicle (EV) on the market, yet it’s still hard to imagine many drivers excitedly running out to buy one. (Tuttle, 2013)

Another strategy is to respond to a **quotation** that addresses the problem or issue in some way. Columnist George F. Will quotes President Barack Obama to begin his own argument about the United States’ policy on Iran’s nuclear program:

- In his disproportionate praise of the six-month agreement with Iran, Barack Obama said: “For the first time in nearly a decade, we have halted progress of the Iranian nuclear program.” But if the program, now several decades old, had really been “halted” shortly after U.S. forces invaded neighboring Iraq, we would not be desperately pursuing agreements to stop it now, as about 10,000 centrifuges spin to enrich uranium. (Will, 2013)

Overall, your focus in an introduction should be on orienting your reader. Notice how the example below catches the reader's attention with references to the game Atari and the television show *Dynasty* and closes with a strong, clear thesis.

- Play Atari on a General Electric brand television set? Maybe watch *Dynasty*? Or read old newspaper articles on microfiche at the library? Twenty-five years ago, the average college student did not have many options when it came to entertainment in the form of technology. Fast-forward to the twenty-first century, and the digital age has digital technology, consumers are bombarded with endless options for how they do most everything-from buying and reading books to taking and developing photographs. In a society that is obsessed with digital means of entertainment, it is easy for the average person to become baffled. Everyone wants the newest and best digital technology, but the choices are many and the specifications are often confusing.

Remember, an effective introduction will capture your reader's attention, provide context for your topic, and transition to your thesis.

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3.9: Conclusions

Learning Objectives

- Identify successful strategies for writing conclusions

Conclusions

Try to avoid beginning your conclusion with the words “In conclusion”! This section will help you consider ways to write so that readers can clearly see you are ending your piece without your having to announce it in such blunt terms.

A satisfying conclusion allows a reader to finish your paper with a clear understanding of the points you made and hopefully even a new perspective on the topic. As the writer, consider who your readers are and the conclusions you want them to reach.

For example, is your reader relatively new to your topic? If so, you may want to restate your main points for emphasis as a way of starting the conclusion. (Don’t literally use the same sentence(s) as in your introduction, but come up with a comparable way of restating your thesis.)

We want to move, however, beyond the traditional re-statement of the thesis that you learned when you were mastering the five-paragraph-essay format. Ideally, in your paper you have just taken your reader through a strong, clear argument in which you have provided evidence for your perspective. You want to conclude by pointing out the importance or worthiness of your topic and argument. You might describe how the world would be different, or people’s lives would be changed, if they ascribed to your perspective, plan, or idea.

Ask yourself the “So what?” question. Your reader has read through your essay and conclusion. Now, what do you want the reader to think?

Considering Conclusions

What is the “So, what?” or take away from this conclusion?

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

Notice how clearly the final call to action here–insisting that consumer think before they buy instead of being driven by advertising—tells the reader (a consumer) what to take away from this discussion of how consumption is shaped and distorted by ever-changing technology, instant gratification, and relentless advertising.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20231

You might also point out the limitations of the present understanding of your topic, suggesting or recommending future action, study, or research that needs to be done. A strong conclusion does not need to suggest only conclusions or answers; you may, at this stage in your writing, suggest new questions or consideration for further discussion. Note, however, that your conclusion is not the place to question or raise counter-points to your argument.



Figure 1. What do you expect the reader to gain from reading your essay? Use the conclusion to issue calls of action, make emotional appeals, and consider further action that may be needed in relation to your topic.

Below is a list that captures these ideas and other potential goals of a conclusion. Conclusions might

- Summarize the argument in fresh language (especially in longer pieces of writing)
- "Bookend" a story or idea that started in the introduction
- Include an emotional appeal, with which you (explicitly or implicitly) connect the "logic" of the argument to a more passionate reason intended to sway the reader
- Issue a call to action
- Make some sort of prediction or assessment about the future of your topic or future research that needs to be done on the topic

Often, a conclusion will work in tandem with an introduction, having some kind of "call back" element to remind your reader of the powerful opening you provided.

Remember that introductions and conclusions are not independent sections of your writing. They should work together and fit with the rest of your paragraphs or sections. For example, a conclusion should pick up from the final body paragraph and feature an effective transition. Likewise, your introduction should set up the direction of your writing and lead nicely into the first body paragraph.

? ? The Declaration of Independence

Consider the "Declaration of Independence" below. Without reading every word of the text, focus on how the introduction and conclusion work together to open and close the piece so strongly.

In Congress, July 4, 1776.

The unanimous Declaration of the thirteen United States of America, When in the Course of human events, it becomes necessary for one people to dissolve the political bands which have connected them with another, and to assume among the powers of the earth, the separate and equal station to which the Laws of Nature and of Nature's God entitle them, a decent respect to the opinions of mankind requires that they should declare the causes which impel them to the separation.

We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness.–That to secure these rights, Governments are instituted among Men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed, –That whenever any Form of Government becomes destructive of these ends, it is the Right of the People to alter or to abolish it, and to institute new Government, laying its foundation on such principles and organizing its powers in such form, as to them shall seem most likely to effect their Safety and Happiness. Prudence, indeed, will dictate that Governments long established should not be changed for light and transient causes; and accordingly all experience hath shewn, that mankind are more disposed to suffer, while evils are sufferable, than to right themselves by abolishing the forms to which they are accustomed. But when a long train of abuses and usurpations, pursuing invariably the same Object evinces a design to reduce them under absolute Despotism, it is their right, it is their duty, to throw off such Government, and to provide new Guards for their future security.–Such has been the patient sufferance of these Colonies; and such is now the necessity which constrains them to alter their former Systems of Government. The history of the present King of Great Britain is a history of repeated injuries and usurpations, all having in direct object the establishment of an absolute Tyranny over these States. To prove this, let Facts be submitted to a candid world.

- He has refused his Assent to Laws, the most wholesome and necessary for the public good.
- He has forbidden his Governors to pass Laws of immediate and pressing importance, unless suspended in their operation till his Assent should be obtained; and when so suspended, he has utterly neglected to attend to them.

- He has refused to pass other Laws for the accommodation of large districts of people, unless those people would relinquish the right of Representation in the Legislature, a right inestimable to them and formidable to tyrants only.
- He has called together legislative bodies at places unusual, uncomfortable, and distant from the depository of their public Records, for the sole purpose of fatiguing them into compliance with his measures.
- He has dissolved Representative Houses repeatedly, for opposing with manly firmness his invasions on the rights of the people.
- He has refused for a long time, after such dissolutions, to cause others to be elected; whereby the Legislative powers, incapable of Annihilation, have returned to the People at large for their exercise; the State remaining in the mean time exposed to all the dangers of invasion from without, and convulsions within.
- He has endeavoured to prevent the population of these States; for that purpose obstructing the Laws for Naturalization of Foreigners; refusing to pass others to encourage their migrations hither, and raising the conditions of new Appropriations of Lands.
- He has obstructed the Administration of Justice, by refusing his Assent to Laws for establishing Judiciary powers.
- He has made Judges dependent on his Will alone, for the tenure of their offices, and the amount and payment of their salaries.
- He has erected a multitude of New Offices, and sent hither swarms of Officers to harrass our people, and eat out their substance.
- He has kept among us, in times of peace, Standing Armies without the Consent of our legislatures.
- He has affected to render the Military independent of and superior to the Civil power.
- He has combined with others to subject us to a jurisdiction foreign to our constitution, and unacknowledged by our laws; giving his Assent to their Acts of pretended Legislation:
    - For Quartering large bodies of armed troops among us:
    - For protecting them, by a mock Trial, from punishment for any Murders which they should commit on the Inhabitants of these States:
    - For cutting off our Trade with all parts of the world:
    - For imposing Taxes on us without our Consent:
    - For depriving us in many cases, of the benefits of Trial by Jury:
    - For transporting us beyond Seas to be tried for pretended offences
    - For abolishing the free System of English Laws in a neighbouring Province, establishing therein an Arbitrary government, and enlarging its Boundaries so as to render it at once an example and fit instrument for introducing the same absolute rule into these Colonies:
    - For taking away our Charters, abolishing our most valuable Laws, and altering fundamentally the Forms of our Governments:
    - For suspending our own Legislatures, and declaring themselves invested with power to legislate for us in all cases whatsoever.
- He has abdicated Government here, by declaring us out of his Protection and waging War against us.
- He has plundered our seas, ravaged our Coasts, burnt our towns, and destroyed the lives of our people.
- He is at this time transporting large Armies of foreign Mercenaries to compleat the works of death, desolation and tyranny, already begun with circumstances of Cruelty & perfidy scarcely paralleled in the most barbarous ages, and totally unworthy the Head of a civilized nation.
- He has constrained our fellow Citizens taken Captive on the high Seas to bear Arms against their Country, to become the executioners of their friends and Brethren, or to fall themselves by their Hands.
- He has excited domestic insurrections amongst us, and has endeavoured to bring on the inhabitants of our frontiers, the merciless Indian Savages, whose known rule of warfare, is an undistinguished destruction of all ages, sexes and conditions.

In every stage of these Oppressions We have Petitioned for Redress in the most humble terms: Our repeated Petitions have been answered only by repeated injury. A Prince whose character is thus marked by every act which may define a Tyrant, is unfit to be the ruler of a free people.

Nor have We been wanting in attentions to our British brethren. We have warned them from time to time of attempts by their legislature to extend an unwarrantable jurisdiction over us. We have reminded them of the circumstances of our emigration and settlement here. We have appealed to their native justice and magnanimity, and we have conjured them by the ties of our common kindred to disavow these usurpations, which, would inevitably interrupt our connections and correspondence. They

too have been deaf to the voice of justice and of consanguinity. We must, therefore, acquiesce in the necessity, which denounces our Separation, and hold them, as we hold the rest of mankind, Enemies in War, in Peace Friends.

We, therefore, the Representatives of the United States of America, in General Congress, Assembled, appealing to the Supreme Judge of the world for the rectitude of our intentions, do, in the Name, and by Authority of the good People of these Colonies, solemnly publish and declare, That these United Colonies are, and of Right ought to be Free and Independent States; that they are Absolved from all Allegiance to the British Crown, and that all political connection between them and the State of Great Britain, is and ought to be totally dissolved; and that as Free and Independent States, they have full Power to levy War, conclude Peace, contract Alliances, establish Commerce, and to do all other Acts and Things which Independent States may of right do. And for the support of this Declaration, with a firm reliance on the protection of divine Providence, we mutually pledge to each other our Lives, our Fortunes and our sacred Honor.

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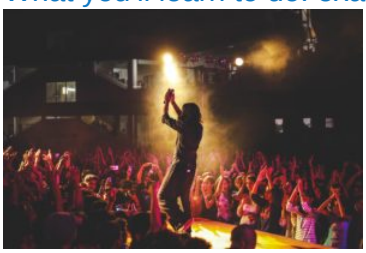
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3.10: Introduction to Audience Awareness

What you'll learn to do: examine how to analyze and appeal to your audience in your writing



Who is the audience for your writing? Often, in school, students think of the teacher as their audience. And students who are good at pleasing the teacher sometimes do well at their writing because they can "read" this audience of one.

In college and in the real world writing you do beyond college, reading your audience is critical to effective writing. Authors who know their intended audience, and who keep in mind possible unintended audiences, compose essays and arguments that are more effective at provoking a response, whether that response is simply creating agreement with the author's position or spurring the reader to take action.

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3.11: Audience Analysis

Learning Objective

- Describe strategies for analyzing the audience

Writing in college is all about your audience, which means you'll need to spend some time getting to know your audience. This is particularly true for argumentative writing, where you are writing to persuade someone about a potentially controversial topic on which they might already have a strong opinion. Knowing the ideas and potential biases of your audience is key to making your writing effective.

This doesn't mean you have to hang out with the people for whom you are writing. It does mean you need to do some thinking and possibly some researching about who your audience is, what that audience knows about your topic or issue, and what biases or opinions that audience may already have.

Let's look at an example. Let's say you have decided to write about reducing the costs of textbooks at your college. You first have to decide who you need to convince. Since most of your fellow college students would agree with you on an issue like this, if you're going to make a difference, you would need to target a different audience—perhaps college administrators. A good first step would be to head to the web to see what college administrators think and have written about this issue. Then, as a second step, if you could interview a college administrator on your campus, you would have even more information.

Try It

Clementa Carlos Pinckney was a Democratic senator in the South Carolina legislature. He represented the 45th District from 2000 until his death. From 1997 through 2000, he was a member of the South Carolina House of Representatives.

In the video below, President Obama's addresses mourners gathered in Charleston, South Carolina, to honor Reverend Pinckney following his death. While Obama's address was to those in attendance, he is clearly aware of and speaking to a national audience.

Skim through the following video (or read the transcript) to begin thinking about intended and unintended audiences. It's easier to think about audiences for a public speech than it is for an essay, but the same rhetorical principles of audience analysis apply.

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

You can view the transcript for "The President Honors the Life of Reverend Clementa Pinckney" here (opens in new window).

Think about the video or the transcript as you answer the practice questions below.

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...sessments/5176

Now you know a little bit about the people to whom President Obama was speaking and others whom he did not address or consider directly but who may have heard or read his speech nonetheless. The president had an immediate purpose to eulogize Reverend Pinckney for an audience of mourners, but he was also speaking to a more general audience of U.S. citizens concerned about racism, gun violence, civil rights, and inequality. The claims and evidence from his speech may, therefore, be relevant to other audiences who are concerned about similar issues and share some of the same ideas and values.

Watch It

This presentation explains important components to consider when creating an argument for your audience.

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Audience Awareness

Even if you aren't planning to become a politician, you have to think about the audience for everything you say and do. This is even more important with social media. Some of the best examples of not thinking about unintended audiences or failing to build common ground come from social media. Think about the following fake social media post in terms of audience and common ground:



Figure 2. Louise was not aware of her audience when making this social media post bashing her employer.

What's wrong here? Louise works at Generic Store and makes a social media post speaking poorly of her employer and admitting to criminal behavior. To add to that, she tags the store's social media account in the post. Obviously, Louise is not considering unintended audiences. She may have meant to share her post only with "Badrhetoricgirl" and "nocommonground1," but at least sixteen others have seen and responded to her post. It's very likely that her employer would come across this post and take disciplinary action against Louise.

This example may seem ridiculous: maybe you are already wise to social media privacy settings, but this same kind of mistake takes place frequently in student writing and speaking.

? ? Try It

Check your understanding of audience awareness in the following interactive.

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3.12: Tone, Language, and Appeal

Learning Objectives

- Explore strategies for connecting with an audience through effective tone, language, and rhetorical appeals

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

Tone

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

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

Student Example

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

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

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



Figure 1. Taking into account the age group of your audience is one factor to consider when evaluating the tone of your essay.

Tone reveals the attitude of the writer, which can range from friendly to angry to cold to intimate.

Notice the different tones in the two passages below:

Boss 1:
It has come to my attention that computers are not being turned off at the end of the workday. This is a possible security breach, as well as a waste of electricity, and failure to shut down electronic equipment will not be tolerated. Please ensure that your computers are off before you leave each night or there will be consequences for individuals who do not comply.

Boss 2:
Hello, everyone! I know that here at Plants, Inc., we're all committed to a green work environment. So I'm asking for your help with respect to computers. We've seen a number of computers inadvertently left on in the evenings. I want to ask for your cooperation in turning off your computer before you leave, which helps conserve electricity. Thanks for your help!

Academic Language

When writing a research paper and other academic writing (what is called academic discourse) you'll want to use what is called the academic voice, which is meant to sound objective, authoritative, and reasonable. While a research paper will be based on your

opinion on a topic, it will be an opinion based on evidence (from your research) and one that has been argued in a rational manner, using standard, formal language, in your paper.

You use academic language because your opinion is based on thinking; in your writing assignments, you're revealing your thought process to your reader. Because you'll be appealing to reason, you want to use the language of one intellectual talking to another intellectual.

? ? Tips for Appropriate Academic Language

1. Be clear.

Instead of: The utilization of teams as a way of optimizing our capacity to meet and prioritize our goals will impact the productivity of the company.

Write: Teams will execute the goals and enhance the company's output.

2. When using the academic voice you won't *usually* use first personal pronouns.

Instead of: I think anyone who becomes a parent should have to take a parenting class.

Write: Parenting classes should be mandatory for any biological or adoptive parents.

3. Avoid using second-person pronouns.

Instead of: When you read "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," you will realize that King was writing to people besides the ministers who criticized him.

Write: Upon reading "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," readers will note that King was addressing a wider audience than the clergy who condemned his actions.

4. Avoid contractions in more formal writing.

Instead of: It shouldn't be difficult to record what we feel, but many of us just can't get our feelings down on paper.

Write: It should not be difficult to record feelings, but many people are unable to do so.

5. Avoid informal language

Instead of: It's obvious that she's a feminist because she makes a big deal about women who were into the suffrage movement.

Write: Because of her focus on the suffragists, one can assume she is a feminist.

6. Abbreviations for common terms should not be used in academic writing

Instead of: Smith was declared the official winner at the P.O. last Mon. on Jan. 6th.

Write: Smith was declared the official winner at the post office last Monday, on January 6.

7. **Use gender-inclusive language** and gender-neutral pronouns, when appropriate. So instead of "he or she" and "his or her," use "they, them, or their."

Instead of: Every student should turn *his or her* paper into the office before noon.

Write: Students should turn in *their* papers to the office before noon.

Although using the singular form of "they" was previously frowned upon in academic writing, it is now acceptable. For example, male pronouns were often used to refer to an unknown someone ("to each *his* own"), or just female pronouns ("to each *her* own"), but those show gender bias. Instead, "to each their own" is appropriate.

Instead of: “That driver needs to stay in his lane. He’s being so aggressive!”

Write: “That driver needs to stay in their lane. They’re being so aggressive!”

? ? Try It

https://h5p.cwr.olemiss.edu/h5p/embed/93

https://h5p.cwr.olemiss.edu/h5p/embed/92

Language

Language is closely related to tone. In fact, if you misjudge the appropriate language for your audience, your tone will suffer, too. If you are writing an article for a scientific journal, obviously you would want to make sure to use the technical language appropriate to your subject. Of course, if you write a text message to a friend, your language should be informal, non-technical, and conversational!

The differences in the kind of language that we use and that is appropriate and correct depends on our understanding of the different rhetorical contexts. Language use depends on **discourse communities** (the discourse community of a scientific journal versus the discourse community of text messages among friends). Imagine that you work in a car assembly plant. You know your job and enough about the process of car assembly in general to talk to anybody else in the plant about their jobs, as well. You probably have a specialized vocabulary that describes your work process. Now, imagine that you walk into an airplane manufacturing plant. Would you be able to do the same thing? Sure, many of the processes are the same, and you might be able to talk to the workers about the things you have in common. But the vocabulary is different. Workers in the airplane factory talk about different things and have different common knowledge than you do. Each factory is a **discourse community**. When you write, you are participating in a discourse community, and you should use language that matches the expectations of the audience.

Rhetorical Appeals

Writers use tone and language to appeal and connect with an audience. To be persuasive, they also use rhetorical appeals. We talked earlier about using logos, pathos, and ethos to determine what kind of evidence might be most effective. **Logos** is about appealing to your audience’s logical side; **pathos** is about appealing to their emotions; **ethos** is about using credibility or character to underscore the appeal to your audience.

? ? Try It

Match each rhetorical appeal to its definition in the practice box below:

https://h5p.cwr.olemiss.edu/h5p/embed/17

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

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

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

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

An audience of climate change denialist politicians would generally be very hostile to what you have to say. Playing up your credibility (ethos) may not be very helpful because they already reject the field in which your credibility is rooted. You have to rely heavily on facts (logos) with this audience and demonstrate that your facts are impossible to deny. You also have to rely on emotion

(pathos) but in a different way than you do with the kindergarteners. This hostile audience is already reacting to you with emotion, so it's important for you to receive that emotional energy and make the best of it.

Glossary

ethos: appealing to an audience through credibility or character

logos: appealing to an audience through logic

pathos: appealing to emotions

tone: tone is conveyed through word choice and style; in academic writing, we typically use formal language choices and a serious style to give authority and credibility to our writing; a more informal, conversation tone (and choice of words and style) would be appropriate in interactions with friends, for example

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3.13: Introduction to Writing Strong Sentences

What you'll learn to do: learn how to write strong, effective sentences



We've learned about thesis statements, paragraphs, introductions, and conclusions. We discussed how to think about your audience and how to use language effectively. But the building block of your writing is the sentence. So in this section, we're going to spend a little time reviewing techniques for writing powerful sentences. With a little practice, these can become a natural part of your writing process. They can also be an effective part of your revising process, as you work to ensure every sentence you write is as powerful as it can be in communicating your ideas to your reader.

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3.14: Sentence Construction

Learning Objectives

- Explain techniques for writing effective sentences

So far we have discussed organizational practices for strong writing and the importance of keeping the audience in mind. We've also analyzed appropriate tone and language choices for academic discourse. Now, let's talk about the actual writing itself.

Two key characteristics of effective academic writing are that it is precise and concise. This precision and concision must be evident at all levels, from the overall document, to paragraphing, to sentence structure to word choice, and even to punctuation. Every word or phrase should have a distinct and useful purpose.

Write Concise Sentences

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

But wait—don't you need to inflate your text so you can meet the minimum word count? Wouldn't it be better to use "due to the fact that" for "because" and "in addition to" for "and," since these phrases use far more words? No! Any experienced reader will instantly see through these efforts and will likely become irritated by the resulting "flabby" prose. If you are having trouble meeting the minimum word count, a far better solution is to add more examples, details, quotations, or perspectives.

When you are succinct in your writing, you want to avoid extra, unnecessary words. For example, you don't need to talk about the "positive benefits" of a program in your community, because the word "benefits" already implies that it is positive. Some examples of these redundant phrases are listed below.

Redundancies		
combine/join together	fill completely	unite as one
finish entirely	refer/return/revert back to	emphasize/stress strongly
examine (closely)	suddenly interrupt	better/further enhance
eventually evolve over time	strictly forbid	rely/depend heavily
plan ahead	harshly condemn	protest against
completely surround on all sides	estimate/approximate roughly	gather/assemble together
clearly articulate	carefully consider	successfully prove
future plan	mutual agreement	years of age
in actual fact	positive benefits	end result/product

Write Clear Sentences

Students sometimes worry that their sentences don't sound smart enough and they feel like they need to use the thesaurus to find fancy words instead of using their natural vocabulary. Fancy words and complicated sentences are not always better. Clear sentences are strong sentences.

Compare these two sentences (the first is taken from President John F. Kennedy's inaugural address):

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

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

Clear writing involves knowing what you want to say before you say it. So a lack of clarity often comes from unclear thinking or poor planning. This, unfortunately, leads to confused or annoyed readers. For many of us, our ideas become more clear as we draft our essays. That's why the revision process is so important. As you clarify your ideas, you need to ensure that each sentence conveys one idea, and that each paragraph thoroughly develops one unified concept.

Avoid vague and unnecessary words

Are you **very** hungry? Or are you so hungry you could eat out the entire refrigerator? Is your English class **really** great? Or does your English class make you feel as if you are the most creative writer and the smartest thinker, lucky enough to be studying in class full of ambitious and engaged peers? Words like *very* and *really* don't say much. Instead of using stock or clichéd phrases, try to be more specific about what you mean. Below are some examples of overused intensifiers and clichés you should be wary of.

Overused Intensifiers					
absolutely	actually	assuredly	certainly	clearly	completely
considerably	definitely	effectively	extremely	fundamentally	drastically
highly	in fact	incredibly	inevitably	indeed	interestingly
markedly	naturally	of course	particularly	significantly	surely
totally	utterly	very	really	remarkably	tremendously

Clichés	**Alternatives**
as plain as day	plainly, obvious, clear
ballpark figure	about, approximately
few and far between	rare, infrequent
needless to say	of course, obviously
last but not least	finally, lastly
as far as ___ is concerned	according to

Vary the Length of your Sentences

Your sentences should vary in length (short sentence). Avoid having too many long sentences because they take longer to read and are often more complex (longer sentence). Reserve the short sentences for main points and use longer sentences for supporting points that clarify or explain cause and effect relationships (longer sentence). If you feel the sentence is too long, break it into two sentences (medium sentence). You do not want your reader to have to read a sentence twice to understand it (short sentence). (Note: you'll learn more in a later module about using colons and semi-colons to structure your complicated and longer sentences so that don't get out of control, grammatically.)

Name the People

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

- **Without people:** A citywide ban on indoor smoking in Duluth originally caused a marked drop in bar patronage.
- **With people:** When the Duluth City Council passed a citywide ban on indoor smoking, many people stopped going to bars.

Use Active Verbs

Consider replacing "be-verbs" (is, am, are, was, were, be, has/have been) with active verbs that allow you to compose powerful sentences shaped around action. Below the italics are the same sentences that have been transformed with active verbs.

- **To be**: The sharp rise in fuel prices **is** a serious challenge to trucking firms. It makes it hard for them to provide timely service to customers and to meet payroll expenses.
- **Active**: Sharply rising fuel prices ***challenge*** trucking firms by causing delays in customer service and payroll.
- **To be***:* Primary causes of the rise in fuel prices **are** an issue of confusion for many citizens. They don't know how to fight the rise because they don't know its cause.
- **Active**: Primary causes of rising fuel prices ***elude*** many citizens, making them unaware of how to fight the increase.

✔ ✔ Watch It

Watch this video for tips and more examples of how to avoid wordy or redundant writing.

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

You can view the transcript for "Avoiding Wordiness and Redundancy" here (opens in new window).

Use Parallel Structure Effectively

Simply put, parallellism is the practice of using the same patterns in words and structures in order to provide balance to sentences and paragraphs.

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.

Was the second sentence a smoother read than the first? The second sentence uses parallelism—all three verbs are gerunds (running, swimming, biking) —whereas in the first sentence two are gerunds (running and biking) and one is an infinitive (to swim). When reading the first sentence, it's easy to trip up over the mismatching items. Using strong parallel structure improves writing style and readability and makes sentences easier to process.

Compare the following examples:

- 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: "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 parallel examples sound much better to your ears.

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.

? ? Try It

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

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

2. The influence of genetics on human behavior has been shown through studies of twins who were separated at birth. Not only do these sets of individuals share many physical characteristics, but they also tend to have the same sort of interests and biases and utilize similar mental processes.
3. *Nocturne in Black and Gold (The Falling Rocket)* by James Abbott McNeil Whistler is very emblematic of the impressionist movement: its dark colors, contrast, and lack of definite form reflect the attitudes of the day.

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1. The first two sentences that identify behaviors of low self-esteem both start with the construction adjective + *individuals* + *may* verb. Changing the third sentence to match this construction will create a stronger introduction to the paper:
   - Low self-esteem can manifest itself in various behaviors. Some individuals may become paralyzed at the prospect of making a decision. Other individuals may bend their wills to others' in order to keep the peace. Yet other individuals may retreat from society as a whole and become isolated.
2. If you wanted to make the whole sentence more parallel, you may want to adjust the sentence to match the structure of the phrase "Not only do these sets of individuals share many physical characteristics":
   - Not only do these sets of individuals share many physical characteristics, but they also share similar interests, biases, and mental processes.
3. The items in "its dark colors, contrast, and lack of definite form" don't quite match up. While they are all nouns, each item has a different structure (adjective noun, noun, noun + *of* + adjective noun). Here are a couple suggestions for more parallel items:
   - Its depth of color, intensity of contrast, and lack of form reflect the attitudes of the day.
   - Its dark colors, intense contrast, and lax forms reflect the attitudes of the day.

[/hidden-answer]

Effective Use of Parallelism and Repetition

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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3.15: Using the Active Voice

Learning Objectives

- Use active voice effectively

Use Active Voice

Just as we want to use active verbs in writing, it is also best to write in the active voice. The active voice emphasizes the person/thing doing the action in a sentence. For example, *The outfielder throws the ball*. The subject, "outfielder" actively performs the action of the verb "throw." The passive voice emphasizes the recipient of the action. In other words, something is being done to something by somebody: *The ball was thrown (by the outfielder)*. While the passive voice has a place, particularly in some subjects like the sciences and social sciences, its overuse can result in writing that is wordy, vague, and stuffy. When possible, use the active voice to convey who or what performs the action of the verb.

Active and Passive Voices

In the simplest terms, an active voice sentence is written in the form of "A does B." (For example, "Carmen sings the song.") A passive voice sentence is written in the form of "B is done by A." (For example, "The song is sung by Carmen.") Both constructions are grammatically correct, but active voice is a more powerful kind of sentence construction for most kinds of writing. Let's look at a couple more examples of the passive voice:

- I have been hit!
- 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. If these sentences used an active voice, they could read:

- The paintball hit me in the arm!
- The aggressive truck hit the car from behind.

Let's look at a few more examples.

- Passive: Changes in gun laws were made as a result of student protests in Florida.
- Active: The Parkland student protests created changes in Florida gun laws.
- Passive: Studying can improve your grades.
- Active: Students who study hard typically earn strong grades.

Let's look at a few more examples.

> Amy **grabbed** the zombie survival guide.

> The zombie survival guide **was grabbed** by Amy.

Can you see how these sentences are different?

In the first sentence, the verb **grabbed** is active because its subject, **Amy** is the doer or agent. Amy did the grabbing.

In the second sentence, **was grabbed** is passive because it describes an action done to its subject, **guide**. The doer of the action, Amy, is now the object of the preposition **by**. Amy comes last here, almost as if she is an afterthought instead of the important doer of the grabbing or agent of the action.

We want to use active verbs whenever possible as they allow us to express ourselves clearly, succinctly, and strongly. Active verbs imply that we're confident with what we're saying; we believe in our words. Looking back at the two sentences, we can see that the first one uses fewer words and offers no ambiguity about who did the action. The latter sentence is wordy and does not directly address Amy.

TIP! A little strategy you can use to test to see if you're using passive voice is to see if you can add "**by zombies"** after the verb. If you can, then you likely have passive voice and may want to restructure your sentence. In the example above, you could certainly say, "**was grabbed by zombies**," so you know this is passive voice. Or, changes in gun laws were made "by

zombies" as a result of student protests in Florida (again, passive voice).

? ? Try It

Are the following sentences in the active or passive voice? How can you tell?

1. The samples were prepared in a clean room before being sent out for further examination.
2. Karen was dancing with Joshua when she suddenly realized she needed to leave.
3. Carlos was a very serious scientist with unique interests.

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[reveal-answer q="206851"]Show Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="206851"]

1. 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.
2. 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.
3. 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*.

[/hidden-answer]



Figure 1. Be careful when using the passive voice- it can sometimes create confusing sentences that are difficult for the reader to follow.

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 taxes will be collected according to the local rules and regulations.
  - *Collected by whom though?*
- Active: The town will collect the taxes according to the local rules and regulations.

It's this ability to cover the actor or agent of the sentence that makes the passive voice a favorite of people in authority, such as politicians, who want to obscure their agency (as if the town wasn't responsible for collecting the taxes). At any rate, you can see how the passive voice can cause wordiness, indirectness, and comprehension problems.

Note that passive voice is sometimes appropriate to use, particularly in the sciences when the doer of the task is unimportant. For example, in a science lab, the passive voice makes sense when writing:

- Photomicrographs were taken to facilitate easy comparison of the samples.

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. For most of your academic writing, however, your instructors will recommend the active voice.

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.

? ? Try It

Convert these passive voice sentences into the active voice. Why is the active voice a better choice for each of these sentences?

1. The process, which was essential for the experiment's success, was completed by Enzo.
2. The cake that I worked on all day long is being eaten by Justin.
3. After the pattern has been applied to the fabric, work on the embroidery can be started.

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[hidden-answer a="529218"]

1. Enzo completed the process, which was essential for the experiment's success.
   - In the passive sentence, the *which*-clause makes the subject of the sentence excessively long. By converting the sentence to the active voice, the clause is moved to the predicate, which makes the sentence easier to understand.
2. Justin is eating the cake that I worked on all day long.
   - The active voice works better in this sentence for the same reasons as sentence one. It is also likely that you would want to put emphasis on Justin in this sentence. After all, he's doing something that is (most likely) inconsiderate.
3. After you apply the pattern to the fabric, you can start working on the embroidery.
   - This sentence is likely found in a set of instructions, which are usually written directly to the reader. Addressing "you" and avoiding the passive voice will make the instructions feel more natural and accessible.

[/hidden-answer]

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3.16: Putting It Together- Writing Essentials

Earlier in your education, you may have used certain strategies and formulas to shape your writing. You may have been told that you should never use "I" or that you should begin your conclusion with "In conclusion." Now that you are in college, your professors will expect both a higher level of writing and a greater variety of types of writing from you. Some of the writing tasks you will take on will be formal, academic writing; others may be less traditional, including writing reflections, discussion forum postings, and blog posts. The range of writing tasks you will face in college should prepare you for the different kinds of writing situations you may face in the world outside of college: from cover letters and memos to professional websites and blogs, and beyond. 

In college, you will be expected to:

- compose nuanced, original theses that are discovered and refined throughout the writing process.
- use key or topic sentences to establish a paragraph's main point and situate the paragraph within the overall sequence of the argument.
- use evidence to develop ideas and shape effective paragraphs.
- use transitions to guide readers from paragraph to paragraph and idea to idea.
- use introductions to orient readers to the topic.
- use conclusions to provide fresh perspectives or calls to action.
- consider audience and rhetoric context to influence choices of tone, language, and rhetorical appeal.
- use effective sentences to communicate clearly and concisely.

Regardless of the task, it is critical for you to consider the rhetorical situation you face. Who is your audience and how does that influence the approach you take in your writing? What are the expectations of the writing task? How can you use language, evidence, strong organization, and effective sentences to express your ideas powerfully and efficiently?

These are the kinds of questions writers in and out of college ask themselves before each and every writing task. A good writer never stops asking these questions!

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3.17: Discussion- Thesis Statements and Supporting Claims Assignment

Select a reading from The Conversation website. Use the categories at the top of the page or the search bar to find something that sounds interesting to you. Include the URL to the website in your post.

First, read through the article and get a feel for what it's about. Write a sentence about the main message of the article. After writing this sentence, go back to the text. Is there a sentence in the text that says something very similar to what you wrote down? This is likely the thesis statement.

STEP 1: Identify this reading's thesis. Is it an explicit or implicit thesis? If it's explicit, include the sentence from the text as a quote that you identify as the thesis. If it's implicit, describe why you feel the author chose not to put an explicit thesis in the work. Describe your thoughts about it—is it a good thesis statement?

STEP 2: Next, write a paragraph that describes how the thesis relates to the topic sentences of at least two of the paragraphs. Include 2 topic sentences as quotes, and explain each's relationship to the thesis.

STEP 3: Write a paragraph that identifies the type of support that each paragraph from the reading uses to reinforce each of those 2 topic sentences. Are they narrative or personal examples? Are they facts or statistics? Are they quotes or paraphrases from research materials? What makes them effective or ineffective?

STEP 4: Respond in a separate post to at least one classmate (in at least 75 words). Explicitly address their examples and try to extend, complicate, or redirect their points in a substantive, knowledge-demonstrating way. Be sure to cite relevant concepts and key terms from the module.

Rubric

Sample Grading Rubric

Criteria	Proficient	Developing	Not Evident	Points
Thesis	Correctly identifies the thesis statement, identifies if it is explicit or implicit, and analyzes its effectiveness	Does not correctly identify or describe the thesis statement	Does not attempt to find the thesis statement	__/5
Topic Sentences	Identifies at least two topic sentences from the essay and explains how they connect to the overall thesis.	Identifies just one topic sentence or incorrectly finds topic sentences; does not connect topic sentences to thesis	Missing topic sentences and explanation	__/5
Support	Includes an analysis of the claims that support the topic sentences in a paragraph. Includes specific examples of types of evidence and a discussion of what makes them effective.	Does not analyze the claims made in a paragraph or connect how the claims support the topic sentences.	Missing explanation of claims	__/5
Discussion	Posts the article URL and comments inside the discussion forum, then returns to discussion to comment in a substantive way on at least one other post in at least 75 words.	Posts discussion and offers incomplete response to classmate.	Does not comment on another post.	__/5

Total:	__/20

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3.18: Discussion- Take a Stance

In this module, you learned about the basics of essay-writing—finding thesis statements, organizing paragraphs, and supporting claims. At first, it may feel awkward to organize your thoughts into an essay, but organizing your thoughts to make an argument is something you do in regular conversations all the time. Think about the last heated discussion you were in—how did you defend your point of view? Did you include supporting claims or evidence? Did you mostly rely on emotional appeals (ethos), logical appeals (logos), or something else?

In this course, you will get practice taking a stance on an issue and defending your point of view. Let's practice that now in the following discussion assignment.

STEP 1: Pick **ONE** of the following questions to post about. Click on the link and read all of the corresponding background information about it from *The New York Times*, including the questions at the bottom of the page.

1. Should Kids Be Social Media Influencers?
2. Should Texting While Driving Be Treated Like Drunken Driving?

STEP 2: Post your reply (in at least 250 words) in the discussion forum. Your response should include a clear stance on the issue with supporting evidence as to why you feel the way you do. Show that you can think critically on the topic by integrating your own thoughts, analysis, or experiences.

STEP 3: Respond in two separate posts to two classmates (in at least 75 words). Explicitly address their responses and try to extend, complicate, or redirect their points in a substantive, knowledge-demonstrating way.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

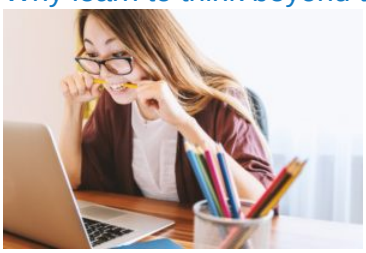
4: Writing in College

4.1: Why It Matters- Writing in College
4.2: Introduction to Writing in College
4.3: Writing Assignments
4.4: Organically Structured Essays
4.5: Introduction to Writing Essays
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4.1: Why It Matters- Writing in College

Why learn to think beyond the five-paragraph essay?



College writing is different from high school writing. College professors view you as independent scholars and imagine you writing with a genuine, driving interest in tackling complex questions. They envision you approaching an assignment without a pre-existing bias. They expect you to look deep into the evidence, consider the broader scholarly conversation about the issues, and work out an original, insightful argument.

This module will introduce you to various rhetorical styles, or patterns of writing, that will set you up for success, no matter the writing assignment. Knowing how to approach these assignments and learning some tips for effective essay-writing will set up the foundation for you to go beyond a contrived or formulaic response to a writing prompt. Writing a paper isn't about getting the "right answer" and adhering to basic conventions; it's about joining an academic conversation with something original to say and contribute, borne of rigorous thought.

Sometimes a college writing assignment doesn't even look like a "writing" assignment at all—it could be a presentation, a video report, or even a blog post. While these types of multimodal assignments may not require a traditional five-paragraph essay, they still necessitate critical thinking and writing skills and can be approached the same way as you would other written assignments.

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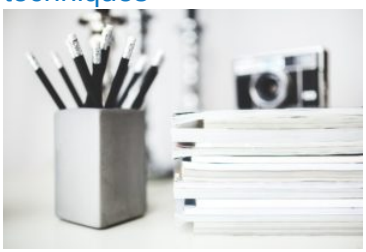
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4.2: Introduction to Writing in College

What you'll learn to do: explain common college-level writing assignments and effective writing techniques



Effective writing is essential to your success in college. In this section, you'll learn about common writing assignments and about writing organically. High school writing often emphasizes formulaic structure, such as the five-paragraph theme or the three-point essay. Those structures are appropriate as an introduction to academic writing because they teach writers to make a point and use evidence to support it in an organized way. Those structures are especially useful when responding to standardized tests under time pressure. In college, though, you'll be writing in a wide variety of disciplines for many different purposes. You'll need to move beyond formulaic structures and learn how to develop and organize your ideas more organically. So, what's the difference between formulaic and organic structure? Read on to find out.

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4.3: Writing Assignments

Learning Objectives

- Describe common types and expectations of writing tasks given in a college class



Figure 1. All college classes require some form of writing. Investing some time in refining your writing skills so that you are a more confident, skilled, and efficient writer will pay dividends in the long run.

What to Do With Writing 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. Others are more open-ended, leaving you to determine the best path toward completing 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.

Writing in college is usually a 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, defined-topic assignments, and undefined-topic assignments.

Link to Learning

This Assignment Calculator can help you plan ahead for your writing assignment. Just plug in the date you plan to get started and the date it is due, and it will help break it down into manageable chunks.

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.

? ? Writing Effective 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.

Understanding the Assignment and Getting Started

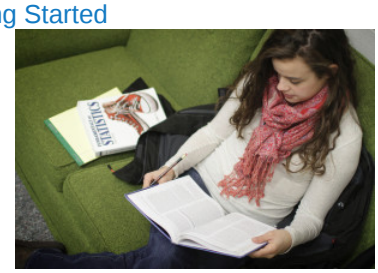


Figure 2. Many writing assignments will have a specific prompt that sends you first to your textbook, and then to outside resources to gather information.

Often, the handout or other written text explaining the assignment—what professors call the **assignment prompt**—will explain the purpose of the assignment and the required parameters (length, number and type of sources, referencing style, etc.).

Also, don't forget to check the rubric, if there is one, to understand how your writing will be assessed. After analyzing the prompt and the rubric, you should have a better sense of what kind of writing you are expected to produce.

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! In a situation like that, consider the following 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.

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. Professors generally love questions, so don't be afraid to ask. 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.

Defined-Topic Assignments

Many writing tasks will ask you to address a particular topic or a narrow set of topic options. Defined-topic writing assignments are used primarily to identify your familiarity with the subject matter. (Discuss the use of dialect in *Their Eyes Were Watching God*, for example.)

Remember, even when you're asked to "show how" or "illustrate," you're still being asked to make an argument. You must shape and focus your 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.

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").

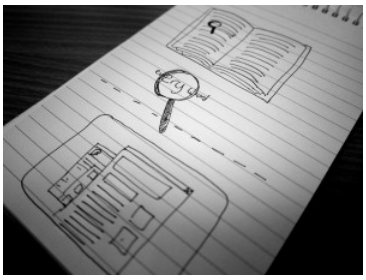


Figure 3. For open-ended assignments, it's best to pick something that interests you personally.

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" or that you think you already know a lot about —those almost always turn out to be false assumptions. Instead, you'll get the most value out of, and find it easier to work on, a topic that intrigues you personally or a topic about which you have a genuine curiosity.

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.

? ? Getting Started in the Writing Process

Writing is not a linear process, so writing your essay, researching, rewriting, and adjusting are all part of the process. Below are some tips to keep in mind as you approach and manage your assignment.



Figure 4. Writing is a recursive process that begins with examining the topic and prewriting.

Brainstorm

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

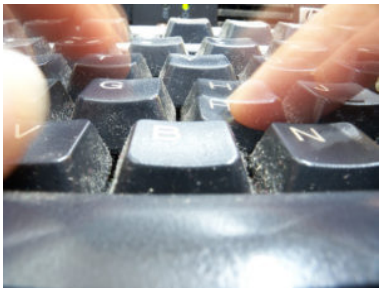


Figure 5. Just getting started is sometimes the most difficult part of writing. Freewriting and planning to write multiple drafts can help you dive in.

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. A quick Google search may turn up unreliable, misleading sources. Be sure you consider the credibility of the sources you consult (we'll talk more about that later in the course). And keep in mind that published books and works found in scholarly journals have to undergo a 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. Even better, research librarians can often be consulted in person, by phone, or even by email. And they love helping students. Don't be afraid to reach out with questions!

Write a Rough Draft

It doesn't matter how many spelling errors or weak adjectives you have in it. Your draft can be very rough! Jot down those random uncategorized thoughts. Write down anything you think of that you want included in your writing and worry about organizing and polishing everything later.

If You're Having Trouble, Try F reewriting

Set a timer and write continuously until that time is up. Don't worry about what you write, just keeping moving your pencil on the page or typing something (anything!) into the computer.

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4.4: Organically Structured Essays

Learning Objective

- Identify characteristics of organically structured essays

In high school, the SAT and other standardized testing formats value a very rigid, formulaic approach to essay writing. Some students who have mastered that form, and enjoyed a lot of success from doing so, assume that college writing is simply more of the same. The skills involved in a very basic kind of essay—often called the five-paragraph theme—are indispensable. If you're good at the five-paragraph theme, then you're good at identifying a clear and consistent thesis, arranging cohesive paragraphs, organizing evidence for key points, and situating an argument within a broader context through the introduction and conclusion.

In college, you will build on and move beyond those essential formulaic skills. Your college professors are looking for a more ambitious and arguable thesis, a nuanced and compelling argument, and real-life evidence for all key points, all in an organically structured paper.

Link to Learning

This resource from the UNC Writing Center explains how college writing differs from writing in high school.

The figures below contrast the standard five-paragraph theme and the organic college paper. The five-paragraph theme, outlined on the left, is probably what you're used to: the introductory paragraph starts broadly and gradually narrows to a thesis, which readers expect to find at the very end of that paragraph. In this format, the thesis invokes the magic number of three: three reasons why a statement is true. Each of those reasons is explained and justified in the three body paragraphs, and then the final paragraph restates the thesis before gradually getting broader. This format is easy for readers to follow, and it helps developing writers organize their points and the evidence that goes with them. That's why you learned it.

The figure on the right represents a paper on the same topic that has the more organic form expected in college. The first key difference is the thesis. Rather than simply positing a number of reasons to think that something is true, the thesis in an organic essay puts forward an arguable statement: one with which a reasonable person might disagree. An arguable thesis gives the paper purpose. It surprises readers and draws them in. You hope your reader thinks, *Huh. Why would the author come to that conclusion?* and then feels compelled to read on. The body paragraphs, then, build on one another to carry out this ambitious argument.

In the classic five-paragraph theme it hardly matters which of the three reasons you explain first or second. In the more organic structure, each paragraph specifically leads to the next. The last key difference is seen in the conclusion. Because the organic essay is driven by an ambitious, non-obvious argument, the reader comes to the concluding section thinking, *OK, I'm convinced by the argument. What do you, author, make of it? Why does it matter?* The conclusion of an organically structured paper has a real job to do. It doesn't just reiterate the thesis; it explains why the thesis matters. Some instructors will call this the *so what?* Given what you've argued in your essay, *so what?* What the takeaway or the call to action?

Five Paragraph Essay vs. organic essay

Compare the five-paragraph model on the left with the organic model on the right.

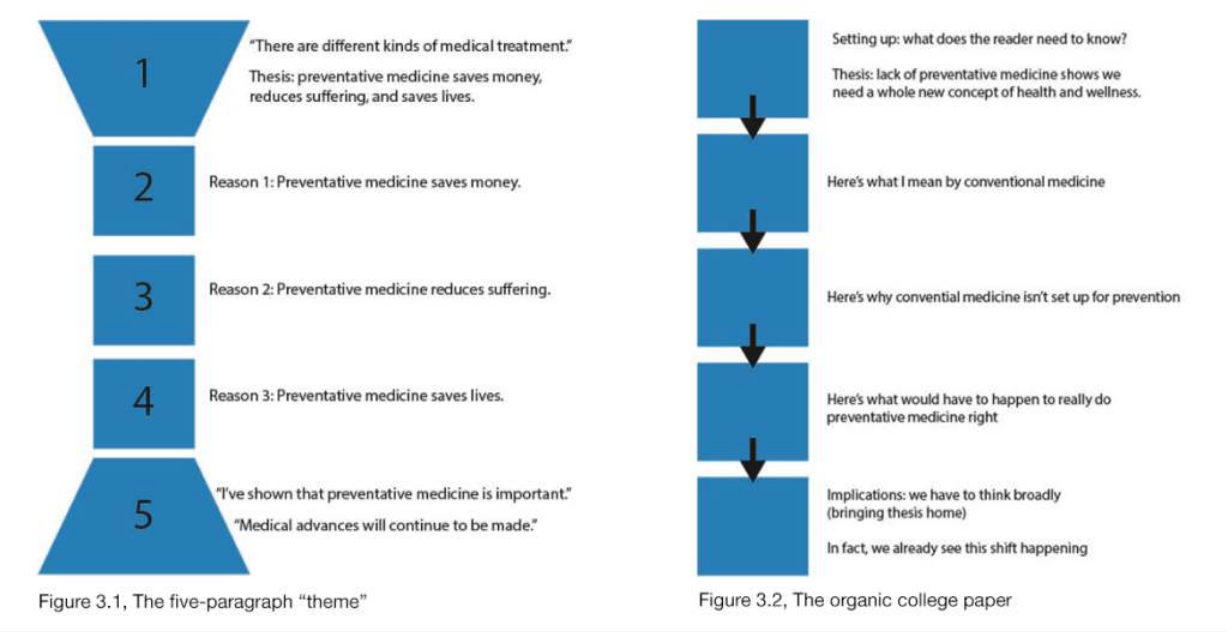


Figure 1. Figure 3.1 on the left shows the five-paragraph essay model. Figure 3.2 on the right shows the organic essay model.

The substantial time you spent mastering the five-paragraph form was time well spent; it's hard to imagine anyone succeeding with the more organic form without the organizational skills and habits of mind inherent in the simpler form. But if you assume that you must adhere rigidly to the simpler form, you're blunting your intellectual ambition. Your professors will not be impressed by obvious theses, loosely related body paragraphs, and repetitive conclusions. They want you to undertake an ambitious, independent analysis, one that will yield a thesis that is somewhat surprising and challenging to explain.

? ? Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...sessments/5603

Understanding that college writing will demand more than a five-paragraph essay is the first step. But then what? How do writers move beyond the formulas that are so familiar and well-practiced and begin to develop organic writing?

A good starting place is to recharacterize writing as thinking. Experienced writers don't figure out what they want to say and then write it. They write in order to figure out what they want to say. Experienced writers develop theses in dialog with the body of the essay. An initial characterization of the problem leads to a tentative thesis. Then, drafting the body of the paper reveals thorny contradictions or critical areas of ambiguity, prompting the writer to revisit or expand the body of evidence and then refine the thesis based on that fresh look. The revised thesis may require that body paragraphs be reordered and reshaped to fit the emerging thesis. Throughout the process, the thesis serves as an anchor point while the author wades through the morass of facts and ideas. The writer continues to read to learn more about his or her issue and refines his or her ideas in response to what is learned. The dialogue between thesis and body continues until the author is satisfied or the due date arrives, whatever comes first.

Consider the following example.

? ? EXAMPLE

Your political science professor asks you to write a paper on legislative redistricting. The professor spent a lot of time in class talking about motivations for redistricting, state redistricting laws, and Supreme Court redistricting cases. You decide to write about those three topics using the following thesis:

> Legislative redistricting is a complicated process that involves motivations for redistricting, state redistricting laws, and Supreme Court decisions.

Then you write a section on motivations, a section on state laws, and a section on Supreme Court decisions.

On the first draft of the paper, the professor comments: “This paper tries to cover too much and has no point to make. What’s the original point you are trying to defend? You are just restating everything we said about redistricting in class. Keep thinking.” You realize at this point that you have tried to write a five-paragraph essay, and it doesn’t work.

You go back to the drawing board. Your professor said you needed an arguable, original point and to avoid just restating everything from class. You think about what interested you most in the discussion of redistricting and remember talking about the Goldilocks principle of getting the balance of voters “just right.” You also remember that the professor mentioned a current case before the Supreme Court involving your home state.

You research the case and decide to revise your thesis to argue that your state has not achieved the Goldilocks balance but has erred on the side of excessive racial representation in some districts. Rather than using the body paragraphs of the paper to give three reasons for why that overrepresentation occurred, you decide to first give background on the racial divisions within the state, followed by profiles of two districts where over-representation of one race has occurred.

After writing those sections, you read further about the current status of the Supreme Court case and find that one of the districts you discuss in the paper isn’t involved in the case and that the Court’s decision has still not been handed down. You decide to rewrite one of the profile sections to focus on the district in the Supreme Court case. Then you add a section overviewing the current court case. You use your conclusion to make a recommendation to the Supreme Court about how the case should be decided.

Once the conclusion is drafted, you go back to the introduction and tighten the thesis to focus just on the two districts covered in the court case. You also revise the initial background section to include specific mention of those two cases. Now you are writing like a college writer, using writing as a tool for thinking and developing the paper in response to your growing understanding.

An organically structured argument is a beautiful thing. For one, it gives a paper authentic momentum. The first paragraph doesn’t just start with some broad, vague statement; every sentence is crucial for setting up the thesis. The body paragraphs build on one another, moving through each step of the logical chain. Each paragraph leads inevitably to the next, making the transitions from paragraph to paragraph feel wholly natural. The conclusion, instead of being a mirror-image paraphrase of the introduction, builds out the argument by explaining the broader implications. It offers new insight, without departing from the flow of the analysis.

A paper with this kind of momentum may read like it was knocked out in one inspired sitting. But don’t be fooled In reality, just like accomplished athletes and artists, masterful writers make the difficult look easy. As writer Anne Lamott notes, reading a well-written piece feels like its author sat down and typed it out, “bounding along like huskies across the snow.” However, she continues,

This is just the fantasy of the uninitiated. I know some very great writers, writers you love who write beautifully and have made a great deal of money, and not one of them sits down routinely feeling wildly enthusiastic and confident. Not one of them writes elegant first drafts. All right, one of them does, but we do not like her very much.[1]

? ? Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...sessments/5604
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1. Anne Lamott, *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life* (New York: Pantheon, 1994), 21. ↵

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4.5: Introduction to Writing Essays

What you'll learn to do: examine characteristics of common essay assignments



High school writing often emphasizes formulaic structure, such as the five-paragraph theme or the three-point essay. Those structures are appropriate as an introduction to academic writing because they teach writers to make a point and use evidence to support it in an organized way. Those structures are especially useful when responding to standardized tests under time pressure. In college, though, you'll be writing in a wide variety of disciplines for many different purposes. You'll need to move beyond formulaic structures and learn how to develop and organize your ideas more organically. Even when you organize your ideas organically, however, you can follow common rhetorical patterns. For example, essays that ask you to compare or contrast two ideas are often formatted following a consistent pattern. Similarly, narrative essays, argumentative essays, or process essays are often structured in similar ways. In this module, you'll learn about some of these main rhetorical structures.

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4.6: Overview of Rhetorical Styles

Learning Objectives

- Explain how and why to use various rhetorical styles

What are Rhetorical Styles?

Non-fiction writing can be defined by sub-genres, sometimes referred to as the **rhetorical styles,** modes, or patterns, of communication. These are categories of types of writing, and they help us to anticipate the structure and purpose of the text itself. There are four main types of writing and (at least) nine different rhetorical modes.



Figure 1. Just as books are categorized into different genres, your essays can also be classified into different types and/or styles of writing.

Types of Writing

There are four main types of writing: expository, persuasive, narrative, and descriptive. Each of these writing styles is used for a specific purpose, but a single text or essay typically employs more than one writing style. Below, we are going to discuss these four general categories of writing.

Of course there are more than four types of writing, however! For example, you may have written a process essay or a cause-and-effect essay, which can be considered sub-genres of the four main types of writing. Also, you may have encountered different names for some of the types of writing we will discuss below. Don't worry! The goal isn't to identify writing by a type but to learn the different styles and techniques associated with each type in order to be a skilled writer with a range of options at your disposal. After we discuss the four main types of writing, we will turn to some of the common rhetorical modes (like the argumentative essay) and discuss ways to approach these different types of writing tasks.

Key Takeaways

The goal is to be an organic writer, employing multiple styles and rhetorical modes to suit your writing purpose and audience. But sometimes it helps to see some examples and templates to understand how to get started.

Expository

Expository writing is one of the most common types of writing. When an author writes in an expository style, they are trying to explain a concept, imparting information from themselves to a wider audience. Expository writing does not include the author's opinion but focuses on accepted ideas or facts about a topic, including statistics or other evidence. Examples of expository writing include:

- Textbooks
- How-to articles
- Recipes
- News stories (not editorials or Op-Eds)
- Business, technical, or scientific writing

Persuasive

Persuasive writing is the main style of writing you will use in academic papers. When an author writes in a persuasive style, they are trying to convince the audience of their positions or beliefs. Persuasive writing contains the author's opinions and biases, as

well as justifications and reasons given by the authors as evidence of the correctness of their positions. Any "argumentative" essay you write in school will be in the persuasive style of writing. Examples of persuasive writing include:

- Argumentative essays
- Cover letters
- Op-Eds and Editorial newspaper articles
- Reviews of items
- Letters of complaint
- Advertisements
- Letters of recommendation

Narrative

Narrative writing is used in almost every longer piece of writing, whether fiction or nonfiction. When an author writes in a narrative style, they are not just trying to impart information, they are trying to construct and communicate a story, complete with characters, conflict, and settings. Examples of narrative writing include:

- Oral histories
- Novels/Novellas
- Poetry (especially epic sagas or poems)
- Short Stories
- Anecdotes

Descriptive

Descriptive writing is often found in fiction, though it can make an appearance in nonfiction as well (for example, memoirs, first-hand accounts of events, or travel guides). When an author writes in a descriptive style, they are painting a picture in words of a person, place, or thing for their audience. The author might employ metaphor or other literary devices in order to describe the author's impressions via their five senses (what they hear, see, smell, taste, or touch). But the author is not trying to convince the audience of anything or explain the scene – merely describe things as they are. Examples of descriptive writing include:

- Poetry
- Journal/diary writing
- Descriptions of Nature
- Fictional novels or plays

Again, it's important to keep in mind that the essays you write in college may incorporate more than one of the types of writing. For example, in a research paper, you will probably include **description** of the events or ideas under consideration, and you may even employ **narrative** as you describe those events or ideas to your reader. You are likely going to be using **expository** writing to explain the concepts and events you are discussing to your reader. And finally, you are likely to employ some elements of **persuasion** in order to make the case to your reader about why the events or ideas under consideration in your essay matter or what takeaways you suggest.

Rhetorical Styles

Keeping these four main writing styles in mind, we can break down types of writing assignments even further and consider the types of **rhetorical modes**, or patterns, needed to be successful within the various types of writing. For example, expository writing may rely on the rhetorical styles of comparison, classification, definition, illustration, or process. Persuasive writing will use an argumentative style, but may also still involve cause and effect rhetorical patterns, illustration, or others.

Some generally recognized rhetorical patterns include:

- **argumentative/persuasive**: defending a certain point of view; writing that persuades
- **comparison** (compare and contrast): a rhetorical style that discusses the similarities and differences of two or more things
- **cause and effect**: a rhetorical style that discusses which events lead to specific results
- **illustration**: writing that gives examples
- **narration**: writing that tells stories
- **personal essay**: a kind of writing often used for college, graduate school, and scholarship applications but also to tell a personal story about oneself

- **description**: a rhetorical style that uses the five senses (touch, taste, sight, sound, smell) and other details to provide the reader with a vivid idea or picture of what is being represented
- **definition**: structured around the goal of defining a term, concept, or idea; writing that tells what something means
- **classification and division**: a rhetorical style that, in essay format, takes a whole and splits it up into parts and then places the divided information into various categories; writing that sorts things into groups
- **process**: a rhetorical style that provides step-by-step directions or guidance; writing that explains how things happen

You probably have some experience with rhetorical styles. Maybe you have had to write a compare and contrast essay, or perhaps you learned about using a descriptive style in a narrative essay. Remember, most essays contain more than one rhetorical style, but some essay assignments will follow one particular style more than others.

For example, an essay that discusses the various means of taking courses may give examples of how each student would manage his or her time while taking a specific course. The writer may use the illustration rhetorical style to give examples of time management techniques in one of the paragraphs in a classification and division essay. In this case, since the essay categorizes the various means of taking courses, the essay may be called a classification and division essay—even though the illustration rhetorical style is present.

Once you learn the various rhetorical styles, you'll have a variety of tools to help you as you develop your writing assignments.

Again, most writing will use a variety of strategies in a single essay. Practicing each separately, however, helps in learning the techniques of organization distinct to the individual strategy. Students then learn to draw from a full palette of techniques to paint your ideas in writing. For example, you can't tell a good story (narration), without description, you might provide examples when comparing items, and you will present causes and effects as part of logical reasoning in an argument.

We will take a look at seven types of rhetorical styles on the coming pages. If you're interested in learning more and seeing examples of the other types, visit the Excelsior OWL website on rhetorical styles.

Glossary

expository: writing that aims to explain or describe something

genre: a category of composition characterized by similarities in form, style, or subject matter

rhetorical style: common patterns and characteristics in effective and persuasive communication shared by certain types of writing

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4.7: Argumentation

Learning Objectives

- Examine the purpose, structure, and style of an argumentative essay

Argumentative Essays



Figure 1. In political debate, politicians often tackle controversial topics. These same types of topics, where you are asked to defend a certain point of view, are often suitable for an argumentative essay.

When you hear the word "argument," what do you think of? Maybe you think of a shouting match or a fistfight? Well, when instructors use the word "argument," they're actually referring to is a position supported by the analysis; they're talking about defending a certain point of view through writing or speech. Usually called a "claim" or a "thesis," this point of view is concerned with an issue that doesn't have a clear right or wrong answer (e.g., four and two make six). Also, this argument should not center around personal opinion (e.g., I really like carrots). Instead, an argument attempt to convince the reader about the validity of the author's point of view (e.g., gun control should be imposed because it will eliminate school shootings). The argumentative essay (sometimes called a persuasive essay) is one of the most common types of essays you'll encounter in college courses. People can and often do disagree with the argument you make in an argumentative essay, which is precisely why so many instructors find this type of assignment so useful—it makes you think.

What distinguishes an argumentative essay from a descriptive essay or "report" is that the argument must take a stance; if you're merely summarizing "both sides" of an issue or pointing out the "pros and cons," you're not really writing an argument. For example, "Stricter gun control laws will likely result in a decrease in gun-related violence" is an argument. In contrast, "A survey of research studies indicates that gun control laws may decrease gun-related violence" is a discussion of research that does not center on persuasion. In the latter example, the writer might disagree with the quality of the research studies, but the task is to discuss, not persuade.

Key Takeaways

While argument essays usually "articulate an opinion," this opinion is always carefully defended with good reasoning and supported by plenty of research. Part of learning to write effective arguments is finding reliable sources (or other documents) that lend credibility to your position. It's not enough to say "capital punishment is wrong because that's the way I feel."

We will examine techniques for writing argumentative essays more closely when we learn about argumentation in more detail, but for now, look at these options for organizing an argumentative essay. Remember, the discussion below is to help you think about how to get started; it is not the only way to think about approaching an argumentative essay. In college, we always want to strive for organic rather than formulaic writing.

Argumentative Essay Organization

The two most common organization methods for the argument essay are as follows: the block method, with arguments supporting your position, then a rebuttal at the end, or an essay that includes the rebuttal throughout. The block example is shown below:

1. Introduction & Thesis Statement
    1. Background information on topic: this section is necessary for solution arguments but sometimes unnecessary for position arguments. Here you could give details about the history of the death penalty, definitions, or the severity of the problem. This is sometimes included in the introduction or introduced *following* the introduction.
    2. Statement of your position on the topic (thesis)
    3. Overview of arguments to be presented (structure)

2. Body paragraphs:
    1. Topic sentence outlining first argument
        1. First claim: For death penalty because it will stop overcrowding
    2. Sentences giving explanations and providing evidence to support topic sentence
        1. Give statistics on overcrowding
        2. Give statistics on future problems if no solution is provided
        3. Explain how the process will help
        4. Explain how/if appeal process is limited this will further help the situation
    3. Concluding sentence – link to next paragraph
    4. Transition
3. 2nd claim: For the death penalty because it will stop repeat offenders
    1. Give statistics on repeat offenders who commit murder
    2. Give statistics if this is not stopped
    3. Explain how the process would work if implemented
    4. Explain how this would also stop overcrowding because repeat offenders would not be imprisoned
    5. Concluding sentence – link to next paragraph
4. Following body paragraphs
    1. These follow the same structure for as many arguments as you wish to put forward in support of the topic.
5. Rebuttal: Rebuttal of antideath penalty arguments
    1. List a few of the opposition's counterarguments (three)
    2. Take each one, one at a time, and supply statistics to prove it wrong, example would be to prove that innocent people won't be executed
    3. #2 Rebuttal: No other democracy uses it, their side, your side with statistics to prove them wrong
    4. #3 Rebuttal: Death penalty cheapens the value of life: their side, your side with statistics to back it up.
    5. Transition
6. Conclusion
    1. Summary of the main points of the body
    2. Call to action

Remember, the template above is suggested to help you organize your thinking. An organic approach to an argumentative essay does not have to follow this exact formula!

? ? SAmple Argumentative Essay

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

Outline

Elizabeth Lamoureux
Dr. X
English 1101 Honors
April 25, 2019

Outline

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

1. Technical high schools can provide the technical training that companies in Georgia need.
    1. Businesses can provide input regarding jobs needed in specific technical fields.
        1. Education can focus on these specific technical fields.
        2. Education can work with businesses to fill these positions.
    2. Businesses can provide apprenticeship programs.
        1. Apprenticeship programs can be a vital part of a student's education.
        2. Apprenticeship programs are integral to Germany's educational program, providing a realistic model for technical high schools in Georgia.
2. Technical high schools can prepare students to enter the workforce earlier.
    1. Students not interested in college can enter the workforce upon high school graduation.
        1. Students train during their high school years for their chosen profession.
        2. Students begin to work in a profession or trade where there is a need.
    2. Students can begin to earn a living upon graduation.
        1. Students will become independent and self-supporting at the age of eighteen when many of their peers are still dependent upon their parents.
        2. Students can make more money over the course of their lifetimes.
3. Technical high schools can reduce the number of dropouts.
    1. Students would stay in school because they take courses that they enjoy.
        1. Students are more motivated to take courses in which they have an interest.
        2. Students will find both core and specialized classes more interesting and valuable when they can see the practical application of the subjects.
    2. Students would no longer need to drop out to support their families.
        1. Students would be able to earn a living wage while still taking classes that would eventually lead to full-time employment.
        2. Students would learn financial skills through experience with money management.

Student Essay

Elizabeth Lamoureux
Dr. X
English 1101 Honors
April 25, 2019

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

The belief of most Americans that everyone needs to have a college education is outdated. The United States needs skilled employees at all levels, from the highly technical to the practical day to day services society needs to sustain its current standard of

living. Germany is doing this through its apprenticeship programs which have proven to be economically successful for both businesses and workers. If the State of Georgia put technical high schools in every county, businesses would get employees with the skills they need; young people would get into good-paying jobs earlier, and schools would have fewer dropouts.

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4.8: Compare and Contrast

Learning Objectives

- Describe techniques for writing comparison essays

Compare & Contrast Essay

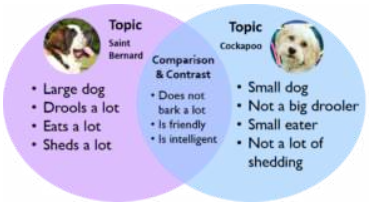


Figure 1. Comparing and contrasting means looking for similarities and differences between two things, which you can see nicely in a Venn diagram.

Compare and contrast is a rhetorical style that discusses the similarities and differences of two or more things: ideas, concepts, items, places, etc. This rhetorical style is one that you'll see often as a complete essay, but you may also use it quite a lot within paragraphs of any kind of essay in which you need to make some kind of comparison to help illustrate a point.

A compare and contrast essay does two things: It discusses the similarities and differences of at least two different things. First, you must find a basis of comparison to be sure that the two things have enough in common. After that, you identify their differences. You may structure the compare and contrast essay using either the **alternating method** (stating one aspect of one thing and immediately discussing the same aspect of the other item and how they are similar or different) or the **block method** (discussing all of the aspects of one thing and then discussing all of the aspects of another).

NOTE: When you write a compare and contrast essay, be sure that the two things have enough in common. Even if you have many differences to analyze, if the topics or items you're comparing don't have much in common, your audience may wonder why you're comparing the two things. For example, you would have a difficult time writing an essay comparing and contrasting your favorite television program with a popular vacation spot in your state. It would make a lot more sense to compare two different television shows or two different vacation spots. You also don't want to bite off more than you can chew. It might be better to compare driving laws in two different states rather than driving laws across the nation.

Techniques

Keep the following in mind:

Basis of Comparison

In order for your essay to be a success, you need to have a basis of comparison about the things that you're comparing. Do the things have enough in common for it to make sense to write about them in a compare and contrast essay? For example, it would make sense to compare in-person and online courses because the two have enough in common to justify discussing the similarities and differences of the two types of courses.

Alternating Method

When you use the alternating method, you discuss one aspect of the first item and then immediately discuss the same aspect of the second item. You may discuss the amount of computer time required for an in-person course and an online course. You may state that while you need to work on the computer for both courses, you would need to spend twice as much time on the computer for the online course.

Block Method

When you use the block method, you discuss one subject and then discuss the next subject. Usually, you would write one paragraph discussing all aspects of the first subject and then write a second paragraph discussing all aspects of the second subject and so on.

For example, if you begin with a discussion of the online course, you might discuss the amount of computer time required, the costs, the typical student success rate, and the usual instructional pedagogy. Next, you would turn to your discussion of an in-person course and discuss each of those aspects for the in-person course.

With the block method, you do not go back and forth in your discussion. First, you focus on the first subject (the online course) and then you focus on the second subject (the face-to-face course).

Combination Method

Finally, when you combine the two, you're writing a compare and contrast essay that follows the combination method. You may spend a couple of body paragraphs using the alternating method and then decide to switch to the block method for a deeper analysis of each of the subjects.

As you can imagine, no one approach always works best, depending on the subjects, which is probably why the combination method evolved. In any case, each of these methods is not meant as a formula; use these approaches to guide you as you master this style of writing.

? ? Example Essay

Click here to see a traditional or typical sample compare and contrast essay from a beginning writing class. In this assignment, the student was asked to write an essay comparing and contrasting two items or concepts and to follow MLA guidelines in the essay.

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4.9: Cause and Effect

Learning Objectives

- Describe techniques for highlighting cause and effect

Cause and effect is a rhetorical style that discusses, not surprisingly, which causes lead to which results. What are the causes of cancer (effect)? What are the effects of smoking (cause)?

You may find that you are assigned to write a cause and effect essay for a writing class, but you might also encounter cause and effect assignments in other disciplines. For example, you may be asked to write about the causes of the decline of a particular company in your business class, or you may be asked to write about the causes of the rise in obesity rates in the United States for your nursing class.

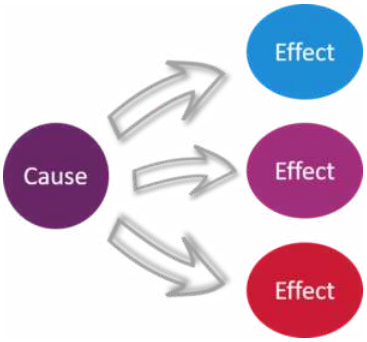


Figure 1. A cause and effect essay is structured around the goal of discovering and discussing events that lead to certain results.

When writing a cause and effect essay, you should be sure that you have researched the specific causes and are confident that you're demonstrating why they lead to particular results. You may either concentrate on causes, effects, or a combination of both.

NOTE: It's important to remember that just because an event occurs before an effect does not mean that they are related. You may be mistaking chronological order or correlation for causality, which can lead you to some faulty logic. For example, just because people who own dogs walk more, doesn't mean that owning a dog causes people to walk more. (It may be that people who like walking and walk a lot are more likely to own dogs.)

Techniques

There are three basic formats for writing a cause/effect essay:

1. Single effect with multiple causes–air pollution is the effect, and students would identify several causes.
2. Single cause with multiple effects–bullying is the cause, and students would establish several effects it has on children.
3. Causal Chain–This is a more complex format. Causal chains show a series of causes and effects. For example, the global COVID-19 pandemic caused a decrease in pedestrian fatalities from car crashes. How? The pandemic caused more people to shelter in place and reduced driving overall. With fewer cars on the road, pedestrian deaths from cars were reduced.

Climate change is a good example of a causal chain topic. Population increase is causing an increase in traffic and greenhouse gases. It is also causing an increase in deforestation for housing, roads, and farming. Deforestation means fewer plants to take up the CO2 and release O2 into the environment. Each item causes an effect. That effect causes another effect. All of this contributes to climate change.

Structure

Cause and effect essays often begin with a general introduction to the topic, then follow with a thesis statement that includes the main cause and main effect or effects. They often use words like *as a result of, because, since, consequently, due to,* or *therefore.*

The essays are often organized by either 1. explaining the cause and then the effects or 2. explaining the effects and then the causes.

For example, if your essay were about how high schoolers jam-packed schedules, high demands, and early mornings cause increased anxiety, you could start by talking about a day in the life of a high-schooler, then talk about the effects, or you could start by talking about the effects first.

No matter which method you choose, be sure to support the claims and connections in your cause and effect essay fully with appropriate evidence. In your conclusion, reiterate the thesis and connection between the cause and effect, and help the reader understand the most important takeaway (the “so what?”) of the essay.

? ? Sample Essay

Now that you have had the chance to learn about cause and effect essays, it’s time to see one in practice. Here you’ll see a traditional or typical sample cause and effect essay from a beginning writing class. In this assignment, the student was asked to write a cause and effect essay on a topic he chose and to follow APA guidelines for the essay.

? ? link to Learning

For a variety of easy to print graphic organizers that will help you organize your cause and effect essay, go to the Education Oasis website. You can click on any of the 11 charts and print a copy or save one to your desktop.

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4.10: Illustration

Learning Objectives

- Describe techniques for illustrating a point

Illustration is a rhetorical style that uses examples to support the thesis or main idea of a paragraph or essay. Don't confuse illustration with the use of pictures, although we will be discussing later how visual images can be used effectively in multimedia writing. Illustration is most often used at the paragraph level to help illustrate or support a point, but you may also encounter illustration essays of various types in your college courses.

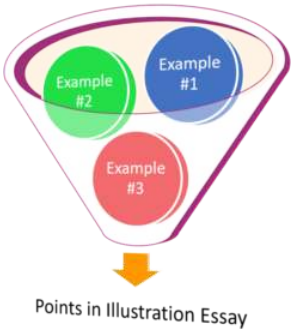


Figure 1. More often than not, the style of illustration is used at the paragraph level of essay writing.

In an illustration essay or a paragraph that employs illustration, your focus is on using examples that are relevant and strong to your argument and appropriate for your audience.

NOTE: You may find that when you're writing about your examples you wind up with very choppy paragraphs. To avoid this, combine examples that are related and relevant to one another.

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

An Illustrative Thesis

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

Examples:

- The over-reliance on social media and texting has created an environment where people feel comfortable sharing critical feelings they would have previously kept to themselves.
- Many of today's popular movies rely on excessive gore and violence to entertain audiences which could explain why book adaptations are more violent than the original text.
- If money is no object, then a vacation to the Kanaapali Shores Beach Resort will satisfy a tourist's paradise dream.

Using scientific studies, experts in a particular field, statistics, historical events, current events, analogies, and personal anecdotes are all ways in which a writer can illustrate a thesis. Ultimately, you want the evidence to help the reader "see" your point, as one would see a good illustration in a magazine or on a website. The stronger your evidence is, the more clearly the reader will consider your point.

Using evidence effectively can be challenging, though. The evidence you choose will usually depend on your subject and who your reader is (your audience). When writing an illustration essay, keep in mind the following:

- Use evidence that is appropriate to your topic as well as appropriate for your audience.

- Assess how much evidence you need to adequately explain your point depending on the complexity of the subject and the knowledge of your audience regarding that subject.

For example, if you are writing about a new communication software and your audience is a group of English-major undergrads, you might want to use an analogy or a personal story to illustrate how the software works. However, if you are writing about the same subject and your audience members are information technology (IT) specialists, your personal experience is less likely to be an effective illustration. Instead, you need to use more technical evidence because your audience has more familiarity with and greater knowledge of the subject.

Keeping your subject matter in mind in relation to your audience will increase your chances of effectively illustrating your point. Be careful not to overexplain simple concepts that your readers are already familiar with—you don't want to insult their intelligence! Instead of more explanation, consider using an example.

Organizing an Illustration

The organization of an illustration essay depends on the purpose of the essay and requires a clear rationale for why the examples apply as an illustration of a concept. When pulling in examples, you may rely on words or phrases such as: *for example*, *for instance*, *in particular*, *to illustrate*, or *specifically.*

Typically in a single supporting paragraph, a writer uses a topic sentence to designate the main idea followed by primary and secondary support structure. In a full essay devoted to illustration, primary supports are the main ideas to support a topic sentence, and secondary supports are the examples and details to provide the concrete information to complete the writer's point.

? ? Illustration Essay Outline

Introduction and Thesis:

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

Primary support 1: The hotel amenities

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

Primary support 2: The restaurants

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

Primary support 3: The beach and activities

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

Primary support 4: The cost

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

Conclusion

? ? SAMPLE Illustration Essay

Now that you have had the chance to learn about illustration essays, it's time to see one in practice. Here you'll see a traditional or typical sample illustration essay from a beginning writing class. In this assignment, the student was asked to write an essay using illustration to make his points, to follow APA guidelines, and to use at least two sources.

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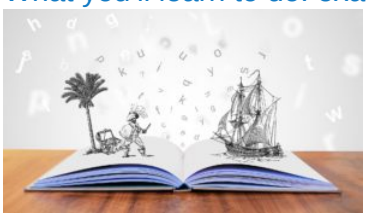
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4.11: Introduction to Narration

What you'll learn to do: examine characteristics of writing narratives



Narrative writing can be a powerful addition to your writing toolkit. Humans seem to hunger for stories, and so narrative may be the most well-received of rhetorical devices. We use stories to educate and to entertain: They often feel friendlier than lists of facts or citations of scientific studies.

As Philip Pullman said,

After nourishment, shelter and companionship, stories are the thing we need most in the world.

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4.12: Narrative Writing

Learning Objectives

- Describe techniques for writing effective narratives

Narrative Writing

What feelings and thoughts does this quote by Margaret Mead bring up in you when you read it? Why does she include this personal glimpse in her preface to the 1949 edition of *Coming of Age in Samoa*?

I had decided to become an anthropologist—in May, 1923—because Franz Boas and Ruth Benedict had presented the tasks of anthropology as more urgent than any other task which lay ready to the choice of a student of human behavior.

By using even a brief personal story, Mead is helping her readers relate to her and open to her viewpoint. Her mentors and teachers instilled in her a sense of purpose — an urgent one, for Mead in May, 1923 — to study human behavior as it happens naturally in a variety of societies and cultures. We can all relate to the feeling of longing for a sense of purpose, even though we may not have an interest in anthropology specifically. Most of us will nod knowingly at her decision because we can relate to her story of feeling, at a specific moment in time and under the guidance of powerful teachers, a sense of purpose and direction.

Narrative Essay

Narration is a rhetorical style that basically just tells a story. Being able to convey events in a clear, descriptive, chronological order is important in many fields. Many times, in college, your professors will ask you to write paragraphs or entire essays using a narrative style.



Figure 1. Think of one of your favorite well-known stories or fairytales. Does it follow the sequence shown above?

Most of the time, in introductory writing classes, students write narration essays that discuss personal stories; however, in different disciplines, you may be asked to tell a story about another person's experience or an event.

The reason we use narrative is because storytelling is the most natural way for us humans to communicate. Not unlike ethnography, it's both a way we find of relating to one another and a way we learn to understand our differences.

Telling a Story

When telling a story, you want to hone in on what's important. Consider, as an example, how you might respond if your friend asked what you did last weekend. If you began with, "I woke up on Saturday morning, rolled over, checked my phone, fell back asleep, woke up, pulled my feet out from under the covers, put my feet on the floor, stood up, stretched…" then your friend might have stopped listening by the time you get to the really good stuff. Your scope is too broad, so you're including details that distract or bore your reader. Instead of listing every detail in order like this:



Figure 2. A Story doesn't need to include every detail in order.

… you should consider narrowing your scope, focusing instead on the important, interesting, and unique plot points (events) like this:

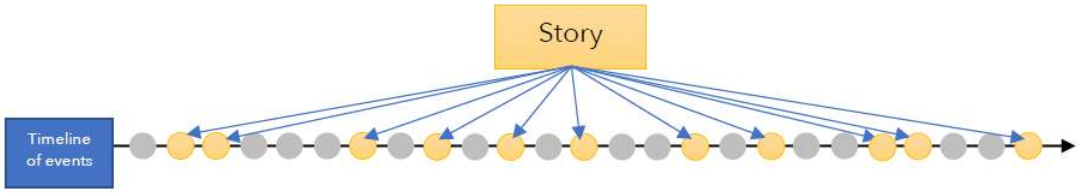


Figure 3. Pick out the most interesting and relevant pieces of a story to keep it engaging.

You might think of this as the difference between a series of snapshots and a roll of film: instead of twenty-four frames per second video, your entire story might only be a few photographs aligned together.

It may seem counterintuitive, but we can often make more impact by digging into a few moments or events rather than trying to relate every idea or event.

Story Sequencing

The order of the events and the amount of time you give to each event, respectively—will determine your reader's experience. There are an infinite number of ways you might structure your story, and the shape of your story is worth deep consideration. Although the traditional forms for narrative sequence are not your only options, let's take a look at a few tried-and-true shapes your plot might take.

You might recognize Freytag's Pyramid from other classes you've taken:

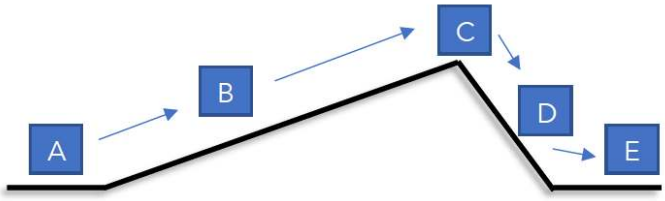


Figure 4. Freytag's pyramid shows a traditional story arc.

The typical components include:

1. Exposition: Here, you're setting the scene, introducing characters, and preparing the reader for the journey.
2. Rising action: In this part, things start to happen. You (or your characters) encounter conflict, set out on a journey, meet people, etc.
3. Climax: This is the peak of the action, the main showdown, the central event toward which your story has been building.
4. Falling action: Now things start to wind down. You (or your characters) come away from the climactic experience changed—at the very least, you are wiser for having had that experience.
5. Resolution: Also known as dénouement, this is where all the loose ends get tied up. The central conflict has been resolved, and everything is back to normal, but perhaps a bit different.

This narrative shape is certainly a familiar one. Many films, TV shows, plays, novels, and short stories follow this track. But it's not without its flaws. What assumptions does it rely on? How might it limit a storyteller? Sometimes, writers want to start the story where the story starts—often, steps A and B in the diagram above just delay the most descriptive, active, or meaningful parts of the story. If nothing else, we should note that Freytag's pyramid is not necessarily the best way to tell your story, and definitely not the only way.

Another classic technique for narrative sequence is known as *in medias res*–literally, "in the middle of things." As you map out your plot in pre-writing or experiment with it during the drafting and revision process, you might find this technique a more active and exciting way to begin a story.

In the earlier example, the plot is chronological, linear, and continuous: The story would move smoothly from beginning to end with no interruptions. *In medias res* instead suggests that you start your story with action rather than exposition, focusing on an exciting, imagistic, or important scene. Then, you can circle back to an earlier part of the story to fill in the blanks for your reader. Using the previously discussed plot shape, you might visualize it like this:

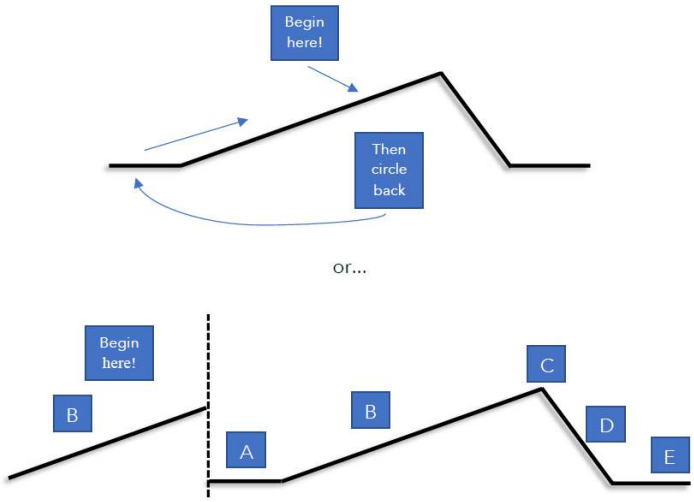


Figure 5. Stories can also start in the middle of the action.

You can experiment with your sequence in a variety of other ways, which might include also making changes to your scope: instead of a continuous story, you might have a series of fragments with specific scope (like photographs instead of video). Instead of chronological order, you might bounce around in time or space, or in reverse. Some narratives reject traditional narrative sequences altogether.

For example, consider how this story starts:

- Lost in my thoughts, I shuddered as the train ground to a full stop in the middle of an intersection. I was surprised, jarred by the unannounced and abrupt jerking of the car. I sought clues for our stop outside the window. All I saw were pigeons as startled and clueless as I.

Using Narrative

You'll find narrative useful in an essay when you want your reader to identify with your perspective or with the view taken by one of your characters or subjects. Documentary filmmaking is full of narrative examples: People tell us the story of what happened as if they were witnesses, even if the event happened many years before they were born. It's an effective technique because the filmmaker weaves a tale for us through each narrator.

You can take a similar approach in writing, laying out the facts of a story interspersed with first-person perspectives. Or you might, as Mead did, offer your reader insight into your own thought process as you came to understand the concept or event.

Satire can be a particularly effective form of narrative, exemplified by *Animal Farm* and *Gulliver's Travels*. Satire works to expose the defects in an idea or society by telling a fictional tale of a different social group. Fictional characters stand in for real people or play out social ideas, usually political in nature.

Narratives can be factual or fictional, depending on the writer's purpose. The writers of factual stories try to recount events as they actually happened, but writers of fictional stories can depart from real people and events because the writers' intents are not to retell a real-life event. Biographies and memoirs are examples of factual stories, whereas novels and short stories are examples of fictional stories. And the line between fact and fiction is often purposefully blurry, again depending on the writer's purpose.

Narrative Essays

You could think of a narrative essay as a short story. It's called an essay, but many narrative essays are really just short stories. If you are using narration as the primary strategy in writing a paper, you will use some semblance of the following format:

Opening

Your opening in a narrative essay does not need to be a description of the event you will be discussing or an explicit outline of the reason(s) you're examining it. Instead, try to hook your readers and think about why should they should be interested.

Narrative Paragraphs

You will divide the event into smaller events and give each of these smaller incidents a paragraph. These will be simple explanations of what happened when, though in a more complex essay you might include reasons for each event and comparisons to another, more current circumstance. Accounts by historians, witnesses, or thought leaders can be woven into the narrative to strengthen the perspective you're offering or to offer the possibility of another perspective, in an effort to provide an objective report.

You'll want to make each portion of the narrative interesting to the reader, so use literary devices like suspense, imagery, verisimilitude, and surprise, perhaps along with a little humor, if appropriate, to keep your audience engaged.

Closing

You don't need to hit your reader over the head a summary of the event and the reason(s) for examining it. You may or may not decide to end with some explicit ideas about how this event is relevant to the reader and to the world at this time.

The checklist for a narrative essay:

- Have a clear purpose.
- Tell the story clearly.
- Make the narrative interesting.
- Relate it to something larger than itself, either overtly, or covertly.

KeY Takeaways

- Narration is another way of saying storytelling.
- Narratives have a plot, characters, conflict, and a theme.
- Narratives can be either factual or fictional.
- Most narratives are written about major events that follow a timeline, but narratives do not need to be written in chronological order.
- Narratives should have strong openings to engage the reader.
- Narratives often have strong conclusions that help to resolve the conflict and reiterate the theme.
- The thesis in a narrative can be implied.

sTART WITH THE STORY

Sometimes, it's easier for students to write the story and then go back and make sure that the essay follows the proper essay format.

After you have completed your story, read it to yourself. Is there any particular moral or idea that the story is demonstrating? If so, you may decide to use that idea in your thesis statement.

For example, consider the topic of going back to school. You may approach it in this way:

1. Write the story (this will become your body paragraphs)
2. Read aloud and see if there is a moral or underlying idea
3. Write your thesis statement based on that idea or moral
4. Continue to write your introduction

Once you have the story down, you read your paragraphs about going back to school, and then you realize how much having a college education will improve your financial situation. This allows you to create your thesis, and go back to form the introduction. In this case, you decide that your thesis is "After careful consideration, I have decided that returning to school is an important step toward improving my financial outlook."

Whether or not you include that explicit thesis in your narrative will depend on the requirements of the assignment and your skill as a writer. Often, in narrative writing, our goal is to show, not tell, the reader the point of the story!

? ? Link to Learning

Here you can see a traditional or typical sample narration essay from a beginning writing class. In this assignment, the student was asked to write a brief **literacy narrative**, a narrative essay that focuses on the author's experiences with reading and/or writing. In this narration essay, the author focuses on reading books and follows MLA guidelines.

? ? Try It

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4.13: Writing a Personal Essay

Learning Objectives

- Describe techniques for writing an effective personal essay

How to Write a Personal Essay

One particular and common kind of narrative essay is the personal narrative essay. Many of you have already written at least one of these – in order to get to college. The personal essay is a narrative essay focused on you. Typically, you write about events or people in your life that taught you important life lessons. These events should have changed you somehow. From this choice will emerge the theme (the main point) of your story. Then you can follow these steps:



Figure 1. Brainstorming the details of a personal experience can help you to write a more complete story with elements like vivid details, dialogue, and sufficient character development.

- Once you identify the event, you will write down what happened. Just brainstorm (also called freewriting). Focus on the actual event. You do not need to provide a complete build-up to it. For example, if you are telling a story about an experience at camp, you do not need to provide readers with a history of my camp experiences, nor do you need to explain how you got there, what we ate each day, how long it lasted, etc. Readers need enough information to understand the event. So, you do not need to provide information about my entire summer if the event only lasts a couple of days.
- Use descriptions/vivid details.
- Use active voice/action. Active voice puts readers in the moment. They experience events as they happen. Think of a horror story where you experience running from the psychotic murderer right along with the hero. Here is an example of active voice from Tobias Wolff's story "On Being a Real Westerner":
  - "Nothing moved but a pair of squirrels chasing each other back and forth on the telephone wires. I followed one in my sight. Finally, it stopped for a moment and I fired."
  - The verbs are all in active voice creating a sense of immediacy: moved, followed, stopped, fired.
- Use passive voice sparingly. It can be used to add variety and slow things down. Here is an example of passive voice:
  - "I had been aiming at two old people, a man and a woman, who walked so slowly that by the time they turned the corner at the bottom of the hill my little store of self-control was exhausted" (Wolff).
    - Passive voice uses the verb "to be" along with an action verb: had been aiming, was exhausted.
- Develop your characters. Even though the "characters" in your story are real people, your readers won't get to know them unless you describe them, present their personalities, and give them physical presence.
- Use dialogue. Dialogue helps readers get to know the characters in your story, infuses the story with life, and offers a variation from description and explanation. When writing dialogue, you may not remember exactly what was said in the past, so be true to the person being represented and come as close to the actual language the person uses as possible. Dialogue is indented with each person speaking as its own paragraph. The paragraph ends when that person is done speaking and any following explanation or continuing action ends. (If your characters speak a language other than English, feel free to include that in your narrative, but provide a translation for your English-speaking readers.)
- Be consistent in your point of view. Remember, if it is a *personal* narrative, you are telling the story, so it should be in first person. Students often worry about whether or not they are allowed to use "I." It is impossible to write a personal essay without using "I"!
- Write the story in a consistent verb tense (almost always past tense). It doesn't work to try to write it in the present tense since it already happened. Make sure you stay in the past tense.

? ? Sample Personal Statement

One type of narrative essay you may have reason to write is a Personal Statement.

Many colleges and universities ask for a Personal Statement Essay for students who are applying for admission, to transfer, or for scholarships.

Generally, a Personal Statement asks you to respond to a specific prompt, most often asking you to describe a significant life event, a personality trait, or a goal or principle that motivates or inspires you. Personal Statements are essentially narrative essays with a particular focus on the writer's personal life.

The following essay was responding to the prompt: "Write about an experience that made you aware of a skill or strength you possess." As you read, pay attention to the way the writer gets your attention with a strong opening, how he uses vivid details and a chronological narrative to tell his story, and how he links back to the prompt in the conclusion.

Sample Student Essay

Alen Abramyan
Professor X
English 1101-209
2/5/2013

In the Middle of Nowhere Fighting Adversity

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

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

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

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

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

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

The train came to a screeching halt, shaking all the passengers awake. I glanced out my window, "Welcome to Cherepovets," the sign read. In the background I saw a horrific skyline of smokestacks, coughing out thick black smoke. Arriving in the city,

we went straight to the weigh ins. Hundreds of boxers, all from many cities were there. The brackets were set up shortly after the weigh ins. In the Super Heavyweight division, I found out I had 4 fights to compete in, each increasing in difficulty. My first match, I made sure not a punch would land; this was true for the next two fights. Winning all three 6-0, 8-0 and 7-0 respectively. It looked like I was close to winning the whole tournament. For the finals I was to fight the National Olympic Hope Champion.

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

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

? ? Link to Learning

Sandra Cisneros offers an example of a narrative essay in "Only Daughter" that captures her sense of her Chicana-Mexican heritage as the only daughter in a family of seven children.

Do Personal Essays have Thesis Statements?

While many personal essays include a direct statement of the thesis, in some personal essays the thesis may be implied rather than stated outright.

Imagine, for example, that in your personal essay you decide to write about the way someone influenced you. The influential individual could be a relative, a friend or classmate, an employer or a teacher. As you shape your essay, you would not simply assemble a collection of miscellaneous observations about the person; instead, you would be selective and focus on details about this person that show his or her impact upon you.

Let us say that the person who influenced you is a grandparent. You may know a lot about this individual: personality traits, family and marital history, medical history, educational background, work experience, military experience, political and religious beliefs, hobbies, tastes in music, etc. But as you shape your essay about how this individual affected you, you wouldn't try to catalog all that you know. Instead, you would try to create a dominant impression by including details that guide your reader toward the idea that is central to the essay.

For example, if you developed certain habits and attitudes as you and your grandparent worked together on a project, that experience might provide the focus for the essay. If you chose details consistent with that focus, then you wouldn't need to state that this was the point of the essay. Your readers would understand that that was the governing idea based on the details you had so carefully chosen.

Whether the thesis is stated outright or implied, then, the personal essay will have a governing idea—an idea that is "in charge" of what you decide to include in the essay in terms of content, vocabulary, sentence structure, and tone. In short, the personal essay may not have a thesis statement, but it *will* have a thesis.

Consider a personal essay in which a student was asked to write about a person she admired, and she wrote about her cousin. She wrote:

- I admired my cousin's decision to enlist because she had to withstand criticism from people who thought women shouldn't be in the army and because in basic training she had to stand up to physical and mental challenges that I don't think I could face.

The thesis statement provides quite a lot of guidance for both writing and reading the essay. Writer and reader are equally able to see what the subject of the essay is and what is being stated about the subject, and both writer and reader can see how the essay should be organized. No matter how many body paragraphs there are, this thesis implies that the paper will be divided into two sections. One section will group together the paragraphs on this topic: cousin "had to withstand criticism from people who thought women shouldn't be in the army." Another section will group together the paragraphs on this second topic: "in basic training she had to stand up to physical and mental challenges."

Are Narratives Persuasive?

In a personal essay, you may not think of your thesis as "arguable" in the same way as a claim in a persuasive essay would be arguable, but in fact, you can think of it as something that should need to be demonstrated—backed up through explanations and illustrations. Usually, the idea that should be demonstrated is that you are a thoughtful, reflective person who has learned from the events and people in your life.

If the thesis does ***not*** need to be demonstrated, then there may not be much purpose in writing the essay. For, example, a statement that "George W. Bush was the forty-third president" or the statement that "Senior proms are exciting" would not be considered arguable by most people and likely would not spark a reader's interest and make them want to keep reading.

On the other hand, the thesis statements below would need to be explained and illustrated. In that sense, these personal essay thesis statements are equivalent to claims that are "arguable."

- The evening was nearly ruined because parents acting as dress-code vigilantes threw several people out of the prom.
- My team spent hours planning the prom and managed to head off a repeat of the after-prom drinking that caused some parents to question whether the prom should be held this year.
- Everyone was able to attend the prom proudly because our prom committee got several stores to loan outfits to make certain everyone would feel like they fit in.
- I opted to attend an alternative prom because the principal refused to allow a same-sex couple to attend.

Keep in mind that the actions or events in your essay do not have to make you look heroic. You could write a convincing and powerful essay about how you attended the school-sponsored prom, even though the principal refused to allow a same-sex couple to attend. Your essay, in this case, might, for example, focus on your regret over your decision and your subsequent understanding of how you think you can best challenge the status quo in the future. In other words, you can write an effective personal essay about a moment of regret.

When writing a personal essay for an application of some kind (scholarship, internship, graduate school), remember that the ultimate purpose of the essay is to make you, the essay writer and applicant, look good. That doesn't mean that you need to describe you doing great things. If your personal essay is all about your grandfather and what an amazing role model and person he was, you still need to think about how your essay can make you (and not just your grandfather) look good. One way to make yourself look good is to make clear that you are a thoughtful, reflective person (and someone smart enough to learn from a man like your grandfather).

? ? Try It

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4.14: Descriptive Essays

Learning Objectives

- Describe techniques for writing effective descriptive essays or effective passages with description

Description



Figure 1. C.S. Lewis, author of the fictitious book series, "The Chronicles of Narnia" is an expert at using descriptive writing.

Description is a rhetorical mode you'll want in your toolbox because it places your reader in the scene you're describing. You'll likely relate this tool to fiction, because the best novels use description to capture our imagination. But description can be important in a personal narrative, a compare and contrast essay, and even a research paper.

Take a look at the detailed imagery in this example from *Between the World and Me*, by Ta-Nehisi Coates.

It was always right in front of me. The fear was there in the extravagant boys of my neighborhood, in their large rings and medallions, their big puffy coats and full-length fur-collared leathers, which was their armor against their world. . . . I think back on those boys now and all I see is fear, and all I see is them girding themselves against the ghosts of the bad old days when the Mississippi mob gathered 'round their grandfathers so that the branches of the black body might be torched, then cut away. (14)

Coates does so much work in this description of the young men in his neighborhood. Their coats and rings are not literally armor, but the descriptive language allows us to see these things as their armor against a fear driven by a history of lynching. In just a few carefully chosen descriptive words and images, Coates makes an emotional appeal for a different way of seeing these "extravagant boys." He takes us both to the streets of Baltimore where these boys walk and to the "bad old days" of Mississippi where African-Americans could be lynched with impunity. Clearly, Coates's use of language transports his reader with compelling, sensory language.

The following passage, for example, could be used in a petition to give the Jemaa el-Fnaa, a marketplace in Marrakesh, protected UNESCO status:

During the day it is predominantly occupied by orange juice stalls, water sellers with traditional leather water-bags and brass cups, youths with chained Barbary apes and snake charmers, despite the protected status of these species under Moroccan law. As the day progresses, the entertainment on offer changes: the snake charmers depart, and late in the day the square becomes more crowded, with Chleuh dancing-boys (it would be against custom for girls to provide such entertainment), story-tellers (telling their tales in Berber or Arabic, to an audience of locals), magicians, and peddlers of traditional medicines.As darkness falls, the square fills with dozens of food-stalls as the number of people on the square peaks. The square is edged along one side by the Marrakesh souk, a traditional North African market catering both for the common daily needs of the locals, and for the tourist trade. On other sides are hotels and gardens and cafe terraces, and narrow streets lead into the alleys of the medina quarter. Once a bus station, the place was closed to vehicle traffic in the early 2000s. The authorities are well aware of its importance to the tourist trade, and a strong but discreet police presence ensures the safety of visitors.

Vivid description can help your audience make an emotional connection to your subject, which is where the true power of the written word lies.

Like many rhetorical strategies for writing essays, description rarely stands alone. So you will be called upon to use your descriptive writing skills in many different kinds of essays.

You can't compare two items unless you describe them. You can't illustrate abstract concepts or make them vivid and detailed without concrete description.

We have five senses: touch, taste, smell, sight, and sound. So, what does it look like, feel like, smell like, or taste like to be hot?

- "The sweat mixed with its salt stung my eyes, and it dripped from my forehead and slid down my brow."

In concrete “show, not tell” description, leaves are not “soft” but “velvet”; sirens are not “loud” as much as they “start my Labrador to howling and vibrate the glass panes in my front door.”

✔ ✔ Show, Don’t Tell

Russian short story author and physician Anton Chekhov succinctly demonstrates how to show rather than tell in the following quote:

Don’t tell me the moon is shining; show me the glint of light on the broken glass.

The following illustrates a progressive improvement in description:

- My friend is big.
- My friend Jamie weighs 320 pounds and is 5’10”.
- Since he would never let me risk danger on my own, Jamie scrunched his 5’10’’ frame and all 320 pounds through the narrow cave entrance and into the black tunnel behind me.

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

Description is about creating pictures; words are your paint.

? ? Sample Descriptive Essay

Here you’ll see a traditional or typical sample descriptive essay from a beginning writing class. In this assignment, the student was asked to write an essay describing an important day, such as a first date, and to follow MLA guidelines in the essay.

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4.15: Introduction to Multimodality

What you'll learn to do: evaluate multimodal text



Writing in college goes well beyond traditional essays. We've looked at different modes of essays – compare and contrast, cause and effect, and others. In this section, we turn to a different kind of text: the multimodal text.

Even before the domination of social media, we all had to negotiate more than just words. We encounter and make meaning out of sounds, images, gestures, and the spaces in which those exist, on a daily basis. In our interconnected and internet enhanced world, the work of understanding, analyzing, composing, and communicating with multimodal texts is ubiquitous.

Whether you are tasked with giving an on-the-fly presentation about a report you wrote at work or you want to use social media to share your vacation photos with your grandparents across the country, you're moving between and among different modes constantly.

In this section, we'll discuss multimodal texts, how they work, how they are designed, and how to use them effectively to communicate in school and beyond.

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4.16: The Five Modes

Learning Objective

- Describe the five modes of communication

The way we communicate is not simply through text or reading material but also through many different modes. What are the differences between a classroom lecture by your professor and his or her lecture notes? What about the differences between a group chat with your classmates and a group project meeting in the library? These situations involve different modes. The first step to learning how to negotiate a multimodal world is to understand what multimodality is.

A *mode*, quite simply, is *a means of communicating*. According to the New London Group, there are five modes of communication: **visual**, **linguistic**, **spatial**, **aural**, and **gestural**.[1]

A mode is different from a *medium*, which is the substance through which communication is conveyed. Examples of a visual medium, for instance, would be photography, painting, or film.

When a given text makes use of more than one mode, the text can be characterized as multimodal. Most texts are multimodal – we make sense out of their messages through decoding the different modes of communication that they employ.

Figure 1.6 The Five Modes of Communication

This chart of the modes is based on a diagram created by the New London Group.

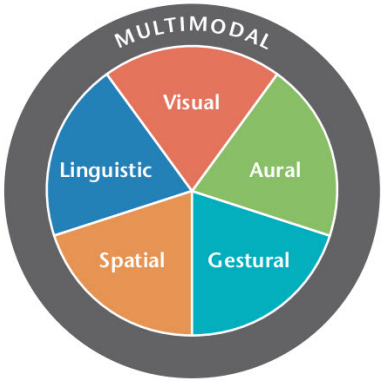


Figure 1. A multimodal world includes visual, linguistic, aural, spatial, and gestural communication.

What is the Relationship Between Modes and Media?

A mode is a means of communicating. A medium is the channel or system through which communications are conveyed. The plural form of medium is media. So, for example, if we want to communicate in the linguistic mode, we might choose the medium of print. If we want to communicate in the aural mode, we might choose the medium of a podcast. Both print and podcasts are forms of media.

When analyzing or producing multimodal compositions, it is important to recognize the operation of multiple modes within artifacts (or what we might call multimedia texts). But it is also useful to think about which mode generally predominates in any given medium. Both photographs and films, for instance, employ the visual mode. Films differ from photographs, however, in that they involve movement of bodies and objects through space (spatial mode). We might say, then, that the visual mode dominates in photographs, while the spatial mode dominates in film (although obviously some photographs employ the spatial mode powerfully in how objects are arranged in relation to each other). Being aware of dominant modes within a medium will prove helpful later when choosing powerful claims and persuasive evidence for composing your own multimodal argument.

Try It

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Visual

The visual mode refers to the images and characters that people see.



Figure 2. A “no guns” symbol.

It is sometimes possible to find compositions that almost, if not completely, rely on a single mode. For instance, the “No Guns” symbol has no alphabetic text and no sound. Like many signs, it relies for its meaning on visual information. However, we might be able to say that the sign uses the spatial mode as well, since the gun appears behind the red bar that signals “no” or “not allowed.” So while the visual dominates in signs, even this composition is not “purely” visual.

Aural

The aural mode is focused on sound including, but not limited to, music, sound effects, ambient noises, silence, tone of voice in spoken language, volume of sound, emphasis, and accent. [2]

An example of an aural mode— one that depends almost exclusively on sound—might be the recording of a public speech that is delivered orally to a live audience, a radio address, or a podcast.

Gestural

The gestural mode refers to the way movement is interpreted. Facial expressions, hand gestures, body language, and interaction between people are all gestural modes. This has always been important in face-to-face conversations and in theater, but it has become more apparent on the web lately with the wide use of YouTube and other video players. The gestural mode works with linguistic, visual, aural, and sometimes even spatial modes in order to create more detail and communicate better to the reader or consumer of the gestural text.

Linguistic (or Alphabetic)

The linguistic mode refers to written or spoken words. The mode includes word choice, the delivery of written or spoken text, the organization of words into sentences and paragraphs, and the development and coherence of words and ideas. Linguistic is not always the most important mode; this depends on the other modes at play in the text, the type of text, and other factors. Linguistic is probably the most widely used mode because it can be both read and heard on both paper or audio. The linguistic mode is the best way to express details and lists.



Figure 3. A traditional classroom setting with orderly class rows.

Spatial

The spatial mode, as the name implies, refers to the arrangement of elements in space. It involves the organization of items and the physical closeness between people and objects.

A good example of the spatial mode might be the different ways in which chairs and desks are arranged in a classroom.

Here is a “traditional” classroom: Individual desks are arranged in orderly rows, facing the front of the room to make the teacher who would stand before the chalkboard the center of attention. The teacher also stands at a distance from the students; the students who sit in the back could hardly even see the board!

By contrast, in this advertisement for “collaborative classrooms,” we see the chairs and desks clustered in small groups so that students can work together on projects. The classroom is also de-centered, which suggests that the teacher and students are working together as partners rather than in a hierarchical manner. All of the people are in close proximity to one another.

Think about how a teacher communicates her ideas about learning through the way in which she arranges her classroom. In that sense, the arrangement of desks and chairs can be “read” as a message about teaching and learning.



Figure 4. A classroom where students interact with each other in different groups.

1. Kristin L. Arola, Jennifer Sheppard, and Cheryl E. Ball. Writer/Designer: A Guide to Making Multimodal Projects. Bedford/St. Martin's. 2014. ↵
2. Kristin L. Arola, Jennifer Sheppard, and Cheryl E. Ball. Writer/Designer: A Guide to Making Multimodal Projects. Bedford/St. Martin's. 2014. ↵

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4.17: Examples of Multimodal Texts

Learning Objective

- Understand the use of multimodality

Multimodal texts mix modes in all sorts of combinations. While often one mode will predominate, more frequently, several modes combine to communicate a message or argument. We will look at several examples of multimodal texts below.

Example of multimodality: Scholarly text

Here is an example of a standard scholarly book in a print edition. This text relies primarily on the linguistic mode. In other words, it is made up primarily of letters and words. However, because most texts are multimodal in some sense, there are at least three modes at work in this example.



CHAPTER ONE

{STUFF AND FLUFF}

The age of information has brought with it a strange paradox. Just when we are drowning in stuff, we seem to be abolishing it. Stuff and what we think about stuff seem to be changing places. Never before have so many people bought so many physical objects, so many varied consumer goods, or expressed their personalities so fully through them. Houses get bigger, and one is seldom enough. Cars metamorphose into trucks and, with the Hummer, into tanks. Mail-order catalogs rain down on us. Our garages must have boats and our homes, home theaters. Moralizers preach about the villainies of such rampant consumerism but also complain, oddly enough, that not everyone can afford them. People love stuff and get enormous fun out of it, especially if it is a fashionable brand. But all this stuff, in spite of much whining to the contrary, has not stifled the finer things of life. There have never been so many art galleries, so many symphony orchestras, so sophisticated a life for the senses and the sensitive. And never have the

For the wit and mind of man, if it work upon matter, which is the contemplation of the creatures of God, worketh according to the stuff, and is limited thereby, but if it work upon itself, as the spider worketh his web, then it is endless, and brings forth indeed cobwebs of learning, admirable for the fineness of thread and work but of no substance or profit.

Francis Bacon, *The Advancement of Learning*

- The **linguistic** mode operates in the printed written text.
- The **visual** mode operates in the formatting of the text (such as the use of fully justified margins) and in the choice of typography (such as the different fonts used for the chapter title and the use of brackets around the chapter title).
- The **spatial** mode can be seen in the text's arrangement (such as the placement of the epigraph from Francis Bacon's Advancement of Learning at the top right and wrapping of the paragraph around it).

Example of Multimodality: Podcast+Website

Sometimes a text in a single modality can be augmented or expanded by other modalities. Take a look at the website for the first episode *Someone Knows Something* podcast. A podcast is entirely an aural text, but the website for the episode expands the podcast with images, text, and video related to the original narration. Thus, this episode's web page is a multimodal refashioning of the original text.

Example of Multimodality: NPR's Daily Picture Show

In this journalistic piece, which consists largely of print illustrated by a few key pictures, we get insight into Geoffrey Hiller's longstanding intellectual and visual involvement with the people and places of Myanmar. Coburn Dukehart's "A Long-Standing Love Affair with Myanmar," an episode in National Public Radio's feature, "Daily Picture Show," is a journalistic report about Hiller with highly symbolic, if realistic, photos from his journeys in the country of Myanmar. Hiller has since published a book of

photos on the subject, entitled Daybreak in Myanmar, which is available for sale. As a book of photos, Hiller's work relies primarily on the linguistic, visual, and spatial modes. But if you visit Hiller's professional website, you can find many multimodal pieces, most of them in the Flash format. (Note: Flash productions are not visible on iPad or phones but are visible on a computer.)

✔ ✔ Examples

Check out this intriguing multimodal text, "Poor Millennials," that uses a host of different modes to communicate. How many modes does this text employ? How do you think the multimodality of this text increases its power to communicate its message and ideas?

Multiliteracy

Once upon a time, being literate meant the ability to communicate through reading and writing. Of course, literacy was not the only way to communicate. Oral storytelling, for example, is a tradition of communication that precedes and continues to this day and does not require traditional literacy for the storyteller or the listener.

Today, however, we know that communication encompasses the ability to produce, consume, and analyze ideas and information across a variety of modes. As a result, scholars like the New London Group have coined a new term, multiliteracy, which acknowledges that communication is not just traditional reading and writing and recognizes that students of communication need to be proficient across a range of modes. Too often traditional education focuses exclusively on reading and writing. A focus on multiliteracy includes but also moves beyond just reading and writing to consider the ways in which all of use need to be multiliterate to function effectively as communicators in today's world.

Note the correct terminology: a text may be multimodal; a person who has the ability to create, consume, and/or analyze a multimodal text is multiliterate.

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4.18: Multimodal Writing

Learning Objectives

- Describe effective techniques for multimodal writing

Multimodal Writing

Many students have extensive experience in multimodal composing outside the classroom. How does that experience translate into writing in college? How can you apply your multiliteracy skills to the multimodal writing that is becoming increasingly popular in college classes? Below, we'll discuss how to apply your skills and the principles of effective writing to composing in a variety of mediums—including when creating web pages that use text and images, videos, or other kinds of multimedia texts as well as photo and video essays.

Writing for the Web

Just as when you write an essay, when you write for the web, you want to make sure your ideas are clear and that you consider your audience as you write. However, there are some important differences between writing a traditional essay and writing for the web.

When you write for the web, you should keep these key differences in mind:



Figure 1. Choosing media that is relevant to your page will help the reader to have a better understanding of the information you are presenting.

- Both your sentences and your paragraphs should generally be shorter. You don't want heavy text on your web page.
- You'll generally use a tone of voice that is a little more informal than a traditional, academic tone. When you write for the web, your audience is broader than an academic audience.
- Use subheadings to help your audience easily scan for main ideas or content that is the most important.
- Use embedded links, images, videos, and other relevant media to make your page more interesting and appealing. Just be sure that the media is relevant to your content.

Blogs

A blog is an online journal that is regularly updated. Blogs are often devoted to writing or "posting" about a particular topic. Unlike private journals, blogs encourage readers to interact through written feedback, and bloggers often provide links to similar or useful sites. In this way, bloggers help create an online community, or social network, of people who connect and share information and opinions about a topic.

There are many sites available that allow you to create blog space for free. **Blogger**, **Tumblr**, and **WordPress** are among the most popular, and creating blog space on these sites is as easy as creating an account, pointing and clicking on style options, and then posting your text and images.

Effective Blogging

There are certain things to consider when writing a blog. Click the plus marks on the interaction to explore and learn about best practices when writing a blog.

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

d]

Photo Essays

A photo essay is simply an essay that uses images to tell a story or make a point. In a photo essay, images are placed in a specific order in order to send a particular message to an audience. Some photo essays will have text to support the photos or provide details, but some photo essays will have no text at all.

TIPS: The tips below will help you if you are creating your first photo essay.

1. **Pick a specific topic.** Just as you need a specific topic or angle with a traditional essay, you need a specific focus for your photo essay.
2. **Do some research.** Just as you often need to conduct research to write a traditional essay, it's important to conduct some research when you create a photo essay. Doing research can help you narrow your focus and have a better idea about what you want to photograph for your essay.
3. **Take more photos than you think you'll need.** It's important to plan well for a photo essay, and part of that planning involves taking more pictures than you may feel is necessary at first. When it's time to put your photo essay together, you'll be thankful if you have a lot of options.
4. **You don't need a fancy camera.** You can take some excellent pictures using your cell phone and edit them using Instagram. Instagram will also let you change the look and feel of your pictures using filters, which can allow you to edit your pictures to really fit the mood of the photo essay you are trying to create.

Video Essays

Much like photo essays and traditional essays, video essays tell a story or make a point. The difference is that video essays use video to present the information.

When you make a video essay, you can use video, pictures, text, music, and/or narration to create a video essay that is powerful and effective. If you think about, many music videos are actually video essays, so chances are, you know a lot more about video essays than you might think. And, because the creation of videos for YouTube has become so popular, many professors are assigning video essays as an alternative to traditional essays.

? Link to Learning

This sample video essay will give you a good idea about how video and words come together to create an argument.

The process for creating a video essay isn't that different from creating a traditional essay—at least in the beginning. However, you'll be working with a lot more technology as you put a video essay together. Still, thanks to some excellent video editors, creating a video essay isn't as difficult as it may seem.

The following steps will help you get going with your project:

1. **Develop a topic.** Using traditional prewriting, work to narrow your topic into something specific. If you're telling a story, think about good elements of a narrative. If you're making an argument in your video essay, think about the elements of an effective argument. Once you have your topic and angle, you're ready for the next step.
2. **Create an outline and a basic script for your video.**
3. **Collect your images.** You can use still images and/or video you film yourself, but you'll need to plan for more pictures or footage than you'll need in order to have plenty of good content to work with.
4. **Collect your voice files and/or music.** Free Creative Commons music can be found at the **Creative Commons Legal Music For Videos** site.
5. **Upload your files into your video editing software** and begin the process of creating your video essay. **Windows Movie Maker** and **iMovie** for Macs work well, and you can find other options for free movie-editing software on the web.
6. **Share your video essay.** You can share your video essay with the world on your web page or on YouTube.

E-Portfolios

In an effort to save paper and give students an opportunity to share their work in a course on the web, even face-to-face writing classes are making the move to e-portfolios. A portfolio is essentially a collection of your work (in this case writing) that you generally put together at the end of a course or sequence of courses. A portfolio allows you to revise and polish your work and

showcase your best pieces. An e-portfolio simply gives you an opportunity to do this online. While some course management systems allow you to create a portfolio within an online course, you may simply use free web space to make your e-portfolio.

When you make an e-portfolio, you should keep in mind that your work will be read electronically, so you should follow good design principals for creating an e-portfolio space that is visually appealing. Of course, you will also want to keep in mind the requirements of your course.

The following guidelines will help you create a quality e-portfolio, but you should consult with your professor about specific requirements that may be different from this suggested list.

- Be sure to polish your work for your portfolio. If you are presenting essays from a writing course, make sure you revise and edit your work again before posting it to your portfolio.
- Include a cover or introductory letter. This will allow you to introduce yourself and your work to your audience.
- Make adjustments to your text to make your writing more appropriate for the web. This means, unless your professor asks for it specifically, you shouldn't put an APA cover page on your web page, even though you may still use APA formatting for any kind of source documentation.
- Share your work. A portfolio is a great way to share the work you have created for your college courses with your friends and family. Ultimately, you may even share e-portfolios with potential employers.

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4.19: Presentations

Learning Objectives

- Describe components of an effective presentation

Presentations

In college and beyond, you'll find that you often need to present information from your research or other writing activities in the form of a presentation. A presentation gives your audience a quick overview of your work and provides your audience with some visual support for your ideas and information.

Presentations are becoming more and more common in all levels of college courses because your professors know presentations are so critical in the world today. The most common presentation assignments are PowerPoint assignments, but you may also use other programs such as Google Slides or Prezi.

Preparing for a Presentation

Just as different writing assignments have unique expectations from you as a student, presentations will also vary depending on the assignment. Carefully read the assignment and directions before you try to create an outline for your presentation. For example, you may be asked to give an argumentative presentation, and that will follow a similar structure as an argumentative essay. Here are some things to keep in mind:

- Remember to **present your thesis statement or main idea clearly**.
- Provide the **highlights of your evidence** from your essay (if you are building from an essay) or simply focus on the **key points** of evidence from your research. Don't try to cover everything!
- You may be asked to **address the opposition**. How you do this will depend upon your goals and the type of argument you are making, but you should always do it.
- **Use images relevant to your points** as evidence. Images are powerful and are important pieces of an effective presentation. Think about how you can use images to amplify your thinking!
- And always **cite your sources**!

Watch It

The sample video below was created using Prezi by a student in a beginning writing class. She took an essay she had written on issues in the clothing industry found here and developed a Prezi to share with a broader audience. Click below to see how she developed an argumentative presentation for her writing class.

Note: This is still a very text-heavy and image-light presentation. Notice how the slides that combine text and image are more powerful in conveying information and the student's broader perspective on her topic. As you watch the presentation, consider moments where some of the text could have been replaced by an image. Or, think about moments where she could have replaced much of her text altogether with just an image, and then presented the text orally while her audience was viewing the image. Remember, it's much easier for a viewer to see and think about an image than it is for a viewer to try to read all the text on your slides.

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290966715661166178/embed

Use this Prezi YouTube channel for tutorials and tips for creating powerful Prezi Presentations.

Creating Effective PowerPoint Presentations

PowerPoint presentations are quite common in both academic and professional settings, and, because they are such an important part of how you'll likely present your ideas and information to an audience, it's helpful to have some basic information on how to create an effective PowerPoint presentation.

The basic purpose of a PowerPoint presentation is to give you a way to present key ideas to an audience with visual support. Your PowerPoint presentation shouldn't be full of text. It is meant to provide you with speaking points, and detailed notes should be kept

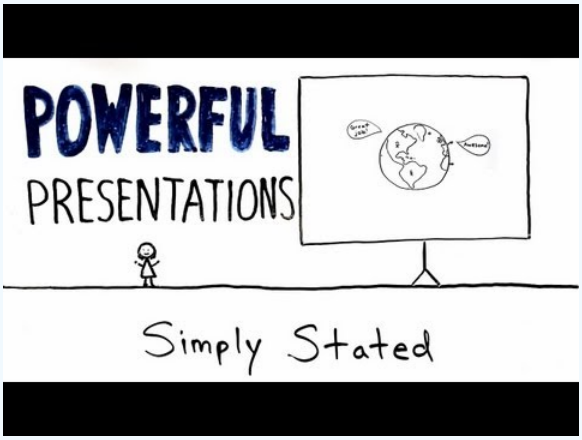
from your audience. You want to keep your slides clear, clean, short, focused, and you want to keep your audience from using the expression that we sometimes hear in reference to long, boring PowerPoint presentations, “death by PowerPoint.”

TIPS: Here are some tips to keep in mind when creating an effective PowerPoint presentation:

1. **Remember to avoid too much text.** You should keep your text brief and include talking points only. Detailed notes can be inserted into the notes section of PowerPoint (or you can use some other form of notes as you present), but only you should see those notes, unless a professor asks to see your notes to evaluate your PowerPoint as an assignment.
2. **Be consistent and clear with your font choices.** Helvetica is a nice font for presentations. Make sure your font is large enough that an audience in a room would be able to see your text, even if audience members are sitting in the back of the room.
3. **Be careful with your color choices for text and background.** You want to make sure your audience can read your text easily. Black on white text is easiest to read but is also boring for a presentation. Still, when you add color, just be sure you are adding color that works and doesn’t distract.
4. **Add images.** Text on slides for every slide is boring. Add appropriate images to your slides. Relevant charts and graphs are excellent, as are pictures that will connect to your content. Think about moments where an image can more easily convey information or a message. A powerful image on a slide with no accompanying text can be a powerful way to capture your audience’s attention.
5. **Make sure your main points are clear.** Remember to connect your ideas well and provide background information and transitions when necessary.
6. **Keep your audience in mind.** Your audience will affect the overall tone and appearance of your presentation. Sometimes, humor can be appropriate. Other times, a more serious tone may be necessary. Just as you evaluate your situation any time you write a paper, you should evaluate your situation for creating a PowerPoint presentation.

✔ ✔ Watch It

Watch this video to review some important tips for giving effective presentations.



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: pb.libretexts.org/ec1/?p=250

You can view the transcript for “How to Give an Awesome (PowerPoint) Presentation (Whiteboard Animation Explainer Video) here (opens in new window).

? ? Try It

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

Finally, don’t forget the key to success at everything: **practice, practice, practice**. Don’t spend all your time preparing your slides and forget to practice making the presentation. Some people use the notes section to outline what they plan to say. Others write out a detailed script. There is no one way of preparing what you will say during a presentation. Just remember, you need to prepare yourself to speak just as you have prepared your slides.

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4.20: Putting It Together- Writing in College



One of the major transitions between high-school writing and college writing is learning to take advantage of a wider set of options for organizing an essay. Choosing the right structure requires you to use your critical thinking skills and select the best fit for your purpose and audience. In this module, we learned that:

- Effective writing is essential to your success in college.
- Writing before college often emphasizes formulaic structure, such as the five-paragraph theme or the three-point essay. Those structures are appropriate as an introduction to academic writing because they teach writers to make a point and use evidence to support it in an organized way.
- Moving beyond the five-paragraph essay is a key component of becoming a successful college writer.
- Writing assignments can be as varied as the instructors who assign them.
- Being asked to summarize the key ideas within a source is a common task for many types of writing.
- 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.
- There are four main types of writing: expository, persuasive, narrative, and descriptive.
- Some generally recognized rhetorical patterns include argumentative/persuasive, comparison, cause and effect, illustration, narration, description, definition, classification and division, and process.
- What distinguishes an argumentative essay from a descriptive essay or "report" is that the argument must take a stance; if you're merely summarizing "both sides" of an issue or pointing out the "pros and cons," you're not really writing an argument.
- Narration is a rhetorical style that focuses on telling a story. Being able to convey events in a clear, descriptive, and compelling language is a common task in many types of writing, including research writing and writing in a range of fields.
- A mode, quite simply, is a means of communicating. We live in a multimodal world, and it's critical to be multiliterate – able to read, analyze, and compose a variety of multimodal texts.
- A presentation gives your audience key information from your work and uses visual support to convey that information efficiently and effectively.

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4.21: Discussion- Descriptive Writing

This activity will encourage you to flex your creative descriptor muscles by generating unanticipated language.

STEP 1: Begin by finding a mundane object. (A plain, unspectacular rock is my go-to choice.) It's sometimes helpful to do this activity with pen and paper, so you can either divide a blank piece of paper into four quadrants OR use a document and divide it into four sections using headers:

- **Section 1**: Object Description
- **Section 2**: New descriptive words
- **Section 3**: Object Uses
- **Section 4**: New uses

Set a timer for two minutes; in this time, write as many describing words about your object as possible. You may use a bulleted list. Full sentences are not required.

Next, set a timer for five minutes. In the second section, write as many NEW describing words as possible without repeating anything from your first quadrant. If you're struggling, try to use imagery and/or figurative language.

For the third section, set the timer for two minutes. Write as many uses as possible for your object.

Before starting the fourth section, set a timer for five minutes. Come up with as many NEW uses as you can, without repeating any of the uses from the previous section.

STEP 2: After this generative process, identify your three favorite words and ideas from the second and fourth lists. Spend ten minutes writing in any genre or form you like—a story, a poem, a song, a letter, anything—on any topic you like. Your writing doesn't have to be about the object you chose, but try to incorporate your chosen descriptors or uses in some way.

STEP 3: Share your writing in the discussion forum and debrief about the exercise. What surprises did this process yield? What does it teach us about innovative language use?

STEP 4: Respond in two separate posts to two classmates (in at least 75 words). Explicitly address their examples and try to extend, complicate, or redirect their points in a substantive, knowledge-demonstrating way.

Remember: Writing invites discovery: the more you look the more you see! Objects aren't boring. The ordinary can be described creatively and dramatically for a purpose. Also, suspend judgment—your first idea may not be your best.

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4.22: Discussion- Neologism Assignment

Some students are nervous about writing so to start your writing process, why not be creative and make up a word to venture into the writing world? Remember when you were a child and maybe had a made-up language or words? Or maybe you created a word your use in your social media postings that has taken on a definition of its own?

Neologism

STEP 1: Each of us encounters moments or experiences when the right words don't seem to exist for the emotions and ideas we wish to express. Consider some of these moments in your own life, and then choose an emotion or idea that you have trouble communicating. Instead of attempting to communicate this emotion or idea using an already existing vocabulary, **create a new word or phrase to describe it**. For example, when I am about to face a challenge of something I have never attempted before, the word I use is *flutternoia* (a combination of fear and excitement before attempting an important challenge).

Even if you're struggling to create a new word, you can use an existing word and change the definition or combine two words. Use your creativity!

Many times, new words become increasingly popular and get added to the dictionary, especially words related to new technologies. Consider words like selfie, vlog, phablet, or meme. Some of student-created neologisms include:

- Absoluternal: that which is both timeless and unchangeable
- Jackosaurus: a deceased and much-loved relative whom the student believed she would spend the rest of her life trying to get to know more about and preserve in memory

STEP 2: Once you have created a new term for the feeling or idea you wish to convey, explore the word in an essay, giving both explanations and examples for appropriate applications. How and when will it be used, and why? The essay should be at least 250 words; 1 page double-spaced, in MLA format.

STEP 3: Post your essay in the discussion forum.

STEP 4: Complete a thorough review of at least ONE of your classmate's neologism papers and answer the following questions:

- What do you think of the new word? Do you see it gaining in popularity?
- What are the strengths of the paper? What do you like about it?
- What would you say is the thesis statement of this paper? Are there topic sentences too? Explain.
- What points in the paper do you feel need improvement? Are there any mistakes or errors? Please be specific, but kind; this will help you and your classmates.
- Does the entire paper have fluidity? Are there any parts that you feel are "misplaced" or should not be in this essay?

Rubric

Sample Grading Rubric

Criteria	Proficient	Developing	Not Evident	Points
New Word	Correctly creates and defines a new word, either by making one up or creating a hybrid of existing words.	Does not correctly identify or describe the thesis statement	Does not identify a new word to define.	__/5
Explanation	Essay explains the definition of the new word, including examples and appropriate applications. It is easy to read and organized in a logical manner.	Essay does not provide sufficient examples or applications of the new word. It may be confusing or hard to read.	Missing essay or essay is difficult to read or understand.	__/10

Discussion	Posts personal essay to the forum comments on a classmate's essay, answering the five questions that are posed. This should be kind, thorough, and substantive.	Posts discussion; offers incomplete response to classmate.	Does not comment on another post.	__/5
Total:	__/20			

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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5.1: Why It Matters- Grammar Essentials

Why care about proper punctuation?



Figure 1. Can you spot the error in this sign?

Writers and their readers are in a relationship. Writers want to convey their ideas. Readers want to understand those ideas. Anything that hinders that understanding is annoying to the reader and damaging to the writer's credibility. That's why it's important for writers to identify and fix any errors that interfere with readers' expectations.

Seemingly minor errors in punctuation or sentence structure slow down readers and frustrate them. Writers must learn which errors they are most prone to and how to eliminate them before they share a writing project with an audience. When you learn to limit errors that readers perceive as sloppy and careless, you will be better able to control your message and the way your audience receives it.

Though there are numerous strategies for improving readability, this module addresses some of the more common errors that first-year college writers make. Learning to recognize and resolve these errors is a good foundation for improving the readability of your writing.

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5.2: Introduction to Punctuation

What you'll learn to do: analyze the use of punctuation marks



There are a few more important pieces of punctuation we should learn about in order to be more effective in our writing. These little marks can often be the cause of heartache and headaches. Errors in punctuation can often have unintended meanings. For example, consider the difference the comma makes in the following sentences:

- Let's eat, Grandpa.
- Let's eat Grandpa.

The comma in the first sentence indicates that you are addressing Grandpa and telling him that you would like to eat. The lack of a comma in the second sentence makes this sentence sound like you are considering cannibalism. That little punctuation mark makes a big difference in what you are trying to say and can lead to some interesting misunderstandings if not used correctly.

However, punctuation doesn't exist simply to cause problems; in fact, it was created to help communication. These marks were invented to guide readers through passages—to let them know how and where words relate to one another. When you learn the rules of punctuation, you equip yourself with an extensive toolset, so you can better craft language to communicate the exact message you want.

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 section will cover the MLA rules for punctuation, but we'll also make note of rules from other styles when they're significantly different.

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5.3: End Punctuation

Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate the proper use of periods, question marks, and exclamation points



Figure 1. A period is one of the three possible punctuation marks at the end of a sentence.

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

Periods indicate a neutral sentence, and as such are by far the most common ending punctuation mark. They're at the end of every sentence on this page so far. They occur at the end of statements. While two spaces after periods used to be the norm, now just one space is standard.

Question Marks



Figure 2. Ensure that you identify whether a question is direct or indirect- it will affect the punctuation.

A question mark comes at the end of a question (How was class today?). A rhetorical question is asked to make a point, and an answer is not expected (Why does it always have to rain on the first day of class?). Some questions are used principally as polite requests (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 do not have question marks at their ends. They can be used in many of the same ways as declarative ones, but they often emphasize uncertainty 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**.

Notice that different word order is used in direct and indirect questions: in direct questions, the verb usually comes before the subject, while in indirect questions, the verb appears second.

What about when you have a sentence that is part statement and part question? What do you do then? You have a couple of options, depending upon the situation. You might have a sentence like this:

- The question I have is, how are we going to get out of here?

In this case, the statement before the question isn't complete, so you can simply use a comma to separate the statement from the question.

Of course, the sample sentence is a bit awkward, so it might be preferable to rewrite the sentence. You could change the sentence so the first part, the statement part, is a complete sentence. In this situation, you might have a sentence like the following:

- One question remains: How are we going to get out of here?

Exclamation Points



Figure 3. Always carefully review your use of exclamation marks- they are generally an informal punctuation mark that is frequently overused.

The exclamation point is a punctuation mark usually used after an interjection or exclamation to indicate strong feelings or high volume, and it often marks the end of a sentence. You've likely seen it overused on the internet.

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 it may indicate astonishment: "They were the footprints of a gigantic duck!"

The exclamation point is sometimes used in conjunction with the question mark to convey protest or astonishment ("Of all the coffee shops, you want to meet at the Pied Cow?!").

Exclamation points may be repeated for additional emphasis ("That's great!!!"), but this practice is generally appropriate only in casual or informal writing, such as text messaging or online communication with friends and family.

In most cases, you should be careful with exclamation marks and make sure the situation calls for them. They are generally considered pretty informal, and a particularly famous writer had this to say about them:

Cut out all these exclamation points. An exclamation point is like laughing at your own joke.
— F. Scott Fitzgerald, author of The Great Gatsby

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Punctuation Clusters

Occasionally, you'll encounter cases that seem 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.

In general, you should not use more than one ending punctuation mark (period, question mark, exclamation point) in a row. If you are quoting a question, it should end with a question mark, not a question mark and a period. If an abbreviation, like *etc.*, ends a sentence, you should use only 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 in the paragraph above with *etc.* This rule also applies to the abbreviations *e.g.* and *i.e.*

Note: *e.g.* is an abbreviation for the Latin phrase *exempli gratia*, which means "for example," and *i.e.* stands for *id est*, which is Latin for "that is."

Periods and parentheses can also appear right next to each other. Sometimes the period comes after the closing parenthesis, but sometimes it appears inside the parentheses. This depends on how much of the sentence is explaining or qualifying the rest of the sentence.

- I have always wanted to travel to Cuba (although the only city I know of is Havana).
- I am going on a trip to Cuba next week. (I have always wanted to go there.)

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5.4: Hyphens and Dashes

Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate the proper use of hyphens and dashes

Hyphens



Figure 1. A hyphen.

The Oxford Manual of Style once stated, “If you take hyphens seriously, you will surely go mad.” Hyphens belong to that category of punctuation marks that will hurt your brain if you think about them too hard, and, like commas, people disagree about their use in certain situations. Nevertheless, you will have to use them regularly because of the nature of academic and professional writing. If you learn to use hyphens properly, they help you to write efficiently and concretely.

The Hyphen’s Function

Fundamentally, the hyphen is a joiner. It can join several different types of things:

- two nouns to make one complete word (kilogram-meter)
- an adjective and a noun to make a compound word (accident-prone)
- two words that, when linked, describe a noun (agreed-upon sum, two-dimensional object)
- a prefix with a noun (un-American)
- double numbers (twenty-four)
- numbers and units describing a noun (1000-foot face; a 10-meter difference)
- “self” words (self-employed, self-esteem)
- new word blends (cancer-causing, cost-effective)
- prefixes and suffixes to words, in particular when the writer wants to avoid doubling a vowel or tripling a consonant (anti-inflammatory; shell-like)
- multiple adjectives with the same noun (blue- and yellow-green beads; four- and five-year-olds)

A rule of thumb for the hyphen is that the resulting word must act as one unit; therefore, the hyphen creates a new word that has a single meaning. Usually, you can tell whether a hyphen is necessary by applying common sense and mentally excluding one of the words in question, testing how the words would work together without the hyphen. For example, the phrases “high-pressure system,” “water-repellent surface,” and “fuel-efficient car” would not make sense without hyphens, because you would not refer to a “high system,” a “water surface,” or a “fuel car.” As your ears and eyes become attuned to proper hyphenation practices, you will recognize that both meaning and convention dictate where hyphens fit best.

Examples of Properly Used Hyphens

Some examples of properly used hyphens follow. Note how the hyphenated word acts as a single unit carrying a meaning that the words being joined would not have individually.

small-scale study	two-prong plug	strength-to-weight ratio	high-velocity flow	frost-free lawn
self-employed worker	one-third majority	coarse-grained wood	decision-making process	blue-green algae
air-ice interface	silver-stained cells	protein-calorie malnutrition	membrane-bound vesicles	phase-contrast microscope
long-term-payment loan	cost-effective program	time-dependent variable	radiation-sensitive sample	long-chain fatty acid

When Hyphens Are Not Needed

By convention, hyphens are not used after words ending in *–ly*, nor when the words are so commonly used in combination that no ambiguity results. In these examples, no hyphens are needed:

finely tuned engine	blood pressure	sea level
real estate	census taker	atomic energy
civil rights law	public utility plant	carbon dioxide

Note: Phrases like containing the word *well* like *well known* are contested. *Well* is an adverb, and thus many fall into the school of thought that a hyphen is unnecessary. However, others say that leaving out the hyphen may cause confusion and therefore include it (*well-known*). The standard in MLA is as follows: When it appears before the noun, *well known* should be hyphenated. When it follows the noun, no hyphenation is needed.

- She is a **well-known** person.
- She is **well known**.

Prefixes and Suffixes

Most prefixes do not need to be hyphenated; they are simply added in front of a noun, with no spaces and no joining punctuation necessary. The following is a list of common prefixes that do not require hyphenation when added to a noun:

after	anti	bi	bio	co
cyber	di	down	hetero	homo
infra	inter	macro	micro	mini
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

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Dashes



Figure 2 . An em dash.

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 pair of dashes in place of parentheses, 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 3. An en dash.

The Em-dash

The dash we typically use is technically called the "em dash," which gets its name from back in the days of typesetting on old-fashioned printing presses. It is a dash that is the width of an *M*, so it is significantly longer than the hyphen.

The En-dash

There is also an "en dash"—whose length is that of an *N*, 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.

The en dash 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.

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Click through this presentation and answer the questions to test your understanding of when to use dashes and hyphens.

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5.5: Parentheses, Brackets, and Ellipses

Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate the proper use of parentheses, brackets, and ellipses

Parentheses



Figure 1. A opening and closing parentheses.

Interestingly, parentheses can do more than make smiley faces 🙂 and sad faces 🙁 like these. Although they are quite handy for these important emoticons, they serve an important function in formal writing as well.

Parentheses are used to set off information in a sentence that is important but not really a part of the main message. It's important to remember that your sentence should make sense if you eliminate the parentheses and all that is contained between them.

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.

You'll probably use parentheses most often in your research papers because both APA and MLA formatting require in-text citations using parentheses. So right after a quote or any other borrowed information, you should include an in-text citation in parentheses, as illustrated in these examples:

- APA (Jones, 2011, p.131).
- MLA (Jones 131).

Note that the period comes after the parenthesis in both APA and MLA format. The exception to this rule is with block quotes. When using block quotes, in both APA and MLA format, the period comes before the in-text citation.

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Brackets



Figure 2. An opening and closing bracket.

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.)

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Bracket Placement

See if you can correctly place the brackets in the following interactive.

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Ellipses

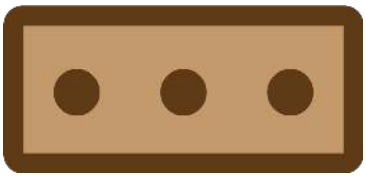


Figure 3. An ellipsis.

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:

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.

It's a lengthy quote, and it contains more information than you want to include. Here's how to cut it down:

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*. . . . 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 . . . to a form of feeding known as branch stripping, where leaves are plucked from branches as the teeth are dragged along them.

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, semi-colons, 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!)

? ? Try It

Quote the following passage, using ellipses to remove the bolded portions and using brackets for clarity where necessary.

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?

[practice-area rows="6"][/practice-area]
[reveal-answer q="3662"]Show Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="3662"]The first ellipsis should follow a period, and the second should follow a comma. There are a couple of phrases that could be used in brackets, but we've chosen the phrase "research has shown."

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?

[/hidden-answer]

This is a part of Martin Luther King's famous "I Have a Dream" speech from the March on Washington for Jobs and Freedom in 1963. Quote part of the following passage, using ellipses to remove the bolded passage and making sure that you use the appropriate punctuation surrounding it:

> I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. I have a dream today. I have a dream that one day down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of "interposition" and "nullification,", one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today.

[reveal-answer q="713549"]Show Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="713549"]The first ellipses should NOT follow the comma, because the phrases that were removed make the comma meaningless. The second ellipses should follow the period. The third ellipses should follow the comma.

> "I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi . . . will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice. I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character. . . . I have a dream that one day down in Alabama, . . . little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers. I have a dream today."

[/hidden-answer]

The ellipsis can also indicate . . . a pause. This use is typically informal, and is only be used in casual correspondence (e.g., emails to friends, posts on social media, texting) or in literature. Because this use occurs in literature, you may find yourself quoting a passage that already has an ellipsis in it. For example, look at this passage spoken by Lady Bracknell, in *The Importance of Being Ernest*.

Well, I must say, Algernon, that I think it is high time that Mr. Bunbury made up his mind whether he was going to live or to die. This shilly-shallying with the question is absurd. Nor do I in any way approve of the modern sympathy with invalids. I consider it morbid. Illness of any kind is hardly a thing to be encouraged in others. Health is the primary duty of life. I am always telling that to your poor uncle, but he never seems to take much notice . . . as far as any improvement in his ailment goes. I should be much obliged if you would ask Mr. Bunbury, from me, to be kind enough not to have a relapse on Saturday, for I rely on you to arrange my music for me. It is my last reception, and one wants something that will encourage conversation, particularly at the end of the season when every one has practically said whatever they had to say, which, in most cases, was probably not much.

If you were to quote the passage, it may appear that something has been removed from the quote. So how can we indicate that this is not the case? If you think back to the bracket rules we just discussed, you may remember that [*sic*] can be used to show that an error was in the original. In a similar practice, we can enclose the ellipsis in brackets to show it appeared in the original work:

Well, I must say, Algernon, that I think it is high time that Mr. Bunbury made up his mind whether he was going to live or to die. This shilly-shallying with the question is absurd. Nor do I in any way approve of the modern sympathy with invalids. I consider it morbid. Illness of any kind is hardly a thing to be encouraged in others. Health is the primary duty of life. I am always telling that to your poor uncle, but he never seems to take much notice [. . .] as far as any improvement in his ailment goes. I should be much obliged if you would ask Mr. Bunbury, from me, to be kind enough not to have a relapse on Saturday, for I rely on you to arrange my music for me. It is my last reception, and one wants something that will encourage conversation, particularly at the end of the season when every one has practically said whatever they had to say, which, in most cases, was probably not much.

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5.6: Introduction to Apostrophes and Quotation Marks

What you'll learn to do: analyze the use of apostrophes



When you send a text message, you probably don't bother with apostrophes, right? It makes sense that we might not worry about properly punctuating possessives and contractions in a text message, but it's very important to remember to use apostrophes correctly in other writing situations.

Academics frequently debate whether or not text messaging is going to kill the poor apostrophe. In his essay "Dear Apostrophe: C Ya," Rob Jenkins (2012) writes, "[O]ne of my professors, talking about the way language evolves over time, predicted that the next evolutionary stage would involve common punctuation marks. Specifically, he said, the apostrophe would eventually cease to exist" (para. 1).

We'll see what the future holds, but the apostrophe is still standard usage. This section will help you understand and apply standard uses of apostrophes.

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5.7: When to Use Apostrophes

Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate the standard uses of apostrophes to show possession
- Demonstrate the standard uses of apostrophes in contractions



Figure 1. An apostrophe.

With possessives, the apostrophe is used in combination with an ***s*** to indicate that a word literally or conceptually possesses what follows it. Singular words, whether or not they end in ***s***, are made possessive by adding an apostrophe + ***s***. For example:

- a student's paper
- one hour's passing

For plural words, we typically indicate possession simply by adding the apostrophe without an additional ***s***. However, for a plural that does not end in an ***s*** (e.g., *bacteria*), we would add an apostrophe + ***s***. For example:

- Illinois's law or Illinois' law
- interviewees' answers
- her professors' office (an office shared by two of her professors; if it were just one professor, we would write *her professor's office*)

Writers sometimes mistakenly add apostrophes to make words plural, but this is not how the apostrophe is used; the apostrophe is used to show possession or ownership.

Watch It

This video explains how apostrophes are used to show possession.

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290906726309870758/embed

Here's a test you can use to determine whether an apostrophe is needed—we call it the "of" test. Try rewording the sentence and substituting the apostrophe with the word *of*.

Using an Apostrophe	**Using "of" test**
my friend's DVD	the DVD of my friend
Beth's zombie plan	the zombie plan of Beth
James's canned goods	the canned goods of James

If you just mean to make a word plural, you should not add an apostrophe. Here is an example of incorrect usage:

- The student's planned to buy their books but played Xbox instead.

Here, you would not use an apostrophe because there is no ownership being established. You can double-check this example and see that this use of the apostrophe would not pass the "of" test:

- **The planned of the students** just does not make sense.

The sentence above would not pass the test and should read as follows:

- The students planned to buy their books but played Xbox instead.

Plural Possessives

Making plural words possessive can be confusing at times because we so often add an ***s*** to a noun to make it plural. All of those ***s's*** can be a little overwhelming, but the rules are pretty simple:

To make plural nouns that do not end in ***s*** possessive, add ***'s***.

- the children's scary books
- the mice's tiny tails

To make plural nouns that end in ***s*** possessive, add just the apostrophe.

- my cats' treasures
- our zombie fortresses' weaknesses

Now try applying these apostrophe rules yourself.

? ? Try It

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

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 follow your teacher's preference, keep in mind that leaving out contractions can often make your words sound too formal and stilted. (And you shouldn't eliminate contractions in your papers just to up your word count!)

? ? To Apostrophe or not to apostrophe

Possessive pronouns vs. contractions

- your vs. you're
- its vs. it's
- their vs. 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. Try replacing the word in question with the expanded version of the contraction and seeing how it sounds.

> I think *it's* going to rain → I think *it is* going to rain.

If the word can be replaced by two words (*it's → it is*) then it is a contraction and it needs an apostrophe (because, remember, the apostrophe is there to replace the missing letters).

> I don't want to go to *your* play → I don't want to go to *you are* play.

If the word cannot be replaced by two words (*your → you are*) then it does not need an apostrophe.

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***. For example, *SSTs* (sea surface temperatures) is more acceptable than *SST's* when your intention is simply to pluralize.

Ideally, with an acronym or number, use the apostrophe before the ***s*** only to show possession (i.e., "1860's law"; "DEP's testing") or when confusion would otherwise result ("mind your p's and q's").

You can also use an apostrophe to stand in for omitted numbers.

I was born in ’75, and I’m feeling old.

It’s important to note that the use of contractions and the use of apostrophes to stand in for omitted numbers are generally considered too informal for most academic writing. Some students wonder why they should bother learning these rules, then. The answer is that there are plenty of writing situations in which contractions are appropriate. It’s just that contractions are too informal for most of the formal papers you write for college and should be avoided in those situations.

? ? Try It

https://h5p.cwr.olemiss.edu/h5p/embed/31

Work through these practice questions to ensure you are clear on the distinction between using an apostrophe to show possession or using it as a contraction.

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5.8: Quotation Marks

Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate the appropriate use of quotation marks

You may not find yourself needing to use dialog very often in academic writing, but you may be asked to write narrative essays in some classes, which often contain dialog. You also will need to use quotation marks when you are quoting others' words, which will happen in almost every genre of academic writing.

When you use dialog, it's important to use quotation marks to set apart the speech from the rest of your text. Otherwise, separating the dialog from the rest of the writing can be very confusing for readers.

When to use quotation marks?

You should use quotation marks any time you use words directly from another source. Sometimes, students think putting a citation or reference at the end "covers it," but you must use quotation marks to indicate borrowed words.

"Quotation marks serve primarily to tell the reader the exact words someone used" (Hope, 2010, p. 21).

If you paraphrase a source, this means you have put the information in your own words, and you don't need to use quotation marks. You should still cite with an in-text citation, but you shouldn't use quotation marks.

The key to borrowing information from sources is to remember that any words appearing inside quotation marks belong to someone else. Words that do not appear inside quotation marks are assumed to be yours.

Quotation Marks



Figure 1. Quotation marks.

There are four typical ways quotation marks are used.

1. The first is pretty self-explanatory: you use quotation marks when you're making a direct quote. This includes dialog as well as taking text verbatim from other sources.

- 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.

2. 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.

3. The third use is scare quotes**,** quotation marks that a writer places around a word or phrase to signal that they are using it in a non-standard, ironic, or otherwise special sense. 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.

4. The fourth use is to highlight the title of relatively short creative work or a part of a larger body of work, such as a newspaper article, poem, or chapter. Larger bodies of work, such as books, magazines, or newspapers are usually italicized.

- Did you read the *New Yorker* article, “How to Make Yourself Useful to Our New Robot Overlords”?

Where Do Quotation Marks Go?

Despite what you may see practiced, the fact is that the period and comma always go inside the quotation marks. (The rules in British English are different, which may be where some of the confusion arises.)

- Correct: The people of the pine barrens are often called “pineys.”
- Incorrect: The people of the pine barrens are often called “pineys”.

The semicolon, colon, dash, question mark, and exclamation point can fall inside or outside of the quotation marks, depending on whether the punctuation is a part of the original quote:

- 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.)

? ? Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20242

Single Quotation Marks

Now that you know what quotation marks are used for, you may wonder about the single quotation marks—the one that look like ‘this.’

Single quotation marks are used for quotes within quotes, as illustrated in the following example:

- The article read, “When the quarterback for the Green Bay Packers was interviewed, he said he was ‘upset’ about the call that affected the game.”

You may even encounter situations where you’ll close single quotation marks and double quotation marks at the same time, leaving you with “something like ‘this.’” Don’t worry if this happens. It is correct. It just means the quote within the quote ended at the same time the main quote ended.

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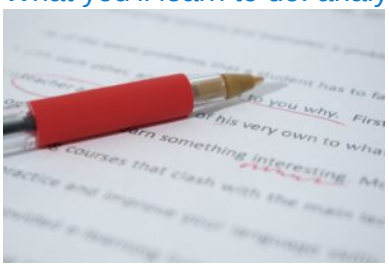
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5.9: Introduction to Commas

What you'll learn to do: analyze the use of commas



Perhaps the best and most instructive way to approach the comma is to remember its chief 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). Commas are also used to separate similar items in lists.

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5.10: Commas as Separators

Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate the standard uses of commas as separators

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, as in the following:

- **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.

When transition words 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 his boss called and asked him to work, he couldn't say no.
- Sam was retired. Nevertheless, he wanted to help out.

As you can see from these examples, a comma is always required after a transition word.

Descriptive Phrases

Descriptive phrases often need to be separated from the things that they describe. 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**.



Figure 1. Just like this lioness is separated from the onlookers at the zoo by a fence, descriptive phrases normally need to be separated from the things they are describing.

In each example, the phrase separated by the comma could be deleted from the sentence without destroying the sentence's basic meaning. 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:

- Incorrect example: Juliet named her hamster after Zeus the god of thunder.
- Correct example: Juliet named her hamster after Zeus, the god of thunder.

The description of Zeus as *the god of thunder* is not necessary information for your audience to understand the meaning of the sentence, because Zeus's identity is common knowledge. Therefore, the words *the god of thunder* should be set off with a comma.

However, sometimes this gets more tricky and there is more than one right answer, like in the sentences below:

- Jefferson's son, Miles, just started college.
- Jefferson's son Miles just started college.

Depending on the situation, either of these sentences could be correct. You would write the first sentence if Jefferson only has one son and his name is Miles. If Jefferson only has one son, then the name *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 only 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 separated so that the reader can consider each item individually. Consider the following sentence:

- 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."

? ? Try It

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5.11: Conjunctions and Lists

Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate the standard uses of commas with conjunctions and in lists

Coordinating Conjunctions: FANBOYS

Coordinating conjunctions 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
- so

When these conjunctions join two words or phrases, no comma is necessary.

- Paula and Lucca had a great time on their date.
- Minh turned off the lights but left the door unlocked.
- We bought tickets so we could go to the concert.

However, when these conjunctions are used to join two complete ideas, a comma is required:

- Danny studied the lifespan of rhinoceroses in their native Kenya, and he also studied the lifespan of rhinoceroses in captivity.
- We could write this as two separate sentences, but we've chosen to join them together here.
- There is an accident on the highway, so you and Mom should take an alternate route.

Watch it

Watch this video below to see when to use commas with coordinating conjunctions, and to understand why you don't need them with other types of transition words:



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: pb.libretexts.org/ec1/?p=280

You can view the transcript for "Comma story- Terisa Folaron" here (opens in new window).

Commas in Lists

Perhaps one of the most hotly contested comma rules is the case of the **serial comma,** or Oxford comma. MLA style (as well as APA and *Chicago*) requires the use of the serial comma—AP style (Associated Press style commonly used by news outlets) 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.

✔ ✔ Watch iT

This video explains the reasons why the serial or Oxford comma is still up for debate, and how you can decide when to use it.



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: pb.libretexts.org/ec1/?p=280

You can view the transcript for “Grammar’s Great Divide- The Oxford comma- TED-Ed” here (opens in new window).

Note: Some professors and many academic 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 recommended in AP style.

? ? Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20243

https://h5p.cwr.olemiss.edu/h5p/embed/27

See if you can place the commas or semicolons in their correct locations in the following interactive.

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5.12: Comma Overuse

Learning Objectives

- Recognize the standard uses of commas

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."



Figure 1. Review several of your own writing pieces- do you notice a pattern in your comma usage mistakes? Don't use the Charlie Brown method of "sprinkling" them in!

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
  - *Example:* My mother, is a wonderful cook.
  - *Example:* The judge, jury, and audience, were all surprised by this admission.
- in between compound subjects or compound verbs
  - Example: My brother, and my sister both hate broccoli with a passion.
  - Example: Jesse tripped, and fell into a rosebush.
- before any preposition
  - *Example:* I signaled quietly to Harriet that she had spinach, in her teeth.
  - *Example:* All Juan wanted to do was to have some time outside walking, through the forest.
- before or after any conjunction
  - *Example:* I challenged Mr. Burton to an arm-wrestling match and, he beat me twice.
  - *Example:* Joey tossed the ball, and watched his dog run after it.
    - Remember that you DO need a comma before a conjunction that is separating two independent clauses.
- before a list
  - *Example:* My favorite things to eat for breakfast are, bacon, eggs, and cereal.

All of these are places where commas should *not* go, even if they sound correct in your head or if it's a place you might pause while speaking aloud. Fixing these comma mistakes will require you to be very intentional about how you write, and to analyze your sentences and figure out what parts of speech fall where in your sentence. It may be time-consuming, but it will get easier as you get more comfortable with it.

Try It

https://h5p.cwr.olemiss.edu/h5p/embed/26

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 you improve your comma usage, you will learn to recognize and re-evaluate your sentence patterns, and the rewards are numerous. There is no foolproof or easy way to understand all standard uses of commas, 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.

? ? Try It

Complete the practice exercises in the interactive below to ensure you know when to use, and when *not* to use, a comma.

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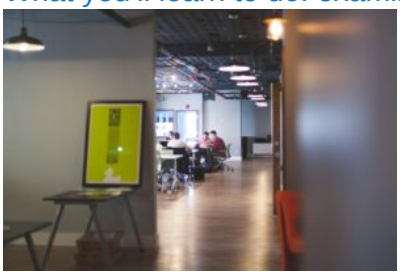
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5.13: Introduction to Semicolons and Colons

What you'll learn to do: examine the use of semicolons and colons



Semicolons and colons are like siblings: they look and sound alike, but they act very differently. The semicolon is a connector, holding elements together, while the colon is a signpost, pointing readers to something important. These powerful punctuation marks are handy tools for writers because they can replace words, making a piece of writing more concise, crisp, and readable.

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5.14: Semicolons- The Connectors

Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate the standard uses of semicolons

Semicolons serve as connectors in two ways: connecting two complete ideas and to separate items in a list.

Connecting Two Independent Clauses

First, a semicolon can connect two complete ideas (a complete idea is an independent clause, which has a subject and a verb and can stand on its own as a sentence) that are related to each other and/or equal. 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 its 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.



Figure 1. A semicolon is similar to a bridge- it connects two independent clauses to form a connection between ideas.

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. Remember: a comma can join a complete idea to other items while a semicolon needs a complete idea on either side.

Here are a few more examples:

- I had a salad for lunch; I wasn't all that hungry.
- Joe went to the soccer field; Amanda decided to go to the library.

Both of these sentences have two connected independent clauses that could both stand alone as individual sentences. The following sentence, however, has one independent clause and one dependent clause, so it would require a comma instead of a semicolon to join the two ideas:

- Emojis are fun to text with, because I can show how I'm really feeling.

Semicolons also serve to separate items in a list, such as in a list of places or a list of duties on a résumé:

> 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.

Try It

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5.15: Colons- The Signposts

Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate the standard uses of colons

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 as a flare in the road, signaling that something meaningful lies ahead.



Figure 1. This road sign warns drivers to pay attention to wildlife as they continue on. Colons similarly remind the reader to pay attention to what they will read next.

The colon is not just used to introduce a list; it is far more flexible. The colon can appear after the first word(s) of a sentence, just before the final word(s) of a sentence, or even between two independent clauses. It can be used to provide emphasis, to explain, or to summarize. Thus, it is one of the most powerful punctuation marks.

Use the colon when you wish to provide emphasis.

- To address this problem, we must turn to one of the biologist's most basic tools: the petri dish.
- My grandfather, a research scientist, gave me some critical advice about petri dishes: don't drop them.

Use the colon to introduce material that explains or summarizes what has preceded it.

- The petri dish: one of the biologist's most basic tools.
- In low-carbon steels, banding tends to affect two properties in particular: tensile ductility and yield strength.
- The research is conclusive: global warming is really happening.

Use the colon to present a list or series, particularly when there is a lot of similar material to join or when the items in the list include commas. When you are using a colon in this way, the colon usually gives the idea of "as follows" or "which is/are." That means you should not include a colon after words like "for example," or when you may be separating a verb from its object.

- A compost facility may not be located in the following: within 300 feet of an exceptional-value wetland, within 100 feet of a perennial stream, or within 50 feet of a property line.
- A backyard compost pile can process many items: fruit and vegetable scraps; crushed egg shells; spoiled soy, rice, almond, or coconut milk; loose leaf tea.
- Incorrect sentence: The three primary colors are: red, blue, and yellow. (The colon is not necessary to introduce this list because the first part of the sentence is grammatically incomplete without including the colors.)

Try It

Is the colon used correctly in the following sentences? Select yes or no.

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...sessments/5171

Understanding the functions of the semicolon and colon will help you use them effectively. Remember, a semicolon connects complete ideas or items in a list that have internal commas. Colons act as signposts to alert readers to important information.

https://h5p.cwr.olemiss.edu/h5p/embed/29

Review the distinctions between semicolons and colons in the following interactive.

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5.16: Introduction to Complete Sentences

What you'll learn to do: critique passages, revising for run-on sentences and fragments



Effective sentence structure is vital to readability. Readers become confused when sentences are incomplete, choppy, or convoluted. Writers need to pay attention to how sentence construction affects both their message and their audience. This section will help you better understand how to recognize and avoid two common sentence construction errors: fragments and run-on sentences. When you construct clearer sentences, you are able to better connect with your intended audience.

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5.17: Sentence Fragments

Learning Objectives

- Recognize sentence fragments
- Revise sentence fragments

Fragments are simply grammatically incomplete sentences—they are phrases and dependent clauses. 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?

A sentence fragment is simply a sentence that is missing one of its crucial elements: a subject, a verb, or a complete thought.

- Missing a subject: Slammed the door and left.
- Missing a verb: The answer to our prayers.
- Not expressing a complete thought: Since she never saw the movie.

Length is not an indication of a sentence fragment. For example, the following short sentence is *not* a sentence fragment:

- She ran.

The following, much longer sentence *is* a sentence fragment.

- Which is why we believe the proposed amendments should be passed.

Common Causes of Fragments

One of the reasons 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.

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

- Because the one I have isn't working too well.
- As his girlfriend chased him down the hall screaming her head off.

Relative pronouns, like "that" and "which," do the same type of thing as those listed above. Coordinating conjunctions (FANBOYS) can also cause problems. If you start a sentence with a coordinating conjunction, make sure that it is followed by a complete clause, not just a phrase.

- Which I prefer to keep secret.

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, because the subject is implied:

- Drop and give me fifty!
- Count how many times the word fragrant is used during commercial breaks.

Watch it

Watch the following video for more examples and practice in identifying sentence fragments.

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

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

Fixing Sentence Fragments

Let’s take a look at a couple of examples:

Example 1

- Ivana appeared at the committee meeting last week. And made a convincing presentation of her ideas about the new product.

Let’s look at the phrase “And made a convincing presentation of her ideas about the new product” in this example. 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.

Example 2

- The committee considered her ideas for a new marketing strategy quite powerful. The best ideas that they had heard in years.

The part after the period, “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.

Example 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 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.

Try It

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https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20245

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Check your understanding of sentence fragments in the following interactive.

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5.18: Run-on Sentences

Learning Objectives

- Recognize run-on sentences
- Revise for run-on sentences

Run-on sentences occur when two or more independent clauses are improperly joined. Often, in a run-on sentence, the independent clauses are simply joined without any punctuation or a coordinating conjunction. Another 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 (remember, FANBOYS):

- 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.

A run-on sentence should not just be defined as a sentence that goes on and on. Not every long sentence is a run-on sentence. For example, look at this quote from *The Great Gatsby*:

Its vanished trees, the trees that had made way for Gatsby's house, had once pandered in whispers to the last and greatest of all human dreams; for a transitory enchanted moment man must have held his breath in the presence of this continent, compelled into an aesthetic contemplation he neither understood nor desired, face to face for the last time in history with something commensurate to his capacity for wonder.

If you look at the punctuation, you'll see that this quote is a single sentence. F. Scott Fitzgerald used commas and semicolons in such a way that, despite its great length, it's grammatically sound, as well. Length is no guarantee of a run-on sentence.

Try It

Can you spot a run-on sentence? Click through this interactive to test yourself.

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290910801743442618/embed

Common Causes of Run-on Sentences

We often write run-on sentences because we sense that the sentences involved are closely related, and dividing them with a period just doesn't seem right. We may also write them because the parts seem too short to need any division, as in "She loves skiing but he doesn't." However, "She loves skiing" and "he doesn't" are both independent clauses, so they need to be divided by a comma and a coordinating conjunction—not just a coordinating conjunction by itself.

Another common cause of run-on sentences is mistaking adverbial conjunctions for coordinating conjunctions. For example, if we were to write, "She loved skiing, however he didn't," we would have produced a comma splice. The correct sentence would be "She loved skiing; however, he didn't."

Try It

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Fixing Run-on Sentences

Before you can fix a run-on sentence, you'll need to identify the problem. When you write and revise, **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.

There are five ways you can fix a run-on sentence or comma splice:

1. Change the comma in the comma splice to a semicolon (or add a semicolon between the independent clauses).
2. Change the comma in the comma splice to a colon, but only if the two clauses are very closely related and the second one seems to be explaining or clarifying the first.
3. Add a coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS) after the comma in the comma splice.
4. Change the comma to a period and separate the two independent clauses into two separate sentences.
5. Rewrite the sentence entirely so the run-on sentence is no longer a problem.

? ? Fixing a Comma Splice

Here is an example of a sentence with a comma splice:

- Jill has been waiting for years for this doctor's appointment, it's very frustrating to have it postponed.

Now let's look at how we can revise the comma splice using the techniques learned above:

1. Changing to a semicolon
    1. Jill has been waiting for years for this doctor's appointment; it's very frustrating to have it postponed.
2. Changing to a colon
    1. Jill has been waiting for years for this doctor's appointment: it's very frustrating to have it postponed.
3. Adding a coordinating conjunction
    1. Jill has been waiting for years for this doctor's appointment, so it's very frustrating to have it postponed.
4. Changing to a period and separating into two sentences
    1. Jill has been waiting for years for this doctor's appointment. It's very frustrating to have it postponed.
5. Rewriting the sentence
    1. Jill has been waiting for years for this doctor's appointment, making it very frustrating to have it postponed.

Let's take a look at a few other run-on sentences and their revisions:

- 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.

This is a comma splice. The adverbial conjunction "however" is being treated like a coordinating conjunction (remember, FANBOYS). There are two easy fixes to this problem. The first is to turn the comma before "however" into a period:

- 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.

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.

Let's take a look at another sentence.

- The opposite is true of stronger types of stainless steel they tend to be more susceptible to rust.

This 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. Since 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 (although a semicolon is grammatically correct as well):

The opposite is true of stronger types of stainless steel: they tend to be more susceptible to rust.

Let's try another one.

- Some people were highly educated professionals, others were from small villages in underdeveloped countries.

In this 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.

Watch it

Watch this video for additional tips on how to identify and fix run-on sentences and comma splices.

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

You can view the transcript for "Run-ons and comma splices" here (opens in new window).

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20249

Review tips on how to spot (and avoid!) run-on sentences in the following interactive.

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290907184330046558/embed

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5.19: Putting It Together- Grammar Essentials

You have certainly had a lot to take in as you reviewed the function and purpose of various types of punctuation. To help you review, watch and listen to the presentation below, which provides a basic overview of what you have learned about punctuation.

✔ ✔ Watch it

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

Now that you have learned to recognize and resolve readability errors, develop a strategy for incorporating these skills into your writing process. Below are some guidelines for doing so:

1. Revise for readability in the later stages of your writing process. In the early stages of writing, focus on your ideas.
2. Leave time between drafting and revising for readability. Readability errors become more evident after you have stepped away from a project for a while and return to it later.
3. Make proofreading/editing a vital part of your writing process. The following are some tips for effective proofreading:

? ? effective proofreading TIPs

- Find a quiet place, free from distractions.
- Print a hard copy of the paper.
- Read the paper out loud.
- Read the paper backward, sentence by sentence.
- Enlist help.

Remember, writers and their readers are in a relationship. Writers want to convey their ideas, and readers want to understand those ideas. Anything that hinders that understanding is annoying to the reader and damaging to the writer's credibility. That's why it's important for writers to identify and fix any errors that interfere with readers' expectations. Using good punctuation and grammar will make your writing more credible, clear, and powerful.

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5.20: Discussion- Punctuation Poster Assignment

STEP 1: Review this module and pick one punctuation or grammatical topic you find most interesting, relevant, or useful to your own life. This could be proper end punctuation, hyphens, dashes, parenthesis, brackets, ellipses, apostrophes, quotation marks, commas, semicolons, colons, fragments, or run-ons. Review this topic.

STEP 2: Create a poster or infographic that addresses the punctuation or grammar concept you selected. This can be done as a powerpoint slide, or using a program of your choice, such as Canva, or Easelly. Include appropriate citations and references in your poster.

- Your poster must **include at least three good examples of your chosen concept** and **at least one bad example.** These should be original examples, created by you.
- Your poster must include **at least two images or pictures**.

STEP 3: Next, share your creation with the world so that others can benefit from your work! Using either Flickr or Wikimedia Commons, upload your finished product and publish it so that other English instructors and students can use and reference your work. Although not required, we strongly recommend uploading and releasing your work with a Creative Commons license.

STEP 4: Post the link to your finished poster to the discussion forum. Add in a paragraph about what you learned from the assignment and how you plan to improve your writing moving forward while being more aware of the concept you chose.

STEP 5: Respond in two separate posts to two classmates (in at least 75 words). Explicitly address their examples and try to extend, complicate, or redirect their points in a substantive, knowledge-demonstrating way. Be sure to cite relevant concepts and key terms from the reading.

Rubric

Sample Grading Rubric

Criteria	Proficient	Developing	Not Evident	Points
Punctuation or Grammar Concept and Examples	Correctly identifies a punctuation or grammar concept from the module and explains it on the poster. There are three good examples and at least one bad example of the concept on the poster.	Does not correctly identify or describe the punctuation or grammar concept. Examples are off or incomplete.	Does not appropriately give examples of the punctuation concept.	__/8
Visual Presentation	Poster is interesting and informative; includes at least two images. Generally easy to identify main points visually, and useful graphics highlight important points. Includes MLA citations or attributions for images.	Some use of visuals to display information, but layout is confusing or without clear connections. May not include two visuals or citations.	No attempt at presenting information in a creative manner. Project lacks visual cohesion.	__/8
Discussion	Posts personal poster to the forum and comments on at least two classmate's posters.	Posts poster; offers incomplete response to classmate.	Does not comment on another post.	__/4
Total:	__/20			

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5.21: Discussion- Is Spelling Important?

STEP 1: Click on the link below and read all of the corresponding background information about it from *The New York Times*, including the questions at the bottom of the page.

1. How Important is Correct Spelling?

STEP 2: Post your reply (in at least 250 words) in the discussion forum. Your response should include a clear stance on the issue with supporting evidence as to why you feel the way you do. Show that you can think critically on the topic by integrating your own thoughts, analysis, or experiences.

STEP 3: Respond in two separate posts to two classmates (in at least 75 words). Explicitly address their responses and try to extend, complicate, or redirect their points in a substantive, knowledge-demonstrating way.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

6: The Writing Process

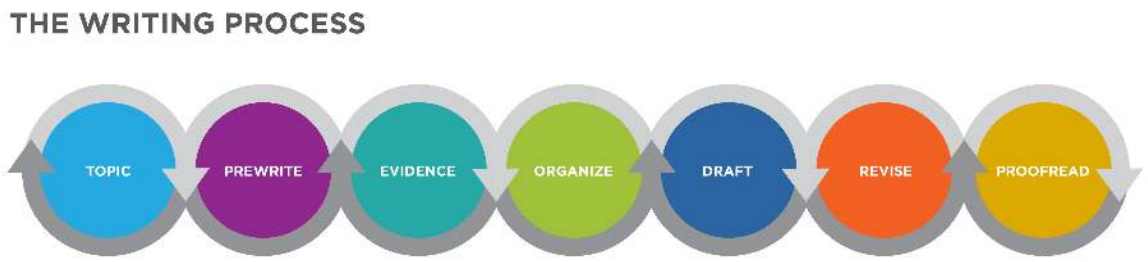
6.1: Why It Matters- The Writing Process
6.2: Assignment- Prewriting
6.3: Introduction to Topic Selection
6.4: Starting a Paper
6.5: Choosing a Topic
6.6: Introduction to Prewriting
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6.21: Discussion- Narrowing a Topic

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6.1: Why It Matters- The Writing Process

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.



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—it's called recursive writing. You make your own path through the process.

✔ ✔ Watch It

The video below is a beautiful example of one person's application of the recursive 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.

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

You can view the transcript for "Writing Process Animation" here (download).

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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6.2: Assignment- Prewriting

For this assignment, you will work with the following assignment prompt:

- The term “college student” corrals a wide range of types of students in a single term. It stands to reason that different groups of people have different motivations for entering higher education, different goals while they are there, and different definitions of success once they graduate.
    - For this essay, you will **select a specific category of college students**and,considering challenges facing this category of students,**detail a practice that could lead to enhanced success for that category, and argue for the adoption of that practice.**

First, you want to think deeply about the prompt and break it down. For example, what does the prompt mean by “category of college students”? You may want to consider traditional students (young undergraduates), nontraditional students (older, part-time, etc.), first-generation students, student-athletes, working students, students with disabilities, commuter students, student parents, and more.

STEP 1: With this prompt and background information in mind, pick one of the student groups and do a 15-minute mind map or free-write that explores the problems related to your chosen student group. What are common problems they face? What kinds of things are already being done to address them? What do you think should be done to help those students succeed? What kinds of things do you think should be done? Write down as much as you can. Remember, there are no wrong answers here!

STEP 2: Next, pick one of the problems from your free-write activity and develop a simple outline for this essay. You don’t need to do research yet, but should develop a plan for what direction you’d like to take if you had to write the entire essay. For example, you could follow this template below and fill it in with appropriate information for your idea:

1. **Introduction and Thesis Sentence:**
    - **Topic Sentence for paragraph #1:**
        - Potential supporting evidence for this claim:
    - **Topic Sentence for paragraph #2:**
        - Potential supporting evidence for this claim:
    - **Topic Sentence for paragraph #3:**
        - Potential supporting evidence for this claim:
2. **Possible Rebuttal**
3. **Conclusion**

STEP 3: Write a one-paragraph reflection describing how you felt about this activity. Did you find the free-write valuable in developing your ideas? How can prewriting help you approach your writing assignments in the future?

Rubric

Sample Grading Rubric

Criteria	Proficient	Developing	Not Evident	Points
Mind-map	Writes at least a half-page paper jotting down ideas and thoughts related to the assignment prompt. Ideas include on-topic thoughts about problems facing students and potential solutions.	Writes down some prewriting ideas but it is not at least half a page and too much is unrelated to the assignment prompt	Incomplete freewrite.	__/7

Essay Outline	Includes an essay outline for what you could write for this essay. The outline minimally includes a thesis statement and topic sentences with some supporting evidence. It is easy to follow and correctly structured.	Essay is partially complete or does not include supporting evidence.	Does not include an outline	__/7
Reflection	Writes a paragraph about the benefits of prewriting, including reflection about how it can develop ideas and help approach writing assignments.	Reflection is superficial or lacks details about the benefits of prewriting.	Does not include reflection about prewriting	__/6
Total:				__/20

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6.3: Introduction to Topic Selection

What you'll learn to do: describe topic selection activities



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 chal lenging problems.

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:

> 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.

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.

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6.4: Starting a Paper

Learning Objectives

- Analyze ways to effectively approach a writing assignment



Figure 1. Before beginning any writing assignment, always ensure that you understand your instructor's expectations and criteria for the paper.

Fortunately, most writing assignments include some directions and parameters, and these constraints can help you feel less daunted when you set out to find a topic or begin writing. Understanding what your instructor expects in the final paper is often the best place to start.

1. Read the assignment carefully.

When reading the assignment prompt, consider underlining key words and questions. Look for clues that indicate the topic, questions to answer, word count, source requirements, and intended audience. Knowing what kind of writing you'll be doing can help you narrow your focus and organize your approach. Clues can be found in the verbs used in the assignment: Are you being asked to *analyze* a historical event, *compareand contrast* two films, *discuss* works by different authors?

2. What question(s) are being asked? Do you understand them?

If you encounter unfamiliar terms or concepts in the assignment, review your assigned readings and class notes. For example, if you're taking a class on eighteenth-century British history, and the assignment asks you to provide evidence of "Enlightenment thinking" in a certain author's work—and you're not sure Enlightenment thinking means—you'll probably want to go back to your readings and check your notes. A dictionary won't be much help, as this assignment is specific to what you've been discussing and studying in your particular class. If you're still unsure, ask your instructor for clarification.

3. What kind of paper are you being asked to write?

Before you begin to write any part of an essay you have been assigned, you must think about the requirements and how you plan to meet those requirements. All too often, students make the mistake of jumping into an assignment without stopping to think about it rhetorically.

What does it mean to think about an assignment rhetorically? It means that you're considering the purpose of the assignment, the audience for the assignment, the voice you might want to use when you write, and how you will approach the assignment effectively overall.

Each time you are presented with a writing assignment in college, you're being presented with a particular situation for writing. Learning about rhetoric can help you learn to make good decisions about your writing. Rhetoric can be simply defined as figuring out what you need to do to be effective, no matter the writing situation.

Thinking rhetorically is an important part of any writing process because every writing assignment has different expectations. There is no such thing as right when it comes to writing. Instead, try to think about good writing as writing that is effective for that particular situation.

Watch It

The following video presentation will help you as you begin to think about your assignments rhetorically. It's so important to stop and think about what you are being asked to write about and why before you begin an assignment.

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290958103298371018/embed

4. Who is the audience for this paper?

Knowing your audience can help you decide whether you'll be writing for someone who is familiar with your topic (e.g., your instructor) or not (e.g., your classmates or family). That, in turn, may influence your thoughts about the main points you are trying to get across and what is most important for you to cover. Knowing your intended audience will also help you determine what type of tone and voice you should use in your paper. Can it be informal and conversational? Or should it be more research-based and formal?

5. What sources will you need in order to fulfill the assignment? Are your own opinions permissible, or are you expected to support your claims with evidence from other sources?

Even if you are required to consult or cite a certain number of academic sources, you may be able to start thinking about a topic or do some initial brainstorming before you head to the library. For example, if your assignment asks you to "explore the reasons for the growing opioid epidemic in America today," and you've been discussing this issue in class all term, you may have enough ideas to do some brainstorming and get started—even if you will need to do additional research.

When you receive your writing assignment from your professor, it's important to stop and think about your assignment. What are the requirements? What is the purpose of this assignment? What is your professor asking you write? Who are you writing for?

? ? Link to Learning

When getting started on a writing assignment, it's also a good idea to plan out enough time to work through each step of the writing process. Use this assignment calculator to help you break it down.

? ? Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20252

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6.5: Choosing a Topic

Learning Objectives

- Analyze strategies for choosing a topic for a paper

How Do I Pick a Topic?



Figure 1. Researching several scholarly sources can help you when narrowing down or refining your topic.

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

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

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

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

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

You should also look for an issue that you can reasonably cover given the time and space (page count) you have available. After that, it's a simple matter of supporting your argument by bringing in relevant quotations from those who agree with you. You should also identify the counter-arguments and provide pertinent background information. In essence, the easiest way to find a topic to write about is to see what other writers are writing about and join their "conversation." The conversation metaphor is a very useful way to understand what scholarship is all about.

Rather than thinking of essays or books as isolated units of scholarship, try envisioning them as the fruits of a massive network of scholars who converse with each other via scholarly documents, conference presentations, e-mail, phone calls, and other forms of communication. Research what is available and where you can make the most valuable contribution.

Watch It

The following video demonstrates the process of selecting and refining a research topic.

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

You can find the transcript for "Research Tutorial: Developing Your Topic" here (opens in new window).

The Problem of Topic vs. Approach

Some instructors who assign writing projects will leave the choice of what to write about up to you. Others will have a very defined set of topics for you to write from. But even when an instructor assigns a given topic or offers a choice of assigned topics, you have a lot of opportunity for creativity.

The real issue here is the approach. When you come to an assigned essay as a project, how you first engage with it will determine your overall experience. Some students see any writing assignment as an externally imposed task—something they have to do in order to pass the course. This approach will guarantee that those students will eventually hate their assignments, possibly their instructor, and when push comes to shove the whole prospect of being in school.

Solution: Choosing an Approach to Your Topic

Deliberately choosing how you approach your topic will help you not only choose one that will satisfy the requirements, but also ensure that you enjoy the process of research and writing. After all, no one on earth can do what you do. So, only you can figure out how to write a great essay in your own voice.

It all starts with selecting a topic. How you approach that selection process is vastly important.

Look to things that interest you as a way of finding your paper topic! Use that initial fascination to twist the topic of your paper so that it becomes an excuse to wallow in whatever got you interested in that class in the first place.

Avoiding the Pit of Despair

Whatever you do, don't fall into the trap of thinking that your work is simply a required box that needs to be checked and you can't bring any creativity to the table. Even if the class was required for your program or degree, you still chose that program. There are ways to make almost any writing task enjoyable, or at least something you gain something interesting out of.

Narrowing a Broad Topic

Once you've settled on a general topic or 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.

? ? Try It

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6.6: Introduction to Prewriting

What you'll learn to do: analyze prewriting activities



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

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 a 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.

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6.7: Brainstorming and Freewriting

Learning Objectives

- Explain how brainstorming and freewriting can help you start writing

As you begin thinking about a topic, before you begin your official draft, you'll want to write down ideas and concepts associated with your assignment to develop your ideas. This is a critical step in helping to shape and organize your paper. Brainstorming and freewriting are two great ways to get started.

Brainstorming

Brainstorming allows you to quickly generate a large number of ideas. You can brainstorm with others or you can brainstorm by yourself, which sometimes turns into freewriting. To effectively brainstorm, write down whatever ideas come to mind.

Brainstorming

To brainstorm, let your thoughts about a specific topic flow, and list those thoughts.

> **Example:** squirrels
>
> - How to get them out of the garden
> - How to get rid of them ethically (without killing)
> - Squirrel traps
> - Repellents for squirrels
> - Types of squirrels
> - Brown vs. black vs. red squirrels
> - Flying squirrels
> - What they eat
> - Different types of play
> - Training squirrels
> - Hunting squirrels
> - Squirrels and cats
> - How they nest
> - Build nests in the same place each year

So, what happens once you've brainstormed a topic? Look over the list. Are there items that group together? Are there items that catch your interest as a thinker, researcher, and writer—items you want to know more about? Are there items that seem unrelated or not useful? Use your list as a starting place; it creates ideas for you, as a writer, to work with.

Sometimes it works better to write down each idea on a separate piece of paper. It also helps to ask yourself some questions:

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

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

Brainstorming Assignment Example

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

1. First ask yourself, What do I care about? or What am I interested in? It is easiest to write about a topic that you are interested in. This could be anything from gardening to ice skating, or from writing poetry to playing the piano. Your list, in this example, would then read:
    1. gardening

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

2. Second, ask yourself, What do I know that I could teach others?
    1. You may be able to teach someone else something that you really enjoy. Good for you. If you cannot, don't worry; you are still just brainstorming. Perhaps you teach swimming lessons or t-ball, or maybe you bake really well and are able to offer some of your insights. Your list, in this example, would then read:
        1. swimming lessons
        2. t-ball
        3. baking

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

1. Again start by asking yourself a question. Ask yourself, What irritates me? Everyone has things that irritate them, some small and others large.
    1. An example of something small that's irritating could be people in your dorm who leave trails of toothpaste by the sink and never clean up after themselves. A personal example can be useful as a bridge to a larger issue that will be your topic—in this case it could be community living and personal responsibility.
    2. In academic writing with a less personal slant, the source of irritation is often another writer/theorist with whom you disagree. Your "irritation" then would lead to an effective piece about why you have a better conception of what's really going on.
    3. A less direct version of this would be a writer/theorist who makes some good points but lacks something in his/her argument that you can add to the "conversation."

✔ ✔ Watch It

This video demonstrates that writers of all levels and experiences value the process of brainstorming. This clip shows how writers brainstorm ideas for the show, Bernie Mac, which aired in the early 2000s.

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

Freewriting

Freewriting is just what it says—writing freely, whatever comes into your mind, without caring about spelling, punctuation, etc. It's a way to free up your thoughts, help you know where your interests lie, and get your fingers moving on the keyboard (and this physical act can be a way to get your thoughts flowing).

Try a series of timed freewritings. Set a timer for five minutes. The object is to keep your fingers moving constantly and write down whatever thoughts come into your head during that time. If you can't think of anything to say, keep writing **I don't know** or **this is silly** until your thoughts move on. Stop when the timer rings. Shake out your hands, wait awhile, and then do more timed freewriting. After you have a set of five or so freewritings, review them to see if you've come back to certain topics, or whether you recorded some ideas that might be the basis for a piece of writing.

? ? Freewriting Example

Here's a sample freewrite that could yield a number of topics for writing:

I don't think this is useful or helpful in any way. This is stupid, stupid, stupid. I'm looking out of my window and it's the end of may and I can see that white cotton stuff flying around in the air, from the trees. One of my aunts was always allergic to that stuff when it started flying around in the spring. Don't know offhand what type of tree that comes from. That aunt is now 94 years old and is in a nursing home for a while after she had a bad episode. She seems to have one now every spring. It's like that old tree cotton triggers something in her body. Allergies. Spring. Trying to get the flowers to grow but one of the neighbors who is also in his 90s keeps feeding the squirrels and they come and dig up everyone's flowerbed to store their peanuts. Plant the flowers and within thirty minutes there's a peanut there. Wonder if anyone has grown peanut bushes yet?

Don't know . . . know . . .

Possible topics from this freewrite:

- Allergy causes
- Allergies on the rise in the U.S.
- Consequences of humanizing wild animals
- Squirrel behavior patterns and feeding habits
- Growing your own food

? ? Try It

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6.8: Prewriting Strategies

Learning Objectives

- Describe and use prewriting strategies (such as journaling, mapping, questioning, sketching)

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. You already learned about brainstorming and freewriting, but there are other helpful techniques to get you started that include journaling, mapping, questioning, and sketching.

Journaling

Many people write in personal journals (or online blogs). Writers not only record events in journals, but also reflect and record thoughts, observations, questions, and feelings. They are safe spaces to record your experience of the world.

Use a journal to write about an experience you had, different reactions you have observed to the same situation, a current item in the news, an ethical problem at work, an incident with one of your children, a memorable childhood experience of your own, etc. Try to probe the *why* or *how* of the situation.

Journals can help you develop ideas for writing. When you review your journal entries, you may find that you keep coming back to a particular topic, or that you have written a lot about one topic in a specific entry, or that you're really passionate about an issue. Those are the topics, then, about which you obviously have something to say. Those are the topics you might develop further in a piece of writing.

Try It

Here's one sample journal entry. Read through it and look for ideas that the writer might develop further in a piece of writing:

> The hot issue here has been rising gas prices. People in our town are mostly commuters who work in the state capitol and have to drive about 30 miles each way to and from work. One local gas station has been working with the gas company to establish a gas cooperative, where folks who joined would pay a bit less per gallon. I don't know whether I like this idea – it's like joining one of those stores where you have to pay to shop there. You've got to buy a lot to recoup your membership fee. I wonder if this is a ploy of the gas company???? Others were talking about starting a petition to the local commuter bus service, to add more routes and times, as the current service isn't enough to address workers' schedules and needs. Still others are talking about initiating a light rail system, but this is an alternative that will take a lot of years and won't address the situation immediately. I remember the gas crunch a number of years ago and remember that we simply started to carpool. In the Washington, DC area, with its huge traffic problems and large number of commuters, carpooling is so accepted that there are designated parking and pickup places along the highway, and it's apparently accepted for strangers to pull over, let those waiting know where they're headed, and offer rides. I'm not certain I'd go that far . . .

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Mapping Strategy

Mapping or diagramming is similar to freewriting, but the outcome often looks more like a list of related 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:

- MindMeister
- Bubbl
- XMind
- Mindomo

Mapping and diagramming may help you create information on a topic, and/or organize information from a list or freewriting entries, as a map provides a visual for the types of information you've generated about a topic. For example:

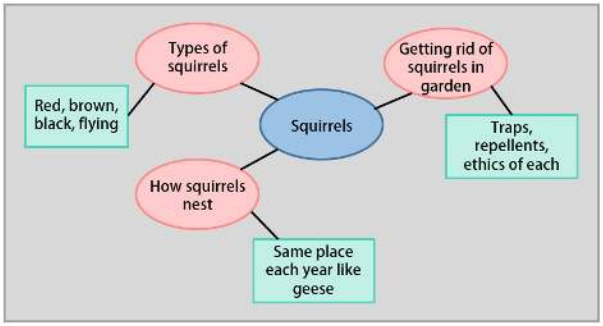


Figure 1. A mind map can help you brainstorm connections between ideas.

Questioning Strategy

This is a basic strategy, useful at many levels, that helps you jot down the basic important information about a topic. Starting by asking the questions who? what? when? where? why? and how? For example, below are 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 . . .

Notice how this series of questions and answers is more developed than this topic would be if you were thinking about it for the first time. 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.

If you have a broad topic you want to write about, but don't quite know how to narrow it, you can also ask defining questions to help you develop your main idea for writing. For example, if you want to write about school taxes, you could ask:

- Why do only property owners (and not renters) in New York State pay school taxes?

- What percent of overall school funding comes from school taxes?
- Do other states fund schools in the same way?
- Does the state lottery system, initially designed to fund schools, actually support schools?
- Is there a limit to paying school taxes when one gets older and no longer has children in school?

Once you have your questions, you can work with the list to group related questions, and then decide whether your writing can logically deal with a number of the questions together or only one. Use questioning to help develop a focus for your writing.

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 Example

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

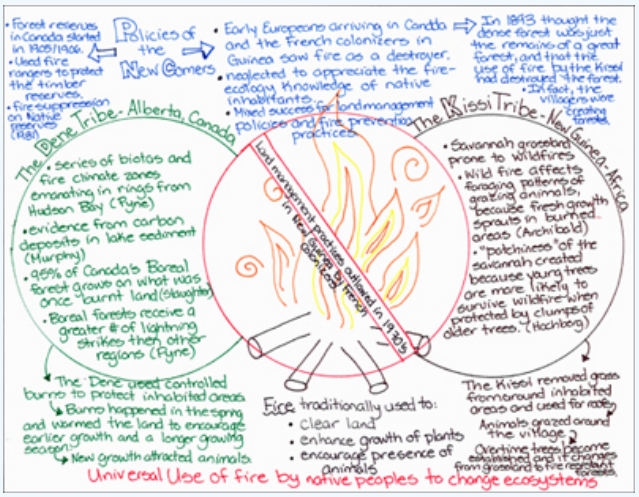


Figure 2. A Venn diagram like this one can help you organize ideas for your writing.

Notice how this Venn Diagram is even *more* developed than the same topic explored previously. 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.

Of course, this is not a comprehensive list of prewriting strategies. You may find that some of these are helpful for certain types of writing projects, or you may prefer other strategies such as making lists, bulleting key points, or writing out pros and cons. 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. You may also want to do more prewriting in the middle of your writing project if you need some help overcoming writer's block.

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6.9: Developing a Working Thesis Statement

Learning Objectives

- Evaluate the role of a working thesis statement

Thesis Angles

Most writers can easily create a topic: squirrels, television viewing, the Patriot Act, Shakespeare's Hamlet. The more difficult part is creating an angle. But the angle is necessary as a means of creating interest and as a means of indicating the type and organization of the information to follow. *Remember that a basic thesis sentence has both a topic and an angle.* The topic is what you're writing about, but the angle covers the main idea of what you're conveying about that topic. For example, in the following thesis, the topic is exercise, and the angle is that it leads to benefits:

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

Thesis Angles

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

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

So what about this thesis sentence?

- Adult college students have different experiences than traditionally-aged college students.

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

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

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

Watch IT

This video reviews the importance of thesis statements and provides examples of how good thesis statements can guide your essay.

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

You can find the transcript for "How to Write a Killer Thesis Statement by Shmoop" here (opens in new window).

Thesis Creation

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

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

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

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

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

? ? Thesis Checklist

Thesis Checklist

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

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

Common Problems

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

? ? Thesis Problems

Thesis too broad

Hospice workers need support.

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

Thesis too narrow

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

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

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

Where to Place a Thesis?

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

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

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

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

? ? Link to Learning

Use this thesis generator from SUNY Empire State College to help you make your thesis statement—just plug in some of the details, and it can help you come up with a solid foundation!

? ? Try It

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6.10: Introduction to Finding Evidence

What you'll learn to do: describe ways 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.

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

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6.11: Finding Evidence

Learning Objectives

- Describe strategies for preliminary research on a topic

A critical step in the writing process is to find evidence that supports and explains the claim you make in your thesis statement. Often, this means doing research and finding information, facts, stories, data, and reports related to your topic, but sometimes, especially in narrative writing, it means adding support through your own experiences and examples.

Support and Elaboration

Support and elaboration consist of the specific details and information writers use to develop their topic. The key to developing support and elaboration is getting *specific*. Good writers use concrete, specific details, and relevant information to establish mental images for their readers.

Sufficiency and Relatedness

Two important concepts in support and elaboration are *sufficiency* and *relatedness*.

Sufficiency refers the amount of detail — is there enough detail to support the topic? Any parent who has asked his or her child what happened at school knows how hard it is to get a child to elaborate on a subject. Good writers supply their readers with sufficient details to comprehend what they have written. In narrative writing, this means providing enough descriptive details for the reader to construct a picture of the story in their mind. In expository writing, this means not only finding enough information to support your purpose, whether it is to inform or persuade your audience, but also finding information that is credible and accurate.

Sufficiency, however, is not enough. The power of your information is determined less by the quantity of details than by their *quality*. Look for evidence that is accurate and comes from credible sources.

Relatedness refers to the quality of the details and their relevance to the topic. Good writers select only the details that will support their focus, deleting irrelevant information. In narrative writing, details should be included only if they are concrete, specific details that contribute to, rather than detract from, the picture provided by the narrative. In expository writing, information should be included only if it is relevant to the writer's goal and strengthens rather than weakens the writer's ability to meet that goal.

Guiding Questions for Support and Elaboration

FOR NARRATIVE WRITING:

- Is your story developed with specific details that are related to the main event?
- Do all of the details move the story along?
- Does your story have enough elaboration so that your reader can see and feel what is happening? Can you show me an example where your reader can see or feel what is happening?

FOR INFORMATIONAL WRITING:

- Is your essay developed with specific information (facts, statistics, etc.) that is related to the main topic?
- Does all of the information support the main topic?
- Does your essay have enough information to fulfill your reader's needs?

FOR ARGUMENTATIVE WRITING:

- Is your essay developed with specific details that are related to the main topic?
- Does all of the information support the main argument?
- Does your essay have enough supporting evidence to persuade your reader?

Finding Evidence

Your research strategy for finding supporting evidence should be based on the research requirements your professor provides. Some formal research essays should include **peer-reviewed journal articles** only; however, there are some research papers that may allow you to use a wider variety of sources, including sources from the World Wide Web.

Primary and Secondary Sources

Some assignments require you to find **primary sources** only, while others allow you to rely on **secondary sources**. Primary sources are original sources and documents that were created at the time of study or that were created by someone experiencing an event first-hand. For example, a historical primary source would be a document, manuscript, recording, autobiography, photograph, or letter directly from the time period; if you were studying the Civil War, then a letter from Abraham Lincoln or a journal entry from a soldier would both be primary sources. More current primary sources include descriptions of events by those who experienced it in person—for example, an essay written by someone at the World Trade Center during 9/11. In the sciences, results of research studies and experiments are also primary sources.

Secondary sources are secondhand accounts of primay sources and involve generalization, analysis, interpretation, or evaluation of the original information. For example, a secondary source about the Civil War would be a biography on Abraham Lincoln or a scholarly journal from someone analyzing battle plans. A news article about a scientific breakthrough would also be a secondary source.

Popular and Scholarly Sources



Figure 1. Online news sources, like the one pictured above, are called a “popular sources”.

A popular source is meant for a general audience. **Popular sources** include newspaper and magazine articles, your Yahoo or Google newsfeed, and blogs. A **scholarly source** would be one that has been written by a professional in the field; the author may hold a doctoral degree or have a great amount of expertise in the field you are studying. Oftentimes, an author’s credentials will be listed as a footnote within the source, but if not, an Internet search may reveal whether the writer can be determined to be a scholarly author or one that has done a vast amount of research on the topic.

The author of the source will always be an important consideration, as your view of the quality of the article may change depending upon the author’s credibility. In addition, you must ask yourself whether your source is popular or scholarly, and be sure to meet any requirements the project demands regarding source types.

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

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

If your professor has not established research requirements for your assignment, it’s a good idea to ask. You can start with a general search using Google or Wikipedia to understand the basics about your topic, but you’ll want to do specific research to find the type of evidence needed to give credibility to your argument. This will probably include using both print and electronic sources, in the form of books, scholarly journals, magazines, newspapers, and websites.

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6.12: Applying Evidence

Learning Objectives

- Describe strategies for synthesizing research with personal ideas

Depending upon the purpose of the assignment, research can be used to accomplish many things. Whether you are writing to inform, persuade, or critique, research should be used in conjunction with your own ideas to support your thesis and your purpose. Do not let the research speak for itself. You, the writer of the document, are the most important voice. You are using outside sources to support your thesis. Therefore, let your comments, connections, objections, etc. play the strongest role in your paper.

In practical terms, some ways to develop and back up your assertions include:

- **Blend sources with your assertions.** Organize your sources before and as you write so that they blend, even within paragraphs. Your paper—both as a whole and at the paragraph level—should reveal relationships among your sources, and should also reveal the relationships between your own ideas and those of your sources.
- **Write an original introduction and conclusion.** As much as is practical, make the paper's introduction and conclusion your own ideas or your own understanding of the ideas from your research. Use sources minimally in your introduction and conclusion.
- **Open and close paragraphs with originality.** In general, use the openings and closing of your paragraphs to reveal your work —"enclose" your sources among your assertions. At a minimum, create your own topic sentences and wrap-up sentences for paragraphs.
- **Use transparent rhetorical strategies.** When appropriate, outwardly practice such rhetorical strategies as analysis, synthesis, comparison, contrast, summary, description, definition, evaluation, classification, and even narration. Prove to your reader that you are *thinking* as you write.

? ? MEAL PAragraphs

Your paragraphs in a research paper will focus on presenting the information you found in your source material and commenting on or analyzing that information. *It's not enough to simply present the information in your body paragraphs and move on. You want to give that information a purpose and connect it to your main idea or thesis statement.*

Your body paragraphs in a research paper will include summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting your source material, but you may be wondering if there is an effective way to organize this information.

Duke University coined a term called the "MEAL Plan" that provides an effective structure for paragraphs in an academic research paper: Main Idea, Evidence, Analysis, and Lead out, or Link. Select the pluses to learn more about what each letter stands for.

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

Anytime you include evidence in your paper, you must clarify where your own ideas end and the cited information begins. Part of your job is to help your reader draw the line between these two things, often by the way you create context for the cited information. A phrase such as "A 1979 study revealed that…" is an obvious announcement of citation to come.

When you quote or paraphrase an outside source, provide appropriate in-text citations. Following the citation, you must comment on this information: its significance, relevance, or even failure of the information as it relates to the thesis of your essay. Avoid stacking together quote after quote without showing your audience the purpose of the information. Always bring the paper back to your thoughts.

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

Within the pages of your research essay, it is important to properly reference and cite your sources to avoid plagiarism and to give credit for original ideas.

Incorporating Sources

There are three main ways to put a source to use in your essay: you can quote it, you can summarize it, and you can paraphrase it.

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).



Figure 1. Sources that are not properly integrated into your paper are like "bricks without mortar: you have the essential substance, but there's nothing to hold it together, rendering the whole thing formless" (Smith)

Summarizing

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

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.[1]

? ? Try It

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1. Smith, Matt. "Putting It All Together: Thesis Synthesis." Web log post. Walden University Writing Center, 12 Apr. 2013. Web. 04 Apr. 2016. ↵

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6.13: Introduction to Organizing

What you'll learn to do: 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?

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

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6.14: Essay Organization

Learning Objectives

- Examine the basic organization of traditional essays

Although college essays can offer ideas in many ways, one standard structure for expository essays is to offer the main idea or assertion early in the essay, and then offer categories of support.

One way to think about this standard structure is to compare it to a courtroom argument in a television drama. The lawyer asserts, "My client is not guilty." Then the lawyer provides different reasons for lack of guilt: no physical evidence placing the client at the crime scene, client had no motive for the crime, and more.

In writing terms, the assertion is the **thesis sentence**, and the different reasons are the **topic sentences**. Consider this following example:

- **Thesis Sentence (assertion):** The 21st century workforce requires a unique set of skills.
  - **Topic Sentence (reason) #1:**Workers need to learn how to deal with change.
  - **Topic Sentence (reason) #2:** Because of dealing with such a rapidly changing work environment, 21st-century workers need to learn how to learn.
  - **Topic Sentence (reason) #3:** Most of all, in order to negotiate rapid change and learning, workers in the 21st century need good communication skills.

As you can see, the supporting ideas in an essay develop out of the main assertion or argument in the thesis sentence.

Essay Organization

The structural organization of an essay will vary, depending on the type of writing task you've been assigned, but they generally follow this basic structure:

Introduction

The introduction introduces the reader to the topic. We've all heard that first impressions are important. This is very true in writing as well. The goal is to engage the readers, hook them so they want to read on. Sometimes this involves giving an example, telling a story or narrative, asking a question, or building up the situation. The introduction should almost always include the thesis statement.

Body Paragraphs

The body of the essay is separated into paragraphs. Each paragraph usually covers a single claim or argues a single point, expanding on what was introduced in the thesis statement. For example, according to the National Institute of Mental Health, the two main causes of schizophrenia are genetic and environmental. Thus, if you were writing about the causes of schizophrenia, then you would have a body paragraph on genetic causes of schizophrenia and a body paragraph on the environmental causes.

A body paragraph usually includes the following:

- Topic sentence that identifies the topic for the paragraph
- Several sentences that describe and support the topic sentence
- Evidence from outside sources



Figure 1. College instructors require more than just "the end" at the close of a paper. Take the time to revisit your thesis statement, bringing all of your claims and evidences together in your conclusion.

- Correctly formatted in-text citations indicating which source listed on the Works Cited page has provided the evidence,
  - Remember that information from outside sources should be placed in the middle of the paragraph and not at the beginning or the end of the paragraph so that you have time to introduce and explain the outside content

- Quotation marks placed around any information taken verbatim (word for word) from the source
- Summary sentence(s) that draws conclusions from the evidence
- Transitions or bridge sentences between paragraphs.

Conclusion

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

? ? Try It

Step through this presentation to review the main components of an essay, then see if you can correctly organize the essay below.

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

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6.15: Common Essay Structures

Learning Objectives

- Examine the structure and organization of common types of essays

Suggested Essay Structure

Some common layouts for essay organization are listed below.

Argumentative Essay

Recall that in an argumentative essay, you are asked to take a stance about an issue. One effective way to argue a point can be to present the opposing view first, usually in your introduction paragraph, then counter this view with stronger evidence in your essay. You can also explain your argument and claims, then address the opposing view at the end of your paper, or you could address opposing views one at a time, including the rebuttal throughout your paper.

Argumentative Essay: Block Format

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 claim
        2. Sentences giving explanations and providing evidence to support topic sentence
        3. Concluding sentence – link to next paragraph
    - paragraph 2 (or more)
        1. Topic sentence outlining second claim
        2. Sentences giving explanations and providing evidence to back topic sentence
        3. Concluding sentence – link to next paragraph
    - paragraph 3: rebuttal
        - Topic sentence outlining any possible counterarguments
        - Provide evidence to refute counterarguments
3. Conclusion
    - Summary of the main points of the body
    - Restatement of the position

Argumentative Essay: Rebuttal Throughout

This type of format works well for topics that have obvious pros and cons.

1. Introduction and Thesis
2. Body Paragraphs
    1. Paragraph 1
        1. Topic sentence outlining first rebuttal
        2. Opposing Viewpoint
        3. Rebuttal Argument
            1. Statistics and facts to support your side
        4. Transition
    2. Paragraph 2 (or more)
        1. Topic sentence outlining first rebuttal

    2. Opposing Viewpoint
    3. Rebuttal Argument
        1. Statistics and facts to support your side
    4. Transition
3. Conclusion
    1. Summary of the main arguments and counterarguments
    2. Restatement of the position

The Comparative Essay

Comparative essays are those that you have you *compare*, *compare and contrast*, or *differentiate* between things and concepts. 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.

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

Comparative Essay: Block Method

1. Introduction and thesis
2. Body Paragraph
    1. Nikon D7000
        1. Price
        2. Image Quality
        3. Shutter Speed
        4. The Auto-focus System
3. Body Paragraph
    1. Canon 60D
        1. Price
        2. Image Quality
        3. Shutter Speed
        4. The Auto-focus System
4. Conclusion

Comparative Essay: Point-by-Point Method

1. Introduction
2. Body Paragraphs
    1. Price
        1. Nikon D7000
        2. Canon 60D
    2. Image Quality
        1. Nikon D7000
        2. Canon 60D
    3. Shutter Speed
        1. Nikon D7000
        2. Canon 60D
    4. The Auto-focus System
        1. Nikon D7000
        2. Canon 60D

3. Conclusion

Cause and Effect Essay

Examples of cause and effect essays include questions that ask you to state or investigate the effects or outline the causes of the topic. This may be, for example, a 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 of an event on a community, a workplace, an individual.

Cause and Effect Essay Format

1. Introduction
    - Background information on the 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 the next paragraph
    - Paragraph 2 (or more)
        1. Topic sentence outlining second cause or effect
        2. Sentences giving explanations and providing evidence to back topic sentence
        3. Concluding sentence – linking to the 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

Mixed Structure Assignment

Finally, consider that some essay assignments may ask you to combine approaches. You will rarely follow the above outlines with exactness, but can use the outlines and templates of common rhetorical patterns to help shape your essay. Remember that the ultimate goal is to construct a smooth and coherent message with information that flows nicely from one paragraph to the next.

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

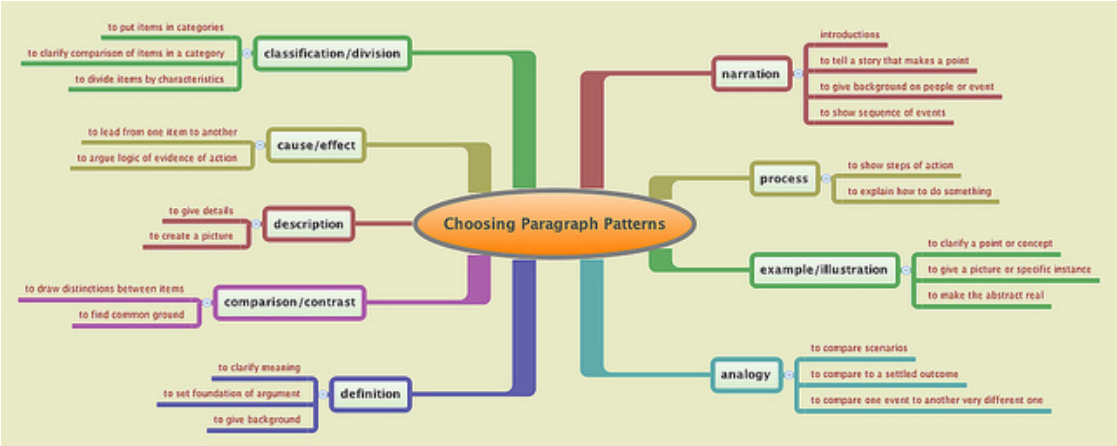


Figure 1. There are several different styles to choose from when constructing a mixed-structure essay.

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6.16: Introduction to Drafting

What you'll learn to do: evaluate drafting techniques

Writing is a way to end up thinking something you couldn't have started out thinking.

—Peter Elbow, *Writing Without Teachers*



According to English Professor and author Peter Elbow, the best way to accomplish deep thinking is through a series of drafts that 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.

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6.17: Getting Started

Learning Objectives

- Explain strategies to help begin your essay

Drafting

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 likely 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. Drafting includes prewriting, editing, and reviewing. Once your general ideas are down on paper, writing out specific ideas and quotations can make the final writing process much easier. Each step of drafting brings the process a little closer to the final product.

Always write down any ideas you have in the drafting process—it is much easier to cut content from your paper than it is to work on adding content. If you collect all your resources, quotations, facts, ideas, and come up with a thesis during the drafting process, your paper will show it. The idea is to provide yourself with as much information as possible in order to create a solid and well-thought-out piece. Do less worrying and more writing. Get started as soon as you possibly can! The first draft can be ugly and messy—the key is to get something out on paper (or screen) that you can enhance later on.

WAtch IT

This video explains some techniques for getting starting on your first draft. You may want to start by writing a "fast draft," which involves writing quickly, or "blurting" to get your thoughts out on the page. When you write a fast draft, you can use brackets to leave notes to yourself about areas where you'll want to come back and add more detail or find research, etc.

Slow drafts, in which you worry more about details and sentence structure, are more time consuming but may work well if you prefer to dive in deep from the beginning. Even with a slow draft, you should still expect to work through many revisions of the paper.

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

You can view the transcript for "How to Plan and Write a Paper: How to Draft" here (opens in new window).

They Say, I Say

Sometimes looking at the template and organization of other types of papers can help you get started on your own. Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein published a helpful book, *They Say/I Say*[1] that provides templates of actual language you could use in written arguments. The title of the book comes from the idea that writing is a form of joining an existing conversation—you find out what others are talking about, you add in your own two cents, and the conversation continues in various forms even after you leave. When writing, you are entering into a conversation with other scholars and other authors who have considered your same topic, so you can approach your paper by first considering what, "They say," and then adding in your own, "I say." For example, in starting your argument, you could say something like:

- X argues that…
- X claims that…
- X demonstrates that…

Then you could support or contradict those ideas with your own beliefs. Templates for joining in an ongoing discussion may look something like this:

- In discussions of _____, one controversial issue has been _____. On the one hand, _____ argues _____. On the other hand, _____ opposes _____. Others even believe _____. My own view is _____.
- When it comes to the topic of _____, most of us will readily agree that _____. Where this agreement usually ends, however, is on the question of _____. While some are convinced that _____, others believe that _____.[2]

You can help readers follow your argument by inserting phrases that signal why you're doing what you're doing. Here are some examples:

- **To state that what you're saying in your thesis (answer to your research question) is in opposition to what others have said:**
  - "Many people have believed …, but I have a different opinion."
- **To move from a reason to a summary of a research study that supports it (evidence):**
  - "Now let's take a look at the supporting research."
- **To introduce a summary of a resource you've just mentioned:**
  - "The point they make is…"
- **To acknowledge an objection you believe a reader could have:**
  - "At this point I should turn to an objection some are likely to be raising…"

Phrases like these can grease the skids of your argument in your readers' minds, making it a lot easier for them to quickly get it instead of getting stuck on figuring out why you're bringing something up at a particular point. You will have pulled them into an argument conversation.

Using templates such as this takes some of the mystery out of what to say and when to say it. To see more of these templates, purchase the book, or check it out from your library.

? ? They SAy, I Say

The blog that accompanies the book *They Say/I Say* with Readings, by Gerald Graff, Cathy Birkenstein, and Russel Durst, contains short, elegantly constructed contemporary arguments from a variety of publications. Take a look at the They Say/I Say blog for a moment and read part of at least one of the readings to see how it can be helpful to you the next time you have to make a written argument.

? ? Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20260

1. Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein. They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing, 3rd edition. New York: Norton, 2014. ↵
2. Gerald Graff and Cathy Birkenstein. They Say, I Say: The Moves That Matter in Academic Writing, 3rd edition. New York: Norton, 2014. ↵

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6.18: Moving From Outline to Draft

Learning Objectives

- Explain how to draft an essay from an outline

Using the Outline

An effective way to begin writing your first draft is to begin with your outline. Hopefully during the prewriting stage, you've collected notes, evidence, and ideas. First, you'll want to organize these ideas into an outline for your paper and pick a working thesis statement. Follow the steps below to turn your outline into the first draft of your essay.

Step 1: Figure out your main points and create the headings for your outline

Let's take a look at a very simple example—imagine that you've already created an outline for a five-paragraph essay on "why I love my dog." It might have the following headings:

I. INTRODUCTION and THESIS: I love my dog because he is a good companion, he is well-behaved, and he is cute.

II. BODY PARAGRAPH 1: My Dog is a Good Companion

III. BODY PARAGRAPH 2: My Dog is Well-Behaved

IV. BODY PARAGRAPH 3: My Dog is Cute

V. CONCLUSION

Since the topic is why I love my dog, each of the body paragraphs will present a reason why you love your dog. Always make sure your main ideas directly relate to your topic and connect to the thesis statement. Don't worry if you are not completely satisfied with the ordering; you can always change it later.

Step 2: Add your supporting ideas

The next step is to fill in supporting ideas for each of your main ideas.

To continue the example above, a writer might fill in part II of the outline as follows:

II. Body Paragraph 1: My Dog is a Good Companion

A. My dog is fun

1. My dog likes to play
2. My dog likes to go on walks

B. My dog is friendly

1. My dog likes to cuddle
2. My dog likes people

Give any necessary explanations, descriptions, evidence, or examples to convince the reader that you are making a good point. If you are using quotes, you can add those to the outline. Remember to include the appropriate citation based on whichever format your teacher requires; having that information in your outline will speed things up when you write your paper (since you won't have to go hunting for the bibliographic information) and make it easier to avoid plagiarism.

When you have finished adding supporting ideas, read through the outline to see if there is anywhere you think your argument has holes or could be further fleshed out. Make sure that your ideas are in the most logical order. Don't be afraid to test out different orderings to see what makes the most sense!

Step 3: Turn your headings and subheadings into complete sentences

When writing a short to medium-length paper, each heading (or main idea) will typically correspond to one paragraph. For longer papers, each heading may be a section and your first (or even second) level of subheading will eventually become your paragraphs. See how many sentences fall under each heading to get a rough idea of what correspondence makes the most sense for your paper.

Step 4: Construct your paragraphs

Next, start at the beginning of your outline and go through point by point. Start to put your sentences together into paragraphs. You may need to add transition phrases or even extra sentences to make sure your prose flows naturally. You might also find that even though your ideas seemed to make sense in the outline, you need to add still more details here or change the order of your ideas for everything to fully make sense. You may even find that you have too many ideas or that some ideas are not really all that relevant and need to be cut. That is perfectly normal. The outline is a plan to help you get organized, but you always have the flexibility to change it to fit the needs of your assignment.

Once you have finished turning your outline into paragraphs, you should have a decent first draft of your paper. Now you just need to proofread, revise, and repeat until you are ready to turn in your assignment!

✔ ✔ Watch It

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.

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

You can view the transcript for "Moving from Outline to Draft" here (download).

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!

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6.19: Multiple Drafts

Learning Objectives

- Examine the importance of writing multiple drafts of an essay

The 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. Knowing that it is just a draft can free 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.

Overcoming Writer's Block

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

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

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.

Make sure that you start early to have enough time to go through many drafts. If you wait until the day before, you will have time for only one draft, and that will show in your writing.

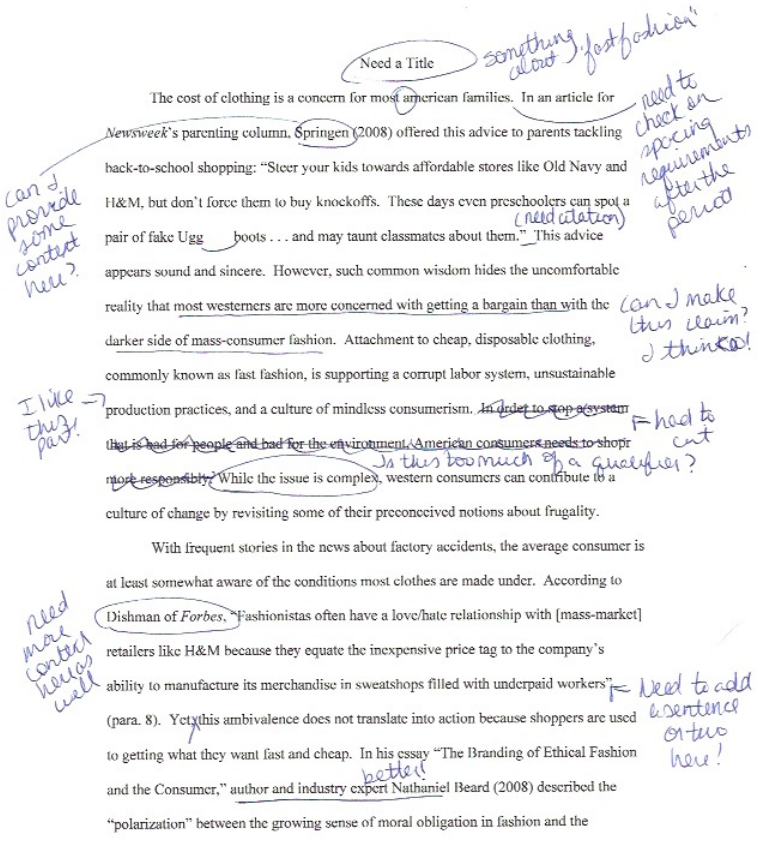


Figure 1. Take a look at this example with notes a student wrote on her rough draft. Once you complete your own rough draft, you will want to engage in a revision and editing process that involves feedback, time, and diligence on your part.

The Second Draft

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

The Third Draft and More

The third and any subsequent drafts are really about finesse. These are the drafts that will hook your reader and earn you an "A." Try to write an attention-grabbing introduction as well as a conclusion that leaves the reader thinking about your paper. If you are still struggling with the overall flow of your paper, go back to your first draft and start rewriting.

Often your main point will change by the time you get to this draft, and that is fine. However, you may need to go back to your first draft when this happens. The elusive "show, don't tell" expression comes into play in this draft, meaning that you want to set the stage for the reader to have them experience and feel a certain way instead of merely telling them what to experience or feel. Your audience wants to be informed, but they want more than just facts.

During this draft, you want to check that you are showing your own thoughts in your writing, and synthesizing from multiple sources. You need to show that you know what you're talking about and that you can write in an engaging style. If you are bored reading the paper, chances are the audience will be, too. Add action verbs, remove passive ones, and use examples.

Revising

Although we often use the terms first draft, second draft, third draft, etc., know that there are no set boundaries on what constitute each draft. The key idea is that you continue to revisit and revise your paper through multiple passes.

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



Figure 2. During your revision process, ensure that all of your claims are supported by evidence. This will strengthen your credibility as a writer.

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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6.20: Putting It Together- The Writing Process

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. Find out what works best for you—do you prefer outlining? Mapping? Fast drafts? Slow drafts? No matter your preferences, you'll find that good writing is a process. It takes time, planning, and multiple iterations before resulting in a polished piece.

Try to identify a metaphor for your writing process. In the example below, Pat Thomson describes the value such a metaphor can give you. In this case, she's describing writing her Ph.D. thesis:

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?

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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6.21: Discussion- Narrowing a Topic

You may be assigned to write papers in your classes about any topic that interests you—from engineering, social movements, sports, politics, education, history…you name it. Sometimes it can be difficult to narrow a broad topic to hone in on the questions you really want to answer. In this discussion, you will first post a broad topic, then you will return to the forum to write defining questions based on the topic, as well as some thoughts as to how you might develop that essay.

STEP 1: For this discussion assignment, post a broad topic that you may be expected to write a paper about.

STEP 2: Return to the discussion and **post on TWO classmate's posts** with defining questions that could help you narrow down the topic. For example, imagine your assignment is to write about New York taxes. You could narrow that to school taxes, then ask the following defining questions:

1. Why do only property owners (and not renters) in New York State pay school taxes?
2. What percent of overall school funding comes from school taxes?
3. Do other states fund schools in the same way?
4. Does the state lottery system, initially designed to fund schools, actually support schools?
5. Is there a limit to paying school taxes when one gets older and no longer has children in school?

STEP 3: Look over your defining questions, and pick which two you would pursue if you had to write a paper about this topic. Where would you go to look for answers? What kind of research would you need to do? What might a working thesis statement look like for this project. Add in your thoughts about how asking defining questions enabled you to narrow down the scope of your project and give you ideas for writing.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

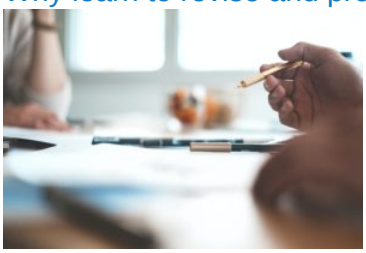
7: The Writing Process—Revising and Proofreading

7.1: Why It Matters- The Writing Process—Revising and Proofreading
7.2: Introduction to Revising
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7.17: Discussion- CARES Peer Review
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7.1: Why It Matters- The Writing Process—Revising and Proofreading

Why learn to revise and proofread your writing?



Novice writers sometimes think that by deleting a few words or fixing some spelling errors as they draft, they have engaged in revision. But true revision involves looking at a draft anew and rethinking it. It pushes writers to re-engage with content, structure, and style. It is time-consuming and labor-intensive, but the reward is worth the effort.

Revision leads to better thinking, as writers challenge their own ideas, weigh the evidence they have included, and scrutinize their own logic. Revision leads to better writing, as writers reflect on their composing practices, learn to identify their strengths, and find ways to overcome their weaknesses. Finally, revision leads to better outcomes, as readers recognize writing that has been carefully considered and re-considered. That recognition brings higher regard from readers and, when those readers are professors, often leads to higher grades.

Revising a written document sometimes closely resembles the multiple drafting stage of the writing process. The main difference between drafting and revising probably lies within the completeness of the document itself. Rough drafts are characterized by varying degrees of completeness, which the writer attempts to finish in a less-than-polished manner. These rough drafts are akin to an unformed block of stone into which the artist is chiseling an image that is not yet fully recognizable to the audience.

Revised drafts are based upon a completed rough draft that now needs to be chiseled into a fully recognizable work of art. During the revising stage, the chiseled image becomes clearer, more developed according to the controlling thesis, and less defined by unnatural, awkward angles. However, the ultimate task of the revising stage is to make that recognizable but still ill-defined image into a beautiful work of art. In this module, we'll learn about techniques and strategies to help you revise, edit, and proofread your paper so that it becomes a polished piece.

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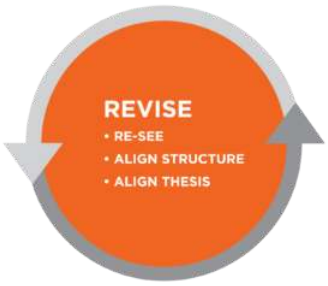
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7.2: Introduction to Revising



What you'll learn to do: analyze revision activities

In their seminal book, The Elements of Style[1], William Strunk, Jr. and E.B. White acknowledge the need for revision in the writing process: "Few writers are so expert that they can produce what they are after on the first try. Quite often you will discover, on examining the completed work, that there are serious flaws in the arrangement of the material, calling for transpositions… do not be afraid to experiment with your text."

In this section, we'll learn about techniques for revision that will enable you to refine and improve your paper. Think of writing like creating a work of art—to produce a polished product, you'd create the initial piece and then revisit it to make adjustments and improvements, probably multiple times. Similarly, you are missing out on an important opportunity for improvement if you don't take the time to revise your writing.

1. Strunk, William; E. B. White (1972) [1959]. The Elements of Style (2nd ed.). Plain Label Books. pp. 55–56. ISBN 978-1-60303-050-2. ↵

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7.3: Working With Your Draft

Learning Objectives

- Explain revision techniques for improving drafts

Revising your Draft

Revision is the step of the writing process in which you focus on your ideas and organization and rearrange or fine-tune your draft. Revision follows drafting and precedes **editing** (which is a focus more on the grammar and readability of your draft) and **proofreading** (which is a final check for surface errors). When revising your work you may rearrange paragraphs and sentences, you may change your wording to make your arguments more clear, or you may add or remove information. Drafting and revising often form a loop as an essay moves back and forth between the two stages; it is not uncommon for professional writers to go through many drafts and revisions before successfully creating a written piece that is ready for the next stage of editing.

Revising Stage 1: Seeing the Big Picture

When you first begin your revision process, you should focus on the big picture or issues at the essay level that might need to be addressed. The following questions will guide you:

- Do you have a **clear thesis**? Do you know what idea or perspective you want your reader to understand upon reading your essay?
- Is your essay **well organized**?
- **Is each paragraph a building block** in your essay: does each explain or support your thesis?
- Does it need a different shape? **Do parts need to be moved?**
- Do you fully **explain and illustrate the main ideas** of your paper?
- Does your **introduction grab the reader's interest**?
- **Does your conclusion leave the reader understanding your point of view?**
- Are you saying in your essay what you want to say?
- **What is the strength of your paper? What is its weakness?**

Revising Stage 2: Mid-View

The second stage of the revision process requires that you look at your content closely and at the paragraph level. It's now time to examine each paragraph, on its own, to see where you might need to revise. The following questions will guide you through the mid-view revision stage:

- Does each paragraph contain **solid, specific information, vivid description, or examples** that illustrate the point you are making in the paragraph?
- Are there are other **facts, quotations, examples, or descriptions** to add that can more clearly illustrate or provide evidence for the points you are making?
- Are there sentences, words, descriptions or **information that you can delete** because they don't add to the points you are making or may confuse the reader?
- Are the paragraphs in the **right order**?
- **Are your paragraphs overly long**? Does each paragraph explore **one main idea**?
- Do you use **clear transitions** so the reader can follow your thinking?
- Are any paragraphs or parts of paragraphs **redundant** and need to be deleted?

Revising Stage 3: Editing Up Close

Once you have completed your revision and feel confident in your content, you'll want to begin the editing stage of your revision and editing process, which we will elaborate on later.

Watch IT: A Three-Step Revision Process

The following video recommends writing 3 additional drafts (yes, after your first and working drafts are already done!) to fully revise an essay. In the first revision, you want to focus on the big picture and overall organization of the paper. In the second revision, focus on strengthening each paragraph, and on the third draft, review things at the sentence level.

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

You can view the transcript for “Three-step revision process” here (download).

Revision Checklist

In summary, the revision checklist found below will help you focus on some key issues as you revise your paper.

- Have I conveyed the significance of my ideas to my readers? Is my purpose clear?
- Does my essay meet the requirements of my assignment?
- Is my focus too broad? Have I narrowed my topic well?
- Is my organization plan effective?
- Is there a way to make the concept I am discussing clearer and more focused?
- Is the voice or style I am using appropriate for my audience?
- Have I clearly defined any terms used?
- Have I considered any possible objections to my position, if I take a position in this research essay?
- Do I provide clear transitions between my ideas? Are there any gaps between my points?
- Are there any points that need further explanation or detail?
- Are there any points that need to be cut because they are not related to my focus?
- Are my sources credible? Have I addressed this credibility in my writing?
- Have I integrated my source material smoothly and effectively by providing signal phrases and/or context for this information?
- Have I put some source material in my own words as much as possible and used quotes only when necessary?
- Have I properly acknowledged all of my source material, including paraphrases and summaries?

Try It

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Glossary

editing: a type of revision that focuses on the grammar, punctuation, and overall readability of a paper

proofreading: the last stage of revision that entails checking for typographical errors such as spelling errors, grammatical concerns, or style

revision: the process of making changes and improvements to a draft of a paper

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7.4: Working with Peers

Learning Objectives

- Describe techniques for effective peer review

Revision doesn't have to happen by yourself. You can (and should!) call upon your peers to help you develop and clarify your draft.



Figure 1. Getting input from others about your writing can be intimidating at first, but feedback from others is invaluable and worth every bit of effort or humility it takes on your part.

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

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

Talk it Out

Even if it is optional, it's a good idea to have a conversation about your piece of writing with someone else. First, you could ask a friend to read through your draft, and mark places where difficult or complicated ideas don't seem to be coming through clearly. Then, look at each passage and explain to your friend what you meant to say in that passage. Sometimes verbally articulating an idea helps to clarify it. What did you say more clearly in the conversation than you wrote in the draft? What did you say that needs to be included in your draft? What kinds of questions or points did your peers make that could be included in your draft? The insights you can from having someone else read your paper can make you aware of any shortcomings or weaknesses in your paper.

Watch It

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.

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

You can view the transcript for "Otis College: Peer Writing Review Process" here (download).

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.

The Need for Specific Feedback

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

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

Finally, she hands you the paper back and says, "This sucks."

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

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

All of these matters should be spelled out clearly beforehand, either by the writer or the reviewer. As a writer, what are you personally working on? It’s not a bad idea to think about your strengths and challenges as a writer before handing over your paper to a reviewer, or to use work that has been returned to you in the past with feedback.

For example, if you’re writing a paper for a professor you’ve had before, and who has made comments on your past work, use those comments to provide your reviewer with a focus. If you are the reviewer in this situation, ask to see the assignment and rubric, if possible. You can also ask the writer for specific guidelines, areas of greatest need, or even anything s/he might know about the grader.

Being a Good Peer Reviewer

Sooner or later, someone is going to hand you a piece of writing and ask for your opinion. You may be asked to review another student’s essay as part of your classwork. Perhaps a friend or a younger brother or sister has come to you for help. If you develop a reputation for being a good writer, then the chances are good that even your boss might ask you to look over letters or policy statements and offer your professional opinion.

In any case, if you really want to do a good job in these situations, you’re going to need reviewing skills. You’re going to need to be able to identify problems, suggest alternatives, and, more importantly, support everything you say with reasonable claims. Furthermore, you must do all this in a convincing way that makes the writer want to make the changes you suggest. You must know what’s wrong with a document, why it’s wrong, and how to fix it. One way you can get better at self-reviewing is to spend time reviewing other people’s work. Eventually, you’ll develop a knack for spotting errors that will serve you well as you edit and revise your own work.

Reviewing Criteria

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

Organization

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

Focus

1. Is the paper focused on the assignment? Does it follow the same thought throughout the paper, or does it jump from subject to subject? Do I feel like I’m still learning about/thinking about the same subject at the end of the paper that I was at the beginning of the paper?
2. Try to paraphrase the thesis of the paper as a promise: In this paper, the writer will… Does the writer fulfill his/her obligation stated in the thesis?

3. What's the writer's position on the issue? What words does the writer use to indicate his/her position?

Style

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

Development

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

Conventions

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

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

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

? ? CARES Peer Review

The least helpful comment to receive from a peer reviewer is, "It looks good to me." The CARES method helps you to articulate useful things that can benefit the author when they revisit their draft. Keep in mind that as a reviewer or reviewee, you want to make and take comments in the spirit of helpfulness.

- **C: Congratulate.** What does the writer do well in this assignment? (List one or more aspects.) Also, please write the writer's main claim or focus (thesis) according to what you have read. (It may not be the last sentence of the first paragraph – the traditional place for the thesis.)
- **A: Ask clarifying questions.** What part(s) of the essay were a bit confusing? Why? What specific suggestions (3 or fewer) do you have for revising the unclear parts of this writing?
- **R: Request** more. What would you like to know more about the topic that can enhance the essay and that supports the thesis?
- **E: Evaluate** its value. What specific detail(s) do not work with the essay (e.g. doesn't support the thesis) or can be moved within the essay?
- **S: Summarize.** Overall, what new information have you learned or how are you thinking differently after this reading?

Visit the Excelsior Online Writing Lab to watch a video of students using the CARES method.

? ? Try It

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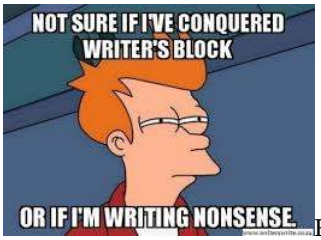
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7.5: Introduction to Revising for Content and Structure

What you'll learn to do: evaluate revision strategies



Revising for content begins when you have a draft. You could have a substantial draft, and you may be wondering how to make sure your ideas are solid, logical, and persuasive to your particular audience. Or, your draft may fall short of the assignment's length expectations, and you may be wondering how to expand or develop your ideas. No matter where you are in the revision process, you'll want to carefully consider the content, supporting evidence, and organization of your essay. Having an organized essay will help your reader follow the points you want to make.

In this section, you'll learn to identify and evaluate different revision strategies for supporting and arranging ideas.

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7.6: Revising for the Rhetorical Context

Learning Objectives

- Utilize strategies for making revisions to the rhetorical context of a writing

In any writing project, three key factors–purpose, author, and audience–all work together to influence what the text itself says, and how it says it. Revisiting these factors, the rhetorical context, can help with expanding and revising your draft.

Purpose

When revising a draft, it can be helpful to ask yourself again, "Why am I writing?" Remember that all writing, no matter the type, has a purpose. Purpose will sometimes be given to you (by a teacher, for example), while other times, you will decide for yourself. As the author, it's up to you to make sure that purpose is clear not only for yourself, but also–especially–for your audience. If your purpose is not clear, your audience is not likely to receive your intended message.

There are, of course, many different reasons to write (e.g., to inform, to entertain, to persuade, to ask questions), and you may find that some writing has more than one purpose. When this happens, be sure to consider any conflict between purposes, and remember that you will usually focus on one main purpose as primary.



Figure 1. Just like bored teenagers who don't understand the purpose of art in a museum, bored readers who don't understand the purpose of your writing will become disinterested in your work.

Bottom line: Making sure your purpose is clear can help identify areas needing revision or areas for further exploration.

Why Purpose Matters

If you've ever listened to a lecture or read an essay and wondered "so what" or "what is this person talking about," then you know how frustrating it can be when an author's purpose is not clear. By clearly defining your purpose before you begin writing, it's less likely you'll be that author who leaves the audience wondering.

If readers can't identify the purpose in a text, they usually quit reading. You can't deliver a message to an audience who quits reading.

If teachers can't identify the purpose in your text, they will likely assume you didn't understand the assignment and, chances are, you won't receive a good grade.

Try It

Identify the purpose for the piece of writing in the following scenarios:

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In order for your writing to be maximally effective, you have to think about the audience you're writing for and adapt your writing approach to their needs, expectations, backgrounds, and interests. Being aware of your audience helps you make better decisions about what to say and how to say it. For example, you have a better idea if you will need to define or explain any terms, and you can make a more conscious effort not to say or do anything that would offend your audience.

Sometimes you know who will read your writing — for example, if you are writing an email to your boss. Other times you will have to guess who is likely to read your writing — for example, if you are writing a newspaper editorial. You will often write with a primary audience in mind, but there may be secondary and tertiary audiences to consider as well.

Consider the Audience

When analyzing your audience, consider these points. Doing this should make it easier to create a profile of your audience, which can help guide your writing choices.

Background Knowledge

In general, you don't want to merely repeat what your audience already knows about the topic you're writing on; you want to build on it. On the other hand, you don't want to talk over their heads. Anticipate their amount of previous knowledge or experience based on elements like their age, profession, or level of education.

Expectations and Interests

Your audience may expect to find specific points or writing approaches, especially if you are writing for a teacher or a boss. Consider not only what they do want to read about, but also what they do not want to read about.

Attitudes and Biases

Your audience may have predetermined feelings about you or your topic, which can affect how hard you have to work to win them over or appeal to them. The audience's attitudes and biases also affect their expectations — for example, if they expect to disagree with you, they will likely look for evidence that you have considered their side as well as your own.

Demographics

Consider what else you know about your audience, such as their age, gender, ethnic and cultural backgrounds, political preferences, religious affiliations, job or professional background, and area of residence. Think about how these demographics may affect how much background your audience has about your topic, what types of expectations or interests they have, and what attitudes or biases they may have.

? ? Examples

Scenario: You are writing an email to your Theatre professor from last semester to propose an independent study course on stage combat with her next year.

Audience: Dr. Wilcox has a Ph.D., and her dissertation focused on American Theatre in particular. She specializes in teaching stage combat strategies–any fights or physical interaction on stage are what she is especially interested in. She often travels to teach small workshops about stage combat.

Background Knowledge	Dr. Wilcox is the preeminent expert on stage combat at your university. You have to assume that she knows basically everything there is to know about it and has years of experience to back up her knowledge. Your email should demonstrate your sincere interest in this subject and explain what the independent study would mean for you. Show that you've done your homework and don't waste her time.
Expectations and Interests	Why should Dr. Wilcox agree to an independent study with you? Theatre professors are very busy, and independent studies can take a lot of time and energy devoted to just one student. Your proposal must show not only interest but passion for this topic. Remember that Dr. Wilcox has devoted her career to becoming an expert on stage fighting. Your email must convey enthusiasm and respect.

Attitudes and Biases	It's possible Dr. Wilcox does not like independent studies or has had bad experiences with them in the past. How can you convince her to make an exception for you? Professors have to work with la lot of students and have to learn to say "no" to avoid burnout, so she could very well initially react with hesitation to your independent study request. You have to demonstrate that this would not create an undue burden on her time.
Demographics	In this scenario, demographics could impact how Dr. Wilcox uses her time and how flexible her schedule is. It certainly isn't your place to pry or to reinforce stereotypes, but remember that even professors have lives outside of school, and be respectful of work/life balance issues in your independent study proposal. If you know Dr. Wilcox lives an hour away from campus, for example, you shouldn't propose meeting times on days you know she wouldn't ordinarily be on campus.

Scenario: You are applying for a scholarship offered from the University of Mississippi School of Nursing to new freshmen pursuing nursing as a career choice. You're required to write a 250-word application essay demonstrating both your need and your interest in nursing.

Audience: This is a committee of doctors and nurses at the University of Mississippi Medical Center in Jackson, MS. They not only have medical degrees, but they also teach classes. They are especially interested in candidates who want to work in under-served communities.

Background Knowledge	The scholarship committee consists of experienced Nursing faculty members. That means they're experts at actually being nurses and training new nurses. They know what characteristics strong nursing students display. Your application essay should be honest and straightforward about what has drawn you to the field of nursing. You should also show passion for working in under-served communities in the future, since that's what the committee is looking for in these applications.
Expectations and Interests	Remember that scholarship committees usually have many applications to read. It can be an exhausting and time-consuming process. If you don't capture their interest in the first few sentences, it's very likely they will just skim the rest of your essay. You have to demonstrate right away that you're an ideal applicant. Make yourself stand out in some way that is memorable and relevant, and write concisely. The last thing you want to do is meander in your words.
Attitudes and Biases	Since the scholarship review committee sees a lot of applications, they're probably expecting some "fluff." Remember that they're looking for opportunities to thin the pile and discard applications from students who aren't qualified or serious. Don't give them any reason to throw your application out. Be concise, on-message, and proofread carefully before you submit.

Demographics	You can't know much about the demographics of the scholarship review committee because you don't know who serves on it. What you do know is that everyone on the committee is a School of Nursing faculty member. They're educated and experienced, and they care about under-served communities. They will probably expect competence, passion, and intellectual inquiry in these applications.

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7.7: Revising for Style

Learning Objectives

- Revise for style and wordiness

Revising for Style

During the revision process, you also want to be scan for appropriate word choice, sentence fluency, and voice.

Have you ever ordered a dish in a restaurant and been not happy with its taste, even though it contained most of your favorite ingredients? Just as a meal might lack the finishing touches needed to spice it up, so too might a paragraph contain all the basic components but still lack the stylistic finesse required to engage a reader. Sometimes writers have a tendency to reuse the same sentence pattern throughout their writing.

Like any repetitive task, reading text that contains too many sentences with the same length and structure can become monotonous and boring. Experienced writers mix it up by using an assortment of sentence patterns, rhythms, and lengths. Using a mixture of different sentence structures reduces repetition and adds emphasis to important points in the text.

Try It

In this extract from an election campaign, the writer uses short, simple sentences of a similar length and style. Notice that five of the seven sentences begin with the same word! This style that emphasizes repetition could be useful in the rhetorical context of a speech, but for a written text, the result is a choppy, unsophisticated paragraph that does not grab the audience's attention.

During my time in office, I have achieved several goals. I have helped increase funding for local schools. I have reduced crime rates in the neighborhood. I have encouraged young people to get involved in their community. My competitor argues that she is the better choice in the upcoming election. I argue that it is ridiculous to fix something that isn't broken. I promise to continue to serve this community if you reelect me this year.

https://h5p.cwr.olemiss.edu/h5p/embed/94

Not just right and wrong

Style is not a matter of right and wrong but of what is appropriate for each rhetorical context—that is, each particular communication task, setting, and audience.

When you first draft an essay, the sentences may sound informal or similar to the way that you speak. This is perfectly acceptable for the drafting process and for certain kinds of informal writing and rhetorical contexts. It is important, however, to be sure that the style of your writing matches the rhetorical situation.

Consider these differences between conversational, spoken language, and more formal, academic language:

Spoken Language	**Written Language**
Shorter sentences	More complex sentences with varying structures
Vague words (e.g., stuff, some)	Precise, careful word choices
Contractions, interjections, and slang (e.g., can't even, wow!, keep it 100)	Non-colloquial, standard word choice

Academic Style

Formal academic writing is concise and precise; the writer weeds out unnecessary words and chooses the exact word to convey meaning. Precise words—active verbs, concrete nouns, specific adjectives—help the reader visualize the sentence. In academic writing, we use adjectives sparingly and adverbs rarely, letting nouns and verbs do the work.

Follow these principles to be sure that your word choice is appropriate to an academic writing task:

- **Use a formal tone.** Avoid slang. Find alternatives to lit, salty, lowkey, or any other contemporary terminology. Write about "men and women" rather than "girls and guys" unless you are trying to create a specific effect. A formal tone calls for formal language.
- **Avoid clichés.** Overused expressions such as outside the box, back in the day, feeling blue, and similar expressions are empty of meaning and may not appeal to your audience.
- Be judicious when you use phrases such as "in terms of," "with a mind to," "on the subject of," "as to whether or not," "more or less," "as far as…is concerned," and similar expressions. You can usually find a more straightforward way to state your point.

Wordy	Revised
As a world leader in the field of green technology, the company plans to focus its efforts in the area of geothermal energy. A report as to whether or not to use geysers as an energy source is in the process of preparation.	As a world leader in green technology, the company plans to focus on geothermal energy. A report about using geysers as an energy source is in preparation.

Choosing words that are sensitive to your audience

As you revise for style, look closely at the language you have used in your drafts. Often, we write words that are fairly common but might be offensive to some readers or make them feel like they are excluded from being valuable members of your audience. Revision is a chance to think carefully about your language choices and to make sure you are considering all potential readers.

Below are some examples of language choices that can help you be more inclusive in your writing:

Gender terms

Use gender-neutral pronouns when appropriate. For example, don't use the word "he" unless you are referring to just a male. Use terms like "he or she" when singular or "their" when plural. In fact, one easy way to make language more inclusive is to pluralize when possible. For example, a sentence such as, "Any student wishing to go on the trip must turn in his money to the teacher by Friday," could easily be changed to, "Students wishing to go on the trip must turn in their money to the teacher by Friday." Unless you were writing about an all-boys school, the second sentence is a much better choice.

Here are some other examples:

- police officer rather than policeman
- mail carrier rather than mailman
- humankind rather than mankind

Racial or ethnic terms

Use terms that are likely to not be offensive to readers. Despite common usage, some terms like "Indian" are not the preferred label for many members of that group. Additionally, it can be confusing because people from the country India can be called "Indian." Use "Native American" or even "American Indian" instead.

Here are some other examples:

- Latino/a or Latinx (or the appropriate specific ethnicity), rather than Mexican
- African-American or Black rather than colored or other terms
- Inuit or Native Alaskan rather than Eskimo



Figure 1. Keep your audience in mind as you write, being careful to avoid words and phrases that might be offensive, exclusive, or beyond the scope of their knowledge.

Writing about disabilities

Terms referring to disabilities are often insensitive and sometimes even inaccurate. For example, the term “blind” has negative connotations. Think about how we also use it in negative ways: “Jill is blind to the fact that her old friends don’t want to hang out with her anymore.” Further, some people may be called blind when they actually have partial vision. The term “visually impaired” is a better choice for multiple reasons, even when someone has complete loss of sight.

Here are some other examples:

- hearing impaired rather than deaf
- mentally disabled or mentally ill; NOT retarded or crazy
- person with disabilities or a person with a disability; NOT cripple or handicap

? ? Try It

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7.8: Revising for Structure

Learning Objectives

- Revise drafts for structure, using techniques such as a reverse outline

Revising for structure goes far beyond just making sure you have an introduction, body, and conclusion to an essay. When you revise for structure, you want to consider how well all the parts of the essay work together and whether the order of ideas makes sense. Does necessary background information come first? Is there a clear connection between evidence and your commentary on that evidence? Does all the necessary evidence appear in the body of the essay? An essay that delays key details, separates evidence and commentary, or introduces new evidence in the conclusion will likely be very difficult to follow and leave a reader with more questions than answers.

There are a few strategies to help you revise your essay's structure globally—that is, strategies that help you consider the overall organization of the essay.

Write stronger introductions – both for the whole document and for major sections.

In general, readers like to get the big picture up front. You can offer this in your introduction and thesis statement, or in smaller introductions to major sections within your document. However, you should also consider how much time your audience will have to read your document. If you are writing for a boss who already works long hours and has little or no free time, you wouldn't want to write an introduction that rambles on for two and a half pages before getting into the information your boss is looking for.

Look for a stronger thesis in the conclusion of the essay draft.

The "restatement" of one's thesis in the draft will typically be a more clear and assertive version of the original thesis stated earlier in the essay. Alternately, it's not uncommon for a rough draft to shift from its original thesis to a more nuanced argument in the process of drafting, and in this case there will be discrepancies between the original thesis and the conclusion of the draft. The most drastic version of this strategy is to remove one's original introduction and replace it with the conclusion of one's draft.

Consider audience receptiveness.

Many writers tend to address counterarguments and rebuttals in the last few paragraphs of an essay—after all, when drafting, it's usually easier to think of reasons to support your position than it is to think of problems or limitations with your ideas. If you are writing an argument that you think (or know) your audience is likely to disagree with, consider using the Rogerian method of argumentation to address alternate or opposing views early in the body of the essay. In the Rogerian method, once you've acknowledged those perspectives and demonstrated your understanding of why someone holds those views, you can then state your own position and proceed with your argument by rebutting those opposing views. This type of argument can be extremely persuasive and can help you, as a writer, understand your own biases and how you might work to find common ground with others.

Cut up your essay.

This is a good strategy if you're feeling particularly stuck in the revision process or just want to take a break from your computer screen. Format your essay so you have only 1 paragraph per page, and then print it out, making sure to only print on one side of the page. Once you've printed your essay, shuffle the pages and then spread them out. Now you can evaluate the order of paragraphs in the essay and easily move them around, trying out different ways of structuring your ideas. It can also be helpful to give the pages of your essay to a writing partner and ask him or her to organize them in a way that makes sense. Do the two of you agree on what structure makes sense? If you don't, this is a great opportunity to discuss your ideas further with your partner.

Create a reverse outline.

Also called a post-draft outline, this strategy asks you to create an outline of the draft you just wrote. Creating a "macro outline" allows you to focus on the "big picture" of an essay's main points and support by using short phrases or keywords. A reverse macro outline is useful when writing about a variety of ideas and issues where the ordering of points is more flexible. A "micro outline" gets into the drilled-down, specific details of the essay's content. It is particularly useful when the topic you are discussing is complex in nature. When creating a reverse micro outline, it can also be useful to insert the quotations you plan to include in the essay (with citations) and subsequent analyses of quotes. Taking this extra step helps ensure that you have enough support for your ideas and that the order of evidence and commentary makes sense throughout the entire essay.

✔ ✔ Watch It

A post draft outline can help you quickly see where you went with your essay and can help you more easily see if you need to make broad changes to content or to organizations. View the video below to learn more.

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

? ? Try It

Consider this excerpt from an essay on children and smartphone usage. Once you've read the paragraphs, arrange the sentences below to create a macro reverse outline for the essay.

Having a video or TV on when a child is doing something else can distract them from play and learning, negatively affecting their development. Hours of background TV has also been found to reduce child–parent interaction, which has an adverse impact on language development. This displacement is a big concern: if kids are left with screen-based babysitters then they are not interacting with caregivers and the physical world. There are only so many hours in a day, and the time spent with screens comes at the expense of other, potentially better, activities.

Under-threes, in particular, need a balance of activities, including instructed play, exploring the natural environment, manipulating physical toys and socializing with other children and grown-ups. The rise in screen use means less of all of these things. "Parents need to think strategically," says pediatrician Dimitri Christakis, Director of the Center for Child Health, Behavior and Development at the Seattle Children's Research Institute. "If your child has 12 hours awake and two of those are spent eating, how will you allocate the rest of the time?"

The problem is that tablets are extremely appealing to children and adults alike. Thanks to their design, versatility and intuitive interfaces, tablets are a perfect way for children to draw, solve puzzles, and be entertained on the move. Combine that with marketing efforts of digital media companies and app developers – whose measure of success tends to be the amount of time people are glued to their creation – and you have a toy that's difficult to pry out of tiny hands.

Many apps are designed to be stimulus-driven, with exciting audiovisual rewards for completing tasks. Christakis refers to this as the "I did it!" response, which triggers the reward pathway in the brain. "The delight a child gets from touching a screen and making something happen is both edifying and potentially addictive," he says.

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7.9: Revising Claims

Learning Objectives

- Review and revise the claims, or evidence, presented in a work of writing

Review the Evidence

When you support your thesis, you are revealing evidence. Evidence includes anything that can help support your stance. You should revisit your evidence as you revise to ensure that it appropriately supports the claims in your writing. The following are the kinds of evidence you will encounter as you conduct your research:



Figure 1. Is your evidence accurate and relevant to your thesis statement?

- **Facts:** Facts are the best kind of evidence to use because they cannot be disputed. They can support your stance by providing background information on or a solid foundation for your point of view. However, some facts may still need explanation. For example, the sentence, "The most populated state in the United States is California," is a pure fact, but it may require some explanation to make it relevant to your specific argument.
- **Judgments:** Judgments are conclusions drawn from the given facts. Judgments are more credible than opinions because they are founded upon careful reasoning and examination of a topic.
- **Testimony**: Testimony consists of direct quotations from either an eyewitness or an expert witness. An eyewitness is someone who has direct experience with a subject; he or she adds authenticity to an argument based on facts. An expert witness is a person who has extensive experience with a topic. This person studies the facts and provides commentary based on either facts or judgments, or both. An expert witness adds authority and credibility to an argument.
- **Personal Observation**: Personal observation is similar to testimony, but personal observation consists of your testimony. It reflects what you know to be true because you have experiences and have formed either opinions or judgments about them. For instance, if you are one of five children and your thesis states that being part of a large family is beneficial to a child's social development, you could use your own experience to support your thesis.

Remember that the effectiveness of evidence is contextual and dependent on audience. While evidence consisting primarily of personal observations may be effective for one audience, another might require hard facts.

Revising: Highlighting Evidence Method

One way to review the appropriateness of the evidence in your paper is to use the highlighting method. To do this, you choose a body paragraph within the draft and highlight the paragraph's claim(s) in one color. Highlight the evidence for that claim(s) in a second color. Highlight the explanation of how the evidence supports the claim in a third color. Review the color-coded paragraph. Is there sufficient evidence for the claim? Don't assume that your reader understands the importance of your quotes or paraphrases. Readers are not inside your head, so it may not be obvious why this evidence is significant. Add further interpretation of your source evidence–why is this evidence important? How does it connect with the point of your paragraph? How does it further your thesis?

Student Example

In accordance with the tuition freeze, universities could also provide students with free books and other required class materials to reduce the burden of college expenses.[1] One college textbook can range from as little as $30 to a whopping $200. In fact, the College Board approximates that "the average college student spends more than $1,200 on books and materials" yearly, and this number fluctuates depending on the student's major (Kristof).[2] An obvious solution would be for students to rent textbooks or buy used books. However, some courses require the student to buy a new textbook that includes a code for the student to access online work for the class, and in some instances, renting the textbook costs about the same as the price of buying it. By granting students access to open textbooks and other free online materials, universities can help lower costs. With

open textbooks, professors would take the important sections of the required text and provide students with the coursework digitally or on paper, and the school would only pay a fee to authors and publishers, if necessary. The fee would be relatively tiny in comparison to textbook costs.[3]

The student's claim is highlighted in turquoise.

The evidence from the College Board is highlighted in blue.

The interpretation, exploration, and connection is highlighted in yellow. Note how much larger the yellow section is in the paragraph.

? ? Revising Using Hotspotting

Another revising method is called hotspotting. Read through your draft marking sentences that convey important ideas in your paper. These are areas where your writing and thinking is significant or "hot." Copy one of the hot sentences into a new document then use that sentence as the first sentence of a new paragraph. Write for 10 or 15 minutes. Don't worry if you seem to be moving in a different direction from your original draft; you might be on to new and better material. When time is up compare the new material with your original draft. Could the new material be incorporated into or substituted for the original? Could the new material be the start of a new part of the original draft? Repeat with other hot sentences.

Student Example

Another intentional feeling amongst the people watching "Toys of War" is sympathy for the children. Berends pushes this emotion through visual tracks and primary footage of the children's everyday lives. The film is constantly showing the kids making their toys out of dirt. **They make little toy trucks, guns, animals, and people to play with because they have nothing else or any other way to have fun according to the video.** This urges the viewer to have sympathy for the children because that is not a social norm in society in other countries.

The bold sentence is the student's hotspot. Below is the result of a student freewrite regarding that hotspot. The writer can then add and/or revise the original paragraph:

This is a really important point and I want the reader to understand how the camera is focused on these animals. What I also notice is that these were handmade. They looked like they were made by the kids themselves, like out of dirt. This could really build on my point that this means pathos. The viewer feels really sad because kids should have toys to play with and not rocks and dirt. And kids should be able to have fun and play.

? ? Try It

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1. Student Claim ↵
2. Evidence from the College Board ↵
3. Interpretation, exploration, and connection. ↵

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7.10: Revising Paragraphs

Learning Objective

- Recognize techniques for effective paragraph construction

Logic and Structure

For the most part, we write paragraphs without a specific method or plan of organization. When you sit down to write, you don't usually tell yourself, "I am going to write eight paragraphs that are four sentences long each." Effective and mature writing is more organic.

Applying logic and structure to paragraphs comes often in the revision stage. When you have completed a draft, one way to tackle organization and coherence in your revision is to study the logic and construction of individual paragraphs.

There are plenty of ways to classify these systems of logic and structure, but we're going to look at four: rank order, spatial, chronological, and general to specific.[1]

Rank Order

Paragraphs can be organized to build toward a main point, with the most important part of the message coming at the end. This last point is sometimes the key/topic sentence, but not always. This method of organization is useful in building up to a problem or claim that will be further developed in later paragraphs. Read the following example from *The Future of Road-making in America* (1905):[2]

In this problem, as in many, the most important phase is the one most difficult to study and most difficult to solve. It is as complex as human life itself. It is the question of good roads as they affect the social and moral life of our rural communities. It is easy to talk of bad roads costing a half billion dollars a year—the answer should be that of Hood's—"O God! that bread should be so dear, and flesh and blood so cheap." You cannot count in terms of the stock exchange the cost to this land of poor roads; for poor roads mean the decay of country living, the abandonment of farms and farm-life, poor schools, poor churches, and homes stricken with a social poverty that drives the young men and girls into the cities. You cannot estimate the cost to this country, in blood, brain, and muscle, of the hideous system of public roads we have possessed in the decade passed. **Look at any of our cities to the men who guide the swift rush of commercial, social, and religious affairs and you will find men whose birthplaces are not preparing another such generation of men for the work of the future.**

This section of the book is making the case for more road construction in rural areas. One of the author's primary claims is that a lack of road infrastructure causes people to migrate to cities. The final sentence of the paragraph is the most rhetorically powerful expression of the writer's message.

Spatial

Spatial organization for paragraphs makes sense for exposition or description. If you are describing the appearance of a sculpture or statue, it makes sense to write the description in a way that's analogous to the appearance of the statue itself. Consider the following example:

As New Jersey contains a great variety of soils, there are many conditions to be met with in road construction. **The northern part of the state is hilly, where we have clay, soft stone, hard stones, loose stones, quicksand, and marshes. In the eastern part of the state, particularly in the seashore sections, the roads are at their worst in summer in consequence of loose, dry sand, which sometimes drifts like snow. In west New Jersey, which comprises the southern end of the state, there is much loose, soft sand, considerable clay, marshes, and low lands not easily drained.**

In this chapter, the writer describes road construction and maintenance in New Jersey. It makes sense to start off by describing the physical geography of the state. Based on this spatial description, I would probably be able to draw a topographical map of New Jersey with some degree of accuracy.

Chronological

Just like you would describe physical appearance using spatial paragraph organization, you would describe sequential events chronologically. If you were writing a paragraph about all the things you ate on Tuesday, it makes sense to start with breakfast and end with your midnight snack. Take a look at the following example:

In the year 1900 object-lesson roads were built under the direction of the Office of Public Road Inquiries near Port Huron, Saginaw, and Traverse City, Michigan; Springfield, Illinois; and Topeka, Kansas. Since that time the object-lesson roads so built have been extended and duplicated by the local authorities without further aid from the government. The people are so well pleased with the results of these experiments that they are making preparations for additional extensions, aggregating many miles. During the year 1901 sample object-lesson roads were built on a larger scale in coöperation with the Illinois Central, Lake Shore, and Southern railroad companies, and the National Association for Good Roads in the states of Louisiana, Mississippi, Tennessee, Kentucky, Illinois, New York, North Carolina, South Carolina, Alabama, and Georgia. In all of these cases the cooperation has been very hearty on the part of the state, the county, and the municipality in which the work has been done, and the results have been very satisfactory and beneficial.

This paragraph describes a sequence of events beginning in 1900. In this case, it wouldn't make sense to describe what happened in 1901 before what happened in 1900. Of course, there are cases where you might use a reverse chronological method for organizing a paragraph. Rarely, however, would you organize a paragraph starting with the events of 1901, followed by the events of 1900 and 1902.

General to Specific

A good metaphor for the general to specific method of organizing a paragraph is the top part of an hourglass. The top of the hourglass has a lot of sand, but only a small amount of sand passes through the middle. Consider the following example:



Figure 1. In this example, the writer begins by addressing a broad issue, before gradually narrowing the focus to something more supportive of the thesis.

All the important roads in the United States can be and doubtless will be macadamized or otherwise improved in the not distant future. This expectation should govern their present location and treatment everywhere. Unless changes are made in the location of the roads in many parts of this country it would be worse than folly to macadamize them. "Any costly resurfacing of the existing roads will fasten them where they are for generations," says General Stone. The chief difficulty in this country is not with the surface, but with the steep grades, many of which are too long to be reduced by cutting and filling on the present lines, and if this could be done it would cost more in many cases than relocating them.

The writer begins by claiming that all roads in the U.S. can be improved. He gradually narrows this focus to state at the end of the paragraph that the main focus of this improvement should be dealing with the specific issue of steep grades on existing roads.

? ? Try It

Read the following paragraph from *The Commentaries of Caius Julius Caesar*:[3] and answer the question below about its logic and structure.

All Gaul is divided into three parts, one of which the Belgae inhabit, the Aquitani another, those who in their own language are called Celts, in ours Gauls, the third. All these differ from each other in language, customs and laws. The river Garonne separates the Gauls from the Aquitani; the Marne and the Seine separate them from the Belgae. Of all these, the Belgae are the bravest, because they are farthest from the civilization and refinement of [our] Province, and merchants least frequently resort to them and import those things which tend to effeminate the mind; and they are the nearest to the Germans, who dwell beyond the Rhine, with whom they are continually waging war; for which reason the Helvetii also surpass the rest of the Gauls in valor, as they contend with the Germans in almost daily battles, when they either repel them from their own territories, or themselves wage war on their frontiers. One part of these, which it has been said that the Gauls occupy, takes its beginning at the river Rhone: it is bounded by the river Garonne, the ocean, and the territories of the Belgae: it borders, too, on the side of the Sequani and the Helvetii, upon the river Rhine, and stretches towards the north. The Belgae rise from the extreme frontier of Gaul, extend to the lower part of the river Rhine; and look towards the north and the rising sun. Aquitania extends from the river Garonne to the Pyrenaean mountains and to that part of the ocean which is near Spain: it looks between the setting of the sun and the north star.

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Revising Paragraph Structure

Since paragraph structure essentially "punctuates" an essay or other piece of writing, if your paragraphs do not make sense, or don't fit together in a way that makes sense, your reader will have a hard time following your message.

There's no right or wrong way to revise a paragraph for logic or structure. The sections you just read about topic sentences, logical organization methods, and transitions provide a good roadmap, but there is no formula for fixing paragraphs.

✔ ✔ View the hotspots

Take a look at the paragraph below and click the hotspots to see our suggestions for revising it.

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

See if you can give a hypothetical student some revision advice. Read the paragraph excerpt below and choose the best feedback from the options given.

? ? Try It

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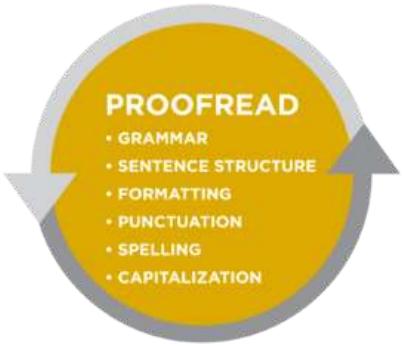
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7.11: Introduction to Editing and Proofreading

What you'll learn to do: evaluate editing and 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.

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7.12: Editing

Learning Objectives

- Describe techniques for reading for editing

Once you have completed your revision and feel confident in your content, it's time to begin the editing stage of your revision process. The following questions will guide you through your editing:

- Are there any **grammar errors**, i.e. have you been consistent in your use of tense, do your pronouns agree?
- Have you accurately and effectively used **punctuation**?
- Do you rely on **strong verbs and nouns** and maintain a good balance with **adjectives and adverbs**, using them to enhance descriptions but ensuring clear sentences?
- Are your words as **accurate** as possible?
- Do you **define any technical or unusual terms** you use?
- Are there **extra words or clichés** in your sentences that **you can delete**?
- Do you **vary your sentence structure**?
- Have you **accurately presented facts**; have you copied quotations precisely?
- If you're writing an academic essay, have you tried to be **objective** in your evidence and tone?
- If writing a personal essay, is the **narrative voice lively and interesting**?
- Have you **spellchecked** your paper?
- If you used sources, have you **consistently documented all of the sources' ideas and information** using a standard documentation style?

Adopt a Listening Ear

The key to revising your work for grammar (both word choice and wording) and mechanics (small but important matters such as punctuation) is to listen to your work anew. The best writers adopt an objective "listening ear," learning to detect their problems of grammar and mechanics both intuitively and methodically, pretending they're encountering the work for the first time no matter how many times they've re-read it.

As you develop this practice, you can count on two things.

1. We tend to repeat the same errors over and over in our writing.
2. Other writers make the same errors we do.

If we have one comma error in an essay, we're likely to have others; if we have a particular usage problem such as the distinction between "**affect**" and "**effect**," we can be sure other writers have it too. By studying the most common errors and revising accordingly, we're likely to improve our work substantially. And when we make particularly common errors in our writing (such as confusing "**it's**" with "**its**"), our audience is justified in viewing us as lazy because such errors are relatively easy to correct.

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, or keyboarding letters bcak ot frotn, missing words or adding words because your brain works far faster you can write type. Did you spot all those kinds of errors in the previous sentence?

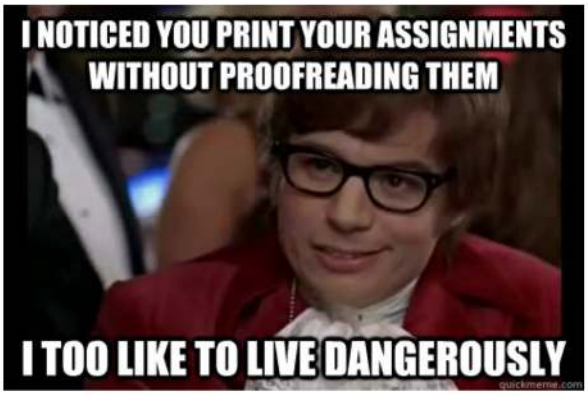


Figure 1. Reading your essay aloud will help you to catch possible mistakes that you may have missed when skimming it over in your head.

Reading for Editing

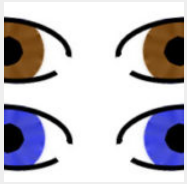
When you edit, you want to do a careful, slow, and detailed reading. Here are some tips:

- **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. You can even use a screen reader to have your essay read aloud to you.
- **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.
- **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.
- **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 for formality**
  - 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 typically need to be replaced by the full words to be formal enough for an academic essay or report.
  - Similarly, search for the capital letter '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…").

- **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.
- **Use Grammar tools such as spell-check or Grammarly**

The additional strategies below can also help you spot errors in your writing:

	**Print a hard copy** of your document. Reading on paper is different from reading electronically, so you'll catch errors on paper you hadn't noticed before.
	**Put a ruler** under each line as you read through the document. This technique will isolate lines, making it easier to spot mistakes. Some writers also like to use a pencil to point at each word.
	**Read through the paper backwards** sentence by sentence. This reverse reading technique puts the focus on the words, sentences, and punctuation marks rather than on the ideas.
	**Ask a classmate** or friend to read the document. Two sets of eyes are better than one.

✔ ✔ Watch It

This video highlights some helpful techniques for spotting editorial concerns.

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

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

? ? Try It

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7.13: Editing Grammatical Errors

Learning Objectives

- Edit for common grammatical errors



Figure 1. Analyze your own writing to identify in which areas your grammar mistakes most commonly occur.

Grammatically, writers tend to make their most obvious errors in the areas below.

Subject/Verb Agreement

This can usually be addressed by identifying each subject and verb in a sentence, ignoring the other words mentally, and making certain subjects/verbs match in number and sound.

- The word “and” linking two subjects makes them plural so you need to use the plural verb. For example, “Grammar and mechanics *are* related.”
- When subjects are connected by “or,” the subject closer to the verb determines the verb’s number, as in, “Either the punctuation marks or the usage *is* flawed.”

Try It

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

Pronoun Reference

Pronoun reference errors also make the list because pronouns seem to give a lot of beginning writers some trouble. A pronoun reference error occurs when you use a pronoun like **he** or **she**, and it’s not clear what that pronoun refers to. Here is an example:

- When Darth Vader and Luke Skywalker were battling with their light sabers, **he became angry**.

Who does **he** refer to? It isn’t clear. A pronoun should clearly refer to its **antecedent** (the word it replaces), so if the antecedent is not clear, you need to revise. Here’s an example of how you might correct the pronoun reference error:

- When Darth Vader and Luke Skywalker were battling with their light sabers, **Luke became angry**.

Verb Tense

You want to be sure that you are always consistent with your **verb tense**. When you shift verb tenses for no reason, and this is an easy mistake to make, you can really confuse your readers.

If you’re writing in the present tense, be sure you stay in the present tense. If you’re writing in the past tense, be sure you stay in the past tense. The exception would be if you need to shift tenses to tell a story, but that would be purposeful shifting. It’s the random, accidental shifting that causes the problems, as illustrated in this example:

- She grabs my hand then flipped me like I weighed nothing. This showed what a good self-defense course has done.

Here is what a corrected version of the sentence looks like:

- She grabbed my hand then flipped me like I weighed nothing. This showed what a good self-defense course has done.

It’s important to check verbs both for consistency and context.

? ? Try It

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

Sentence Structure

Have you ever had a teacher say, “That sentence starts one way and ends another”? If you have, don’t feel badly. Others make this same mistake all the time. Sometimes, we simply lose our train of thought when we write, and we literally start a sentence one way and end it another, as illustrated in the following example:

- I occasionally get the urge to study late at night for instance my exams are going to take me longer than usual to study for because this works.

It’s tough to make sense of this sentence, right?

Of course, this is not the only faulty sentence structure error you might make. It’s important to pay close attention to your sentence structure to make sure you have both a subject and a verb. And, if you are listing items or phrases in a sentence, make sure you keep the items in your list in the same form. Doing so keeps your sentences “parallel,” which is a good thing.

Here is an example of a sentence without parallel structure:

- I start my day with breakfast, exercising, and checking out the latest blogs.

In the sentence above, **breakfast** is a noun, and **exercising** and **checking** begin verb phrases. The items in the list are not in the same form. Here is a correction where the items listed are in the same form:

- I start my day by eating breakfast, exercising, and checking out the latest blogs.

Run-ons and Fragments

You can address run-ons and fragments by identifying subjects and verbs. Sentence length can sometimes be a clue in helping you identify sentences that are too long.

? ? Try It

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

Apostrophe Errors

Apostrophes give many writers a lot of trouble. Sometimes, you might be tempted to put an apostrophe where it does not belong, such as when you are simply making a word plural. Other times, you need to make a word possessive, but you might forget to use the apostrophe.

Then, of course, there is that whole **its / it’s** thing that confuses most everyone. Remember, the rule is to use an apostrophe when you need to show possession or ownership. The exception is with **its**.

Its shows ownership because **it’s** means **it is**. So, it’s like **it’s** is already taken, so **its** gets to be an ownership exception. To make sure you are using **It’s** correctly, just say **it is** when you read it. If it makes sense, you’re fine. However, if you’re trying to show ownership, and **it is** would not work in the sentence, you need to make the change to **its**. Otherwise, you might end up with a sentence like this:

- Its abundantly clear, to me, that creature’s of the night are just misunderstood and misguided beings who sometimes err in judgment and eat their neighbors’ as well as their neighbors families.

And, you would want a sentence like this:

- It’s abundantly clear, to me, that creatures of the night are just misunderstood and misguided beings who sometimes err in judgment and eat their neighbors as well as their neighbors’ families.

Commonly Confused Terms

Writers often also have trouble with some commonly confused terms. The chart below briefly describes a few.

affect vs. **effect**	"Affect" is usually a verb meaning "to influence," while "effect" is usually a noun meaning "outcome" or "result."
it's vs. **its**	"It's" always means "it is," while "its" always shows possession.
e.g. vs. **i.e.**	The abbreviation "e.g." is Latin for exempli gratia and means "for example," while "i.e." is Latin for id est and means "that is."
imply vs. **infer**	The word "imply" means "to suggest" or "to indicate," while "infer" involves a person actively applying deduction.
that vs. **which**	The word "that" is used to define and limit a noun's meaning, while "which" is used to provide descriptive information not central to the noun's definition.

Active and Passive Voice

Readers prefer sentences constructed with the active voice because they are more concise and direct. Consider the following revisions:

> **Passive**: Listeners are encouraged by the lyrics to cast aside their fear and be themselves.
> **Active**: The lyrics encourage listeners to cast aside their fears and be themselves.
>
> **Passive**: Alana's toes were crushed by the garage door.
> **Active**: The garage door crushed Alana's toes.

In both cases, the writer was able to eliminate the "be" verb (is, are, was, were), and the active sentences are less wordy.

? ? Try It

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

Below is an accessible version of the above activity.

This draft contains 5 grammatical errors. Identify each one in the text box and check your answers:

Sports reporters and the media in general treat professional female athletes unfairly, as can be seen in the recent controversy over Serena Williams' catsuit. Returning to tennis soon after giving birth to her daughter, Serena was advised by her doctors to wear something that would effect the blood flow in her legs due to her history of blood clots. To go along with her doctors' request, Serena wore a black Nike catsuit to the French Open (Friedman). This suit, that Serena Williams tried to wear for her health, caused so much commotion that new rules about dress for women at the French Open are set in place. Elle magazine reporter Megan Friedman explains, "The rules won't be as strict as Wimbledon … but they will be asking designers to give them an advance look at designs for players and will impose certain limits." The fact that Serena Williams, someone who has won four Olympic medals, cannot wear something needed for health reasons is ridiculous. Not only have sportswriters stated their views on this issue, but now the people running these events are making rules against what female athletes can wear while performing their sport, inferring that female sports are more about fashion than athletics. Whether it is for health reasons or not. Women should be able to wear whatever makes them feel comfortable while they perform the sport they are good at.

[practice-area rows="8"][/practice-area]

[reveal-answer q="557120"]Show Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="557120"]1. Affect should replace effect in the second sentence. 2. Which should replace that in the fourth sentence. 3. The verb (are) should be in the past tense (were) in the fourth sentence. 4. Implying should replace inferring in the seventh sentence. 5. The second to last sentence is a fragment; it should be combined with the last sentence. [/hidden-answer]

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7.14: Editing Punctuation Errors

Learning Objectives

- Edit for common punctuation errors

Writers do themselves a great favor by learning to understand punctuation conceptually and fundamentally, as follows:



Figure 1. Ensure to ask yourself which punctuation marks are most appropriate for the material at hand.

A **comma** is a separator. Therefore, when you use one you should identify why the material is worthy of separation. Common reasons include that you used a transition word or phrase that creates a natural pause; you wrote a lengthy, complex sentence with multiple subjects and verbs; and that you supplied a list of three or more related items or phrases in a row.

A **colon** is an arrow pointing forward. It tells the reader that new information, which is promised by the wording before it, is about to arrive. The colon is especially handy for introducing an announced piece of evidence, a focused example, or a list. Contrary to popular belief, the colon can be used to point us forward to a single word or to an entire sentence, as in the old George Carlin joke: "Weather forecast for tonight: dark."

A **semicolon** is a mark of co-dependency. This mark is so often confused with the colon that their distinction bears mention: "The colon is two dots; the semicolon is a comma below a dot." As the explanation demonstrates, the semicolon is usually used to join phrases or sentences having grammatical equivalency, and it emphasizes that the joined parts are related, even co-dependent, in context.

A **dash** redefines what was just said. It is a powerful way to make an important aside or to tack on an additional comment of consequence—a comment that redefines. When typing the dash, be certain that you don't type a hyphen, but two hyphens in a row or a long bar.

Try it

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

Common Punctuation Fixes

Comma After Introductory Element

It's important to remember that **introductory words and phrases**—any words or phrases that come before the main clause in a sentence—should be set off with a comma. Here is an example of a sentence that does not include the required comma and then the correction:

- (Missing Comma) In case you were wondering I never allow myself to be exposed to direct sunlight unless I have my scarf, my sunglasses, and a large umbrella.
- Correction: In case you were wondering, I never allow myself to be exposed to direct sunlight unless I have my scarf, my sunglasses, and a large umbrella.

Unnecessary Comma

When beginning writers are first learning comma rules, they have a tendency to forget that the rules all depend upon the situation. So, when you learn to place a comma before a **coordinating conjunction** like **and**, **but**, or **so** when you join two independent

clauses, you might have an urge to place a comma before **and**, **but**, or **so** every time you use these words. You should avoid this urge!

Just because you need to use commas with coordinating conjunctions sometimes doesn't mean you'll use them all the time.

- I have a wide variety of supernatural powers, but wish I had the power to go out in the daylight.

In this example, you don't need a comma before the **but** because you aren't combining two independent clauses. Here is a corrected version of the sentence:

- I have a wide variety of supernatural powers but wish I had the power to go out in the daylight.

You should also be careful that you aren't using commas unnecessarily around information that is essential to the sentence. The comma rule is that non-essential information should be set off with commas, but essential information should not.

Missing Comma

Just as you should not put commas around essential or restrictive information in a sentence, you must remember to put commas around information that is non-essential or nonrestrictive.

If the information is not essential to the meaning of the sentence, you need to be sure to set it off with commas. Here is an example of a sentence without proper commas around the nonrestrictive element:

- Moving into a cave especially one that is already occupied is not a decision one should make without considerable forethought.

Here is the corrected version:

- Moving into a cave, especially one that is already occupied, is not a decision one should make without considerable forethought.

When you join two **independent clauses** (complete sentences) with a **coordinating conjunction** (and, but, or, nor, for, so, yet—also known as the FANBOYS), you must place a comma before the coordinating conjunction.

The rule is very clear, here. The comma before the coordinating conjunction works *with* the coordinating conjunction to help make a proper boundary between the two independent clauses.

Missing Comma in Compound Sentences

- I understand that vampires and ghouls need love but I don't think they really understand just how attached I am to my vital, bodily fluids.

In this example, the sentence is missing the comma before the **but** because the **but** joins two complete thoughts. Leaving out this necessary comma creates an error because you have two sentences connected without a proper boundary between those sentences.

Here is a correction for the sentence:

- I understand that vampires and ghouls need love, but I don't think they really understand just how attached I am to my vital, bodily fluids.

? ? Try It

Now practice spotting some of these common editing concerns in the following activity.

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7.15: Approaching Precision—Proofreading

Learning Objectives

- Describe proofreading and how to do it



Figure 1. Try and see the proofreading process in a similar light as you would an actress getting ready to go onstage- each step is essential and must be done with care and attention.

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.

Proofreading Example

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.

Fresh Eyes

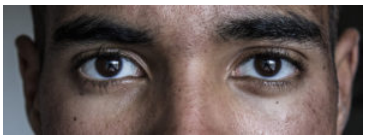


Figure 2. Every essay you write should be proofread by a set of fresh eyes-whether that be another person entirely, or yourself after stepping away for a short time.

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. Reading the paper backwards and forwards is a good way to slow down and look for small errors that need addressing.

What to Look for When Proofreading

In addition to all of the other stylistic and grammatical concerns already mentioned, when you proofread you want to look for things you might have missed in previous revisions such as incorrect or missing words, capitalization concerns, and citation issues.

Wrong Words

Wrong word errors are really common and are number one on the list. Sometimes, we make a wrong word error when we are using the thesaurus and trying to find the biggest word we can find in order to make ourselves sound really smart. This isn't the greatest strategy. Sometimes, it's better just to be simple, and it's always better just to be clear.

We also have to be careful of the spell checker. Sometimes, we misspell words, and then the spell checker makes a change to a word we don't want. Of course, we may be in a hurry and never even notice. Take a look at this sentence to see the problems wrong word errors can create:

- Sometimes, I will just sit and watch strangers in the crowd, but it is **defiantly** awful when I accidentally make eye contact with one of them.

In this sentence, writing **defiantly** when we mean **definitely**, *definitely* changes the meaning in the sentence.

Here is the sentence again with the correct word:

- Sometimes, I will just sit and watch strangers in the crowd, but it is **definitely** awful when I accidentally make eye contact with one of them.

Missing Words

We are too often in a hurry when we edit. Our brains are great. We can read right through sentences and put in the words that need to be there even if words are missing. Of course, others might quickly notice the error, so we have to find ways to slow ourselves down and edit carefully. You don't want to write a sentence like the following example that is missing a small word with big meaning:

- I enjoy walking alone in the woods at night because I never what I will meet while I am out there in the dark.

Did you see the error? Look at the revised sentence below:

- I enjoy walking alone in the woods at night because I never know what I will meet while I am out there in the dark.

Spelling

In the age of spell checkers, it's hard to imagine that spelling errors would top the most common error list, but they do. First, it's important to remember to run the spell checker. Even though you have to remember to check your spell checker, spell checkers are a good place to start when it comes to spelling errors.

Still, there are plenty of spelling errors the spell checker won't catch. In addition to possibly creating wrong-word errors, as discussed earlier, spell checkers also miss misspelled words like names and other proper nouns, as illustrated in the following example:

- On my vacation to France, I went to Pares and visited the Eifel Tower, the Louvre museum, and Jim Morrison's grave.

The spell checker missed these errors. Here is the corrected version of the sentence:

- On my vacation to France, I went to Paris and visited the Eiffel Tower, the Louvre museum, and Jim Morrison's grave.

So, be sure to run your spell checker, but, then, don't forget to double and triple check your writing. Spell checkers do not catch everything.

Capitalization

Be careful to capitalize words that should be capitalized, such as proper nouns, and not capitalize words that should not be capitalized. But, how can you know what should and shouldn't be capitalized? If you are unsure, review the differences between **proper nouns** and **common nouns** in the **Parts of Speech** area of the Excelsior OWL.

Capitalization errors can really have a negative impact on the impressions your readers have of your writing. Take a look at the following sentence:

- i took a walk in central park and saw a Mime, who was pretending to be a Policeman, get sprayed with mace by an elderly woman because she thought he was trying to steal her purse.

Now, take a look at the sentence with correct capitalization:

- I took a walk in Central Park and saw a mime, who was pretending to be a policeman, get sprayed with mace by an elderly woman because she thought he was trying to steal her purse.

It's important to edit carefully and review the rules if necessary!

Citations

It's so important to remember to cite all borrowed information. No matter your documentation style, whether it is **APA format**, **MLA format**, or **Chicago Style**, all require some kind of citation for quoted, paraphrased, and summarized material.

REMEMBER: You must not only cite people's words, but you must also cite their ideas. Errors of this nature can get you into a lot of trouble because incomplete or missing documentation is plagiarism.

Quotations

Using quotation marks correctly can be a little tricky, especially when you need to use other types of punctuation with them. Mechanical errors related to quotation marks makes the most-common error list because beginning writers often forget that commas and periods go inside the quotation marks. Here is an example:

- "When you are courting a nice girl, an hour seems like a second. When you sit on a red-hot cinder, a second seems like an hour. That's relativity", said Einstein.

In this case, the comma placed outside the quotation marks is incorrect. The comma should be placed inside the quotation marks like this:

- "When you are courting a nice girl, an hour seems like a second. When you sit on a red-hot cinder, a second seems like an hour. That's relativity," said Einstein.

It's important to note, however, that not all punctuation automatically goes inside the quotation marks. Question marks are a little trickier. If the only part in quotations is a question, then the question mark should go inside the quotation marks; otherwise, the question mark actually goes outside of the quotation marks. Tricky for sure!

Also, beginning writers often forget that titles of shorter works, like essays and short stories, should be placed inside quotation marks. Longer works, like books and magazines, should be placed in italics:

- I read the essay "The Marginal World" by Rachel Carson in the book *Best American Essays of the Century*.

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7.16: Putting It Together- Revision and Proofreading

Now that you have learned to recognize strategies for revision, make them an integral part of your writing process. For every writing project, budget time to consider the following:

1. **Content:** Does the content of this project fulfill the purpose of the assignment? Will the audience be persuaded by the ideas and evidence? What strategies could I use to improve the content?
2. **Structure:** Is the organization of the project appropriate for the purpose of the assignment? Will the audience find the project well-organized and logical? What strategies might I use to improve the structure?
3. **Style:** Does the style of the project align with the purpose of the assignment? Will the audience recognize the style as appropriate and effective? What strategies might I use to improve the style?
4. **Grammar and mechanics:** Will readers be hindered and irritated by errors in grammar and mechanics? Will errors in grammar and mechanics damage my ethos as a writer? What strategies might I use to edit and proofread the project?



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7.17: Discussion- CARES Peer Review

STEP 1: First, post the draft of your essay to the discussion forum.

1. Copy and paste your draft in a new Google Doc. If you aren't familiar with Google Docs, review this resource by Google to assist you.
2. Title the Google Doc with your first initial, last name, and essay name, ex. "RSmith Narrative Essay."
3. Set the share and edit permissions of the Google Doc to "Anyone with the link."
4. Copy and paste the URL address of the Google Doc into a new discussion post.

STEP 2: Click on another student's post (that has no other reviews) and complete a review of their essay, using the following template. Remember to be courteous, helpful, and clear. Use the Suggest Edits mode to mark up the essay. Make at least five notes or comments within the essay.

At the bottom of the essay, and again inside the discussion forum, write responses to the following CARES peer review components.

- **C: Congratulate.** What does the writer do well in this assignment? (List one or more aspects.) Also, please write the writer's main claim or focus (thesis) according to what you have read. (It may not be the last sentence of the first paragraph – the traditional place for the thesis.)
- **A: Ask clarifying questions.** What part(s) of the essay were a bit confusing? Why? What specific suggestions (3 or fewer) do you have for revising the unclear parts of this writing?
- **R: Request** more. What would you like to know more about the topic that can enhance the essay and that supports the thesis?
- **E: Evaluate** its value. What specific detail(s) do not work with the essay (e.g. doesn't support the thesis) or can be moved within the essay?
- **S: Summarize.** Overall, what new information have you learned or how are you thinking differently after this reading?

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7.18: Assignment- Editing Your Draft

STEP 1: Open the draft of the essay you submitted for the CARES Peer Review. If you haven't yet reviewed and incorporated your peer's suggestions, spend some time doing that.

STEP 2: Now, take a look at your current draft. As you read through (and make any necessary changes), ask yourself the following revision and proofreading questions:

1. **Content**: Does the content of this project fulfill the purpose of the assignment? Will the audience be persuaded by the ideas and evidence? What strategies could I use to improve the content?
2. **Structure**: Is the organization of the project appropriate for the purpose of the assignment? Will the audience find the project well-organized and logical? What strategies might I use to improve the structure?
3. **Style**: Does the style of the project align with the purpose of the assignment? Will the audience recognize the style as appropriate and effective? What strategies might I use to improve the style?
4. **Grammar and mechanics**: Will readers be hindered and irritated by errors in grammar and mechanics? Will errors in grammar and mechanics damage my ethos as a writer? What strategies might I use to edit and proofread the project?

STEP 3: Write down your responses in 3-5 sentences per section. Use the questions within each section to prompt your thought, but feel free to consider other questions related to each topic as well. Use specific detail and/or quotes from your essay when applicable.

STEP 4: Write a final one or two-paragraph reflection about your revising and editing experience. Has it been helpful? What kinds of things did you find in your writing? Was anything surprising? What lessons can you learn for future writing assignments?

Rubric

Criteria	Proficient	Developing	Not Evident	Points
Content	Clearly and thoroughly addresses how the project fulfills the assignment and persuades the audience, and discusses strategies to improve content.	Partially or unclearly addresses how the project fulfills the assignment and persuades the audience with partial/unclear discussion of strategies to improve content.	Does not sufficiently address how the project fulfills the assignment and persuades the audience or discuss strategies to improve content.	__/4
Structure	Clearly and thoroughly addresses the project's organization and discusses strategies to improve structure.	Partially or unclearly addresses the project's organization with partial/unclear discussion of strategies to improve structure.	Does not sufficiently address the project's organization or strategies to improve structure.	__/4
Style	Clearly and thoroughly addresses how the project's style aligns with its purpose and audience, and discusses strategies to improve style.	Partially or unclearly addresses how the project's style aligns with its purpose and audience, and partially/unclearly discusses strategies to improve style.	Does not sufficiently address how the project's style aligns with its purpose and audience or discuss strategies to improve style.	__/4

Grammar & Mechanics	Clearly and thoroughly addresses how grammar and mechanics affect the project's readers and the writer's ethos, and discusses strategies for proofreading and editing.	Partially or unclearly addresses how grammar and mechanics affect the project's readers and the writer's ethos, and partially/unclearly discusses strategies for proofreading and editing.	Does not sufficiently address how grammar and mechanics affect the project's readers and the writer's ethos or discuss strategies for proofreading and editing.	__/4
Reflection	Writes a thoughtful reflection demonstrating lessons learned from the revising and editing process	Writes an incomplete reflection or one that does not demonstrate lessons learned	Does not reflect upon the revising and editing process	__/4
			Total	__/20

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

8: Analysis and Synthesis

8.1: Why It Matters- Analysis and Synthesis
8.2: Introduction to Analysis As Critical Thinking
8.3: What Is Analysis?
8.4: Overcoming Barriers to Analysis
8.5: Suspending Judgment
8.6: Introduction to the Keys to Successful Analysis
8.7: Analytical Thesis Statements
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8.9: Introduction to Types of Analysis
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8.13: Introduction to Synthesis
8.14: Synthesis
8.15: Synthesis in Practice
8.16: Putting It Together- Analysis and Synthesis
8.17: Discussion- Ad Rhetorical Analysis
8.18: Assignment- The Role of Inference in Reading and Understanding Satire

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8.1: Why It Matters- Analysis and Synthesis

Why think and write analytically?



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

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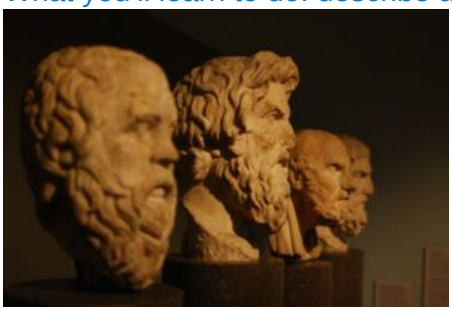
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8.2: Introduction to Analysis As Critical Thinking

What you'll learn to do: describe analysis



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

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8.3: What Is Analysis?

Learning Objective

- Explain the basics of analysis

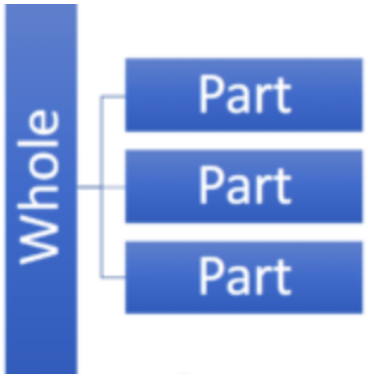


Figure 1. Analysis consists of breaking something down and taking a close look at each of its parts while looking for themes, patterns, and assumptions.

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

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

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

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

The Language of Analytical Assignments

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

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

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

Although this list is a good start, these aren't the only verbs that denote analysis. Another way to tell whether an assignment is asking for analysis is this: If the assignment asks you to **determine how the parts of something relate to the whole, how**

something works, what something means, or why it's important, the assignment is asking you to analyze. Below is a list of sample analytic assignments that meet these criteria.

How the parts relate to the whole:

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

How something works:

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

What something means:

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

Why something is important:

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

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Glossary

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

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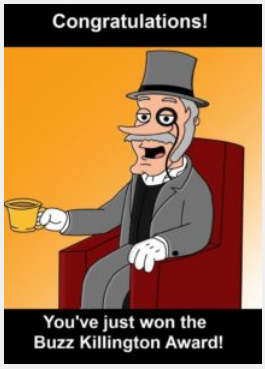
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8.4: Overcoming Barriers to Analysis

Learning Objective

- Recognize barriers to analysis

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

Barrier 1: Analysis might challenge my worldview. The purpose of analysis is to understand something better or more deeply, so as you analyze an idea or issue, your thinking may change and evolve. Deeper learning or understanding is valuable. It exposes falsehoods and moves us closer to truth. A good strategy for overcoming this barrier is to approach analysis with an open mind. Don't approach analysis thinking *I will prove this is right* or *I will prove this is false*. Begin analysis by thinking *I want to understand this more deeply*.	
Barrier 2: Analysis kills fun. When studying something intently, people often see flaws or imperfections they hadn't noticed before. Those imperfections can diminish an analyst's enjoyment or appreciation of the object. Furthermore, once in the habit of analyzing, some people can't turn off their analytical instincts. Because intense analysis is hard, it becomes exhausting to run around analyzing everything. Some people avoid analysis because they fear they don't have the energy for it. To avoid analysis burnout, manage it in small chunks. Don't try to analyze an artifact in one session. Tackle it in several short sessions with breaks in between. If you find yourself analyzing things beyond your assignment, congratulate yourself on your growing prowess, but remember that sometimes it's best to turn off the skills before you exhaust them.	
Barrier 3: Analysis invents meaning. Some people equate analysis with "speculation," "guessing," or "inferring meaning that isn't there." If analysis is done poorly, it can be inaccurate and damaging. The onus is on analysts to support their interpretations with plenty of evidence. Keep in mind that the purpose of analysis is not to present unequivocal truth. Effective and complex analysis offers a well-supported interpretation with the aim of convincing the reader that the interpretation is plausible rather than invincible. By supporting your analysis with a variety of solid evidence, you will avoid the criticism that your analysis is mere conjecture.	

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8.5: Suspending Judgment

Learning Objective

- Describe the importance of suspending judgment to analysis

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

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

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

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

Watch It

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

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

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

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

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8.6: Introduction to the Keys to Successful Analysis

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



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

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8.7: Analytical Thesis Statements

Learning Objective

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

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

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

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

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

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

Formulating an Analytical Thesis Statement

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

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

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

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

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

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

Such a thesis statement is focused while still allowing plenty of room for support in the body of your paper. It addresses the questions posed above:

1. What? What is the claim?
    - The claim is that Escalade connects with a broader audience by rapping about the importance of not taking time with family for granted in his hit song, "Missing You."
2. How? How is this claim supported?

- This claim is supported in the lyrics of the song and through the "experience of losing his mother."

3. So what? In other words, "What does this mean, what are the implications, or why is this important?"
   - The implications are that we should not take valuable things for granted.

Certainly, there may be many ways for you to address "what," "how," and "so what," and you may want to explore other ideas, but the above example is just one way to more fully analyze the material. Note that the example above is not formulaic, but if you need help getting started, you could use this template format to help develop your thesis statement.

> Through _____(how?), we can see that _____(what?), which is important because _____(so what?).[1]

Just remember to think about these questions (what? how? and so what?) as you try to determine why something is what it is or why something means what it means. Asking these questions can help you analyze a song, story, or work of art, and can also help you construct meaningful thesis sentences when you write an analytical paper.

? ? Key Takeaways for analytical theses

Don't be afraid to let your claim evolve organically. If you find that your thinking and writing don't stick exactly to the thesis statement you have constructed, your options are to scrap the writing and start again to make it fit your claim (which might not always be possible) or to modify your thesis statement. The latter option can be much easier if you are okay with the changes. As with many projects in life, writing doesn't always go in the direction we plan, and strong analysis may mean thinking about and making changes as you look more closely at your topic. Be flexible.

Use analysis to get you to the main claim. You may have heard the simile that analysis is like peeling an onion because you have to go through layers to complete your work. You can start the process of breaking down an idea or an artifact without knowing where it will lead you or without a main claim or idea to guide you. Often, careful assessment of the pieces will bring you to an interesting interpretation of the whole. In their text *Writing Analytically*, authors David Rosenwasser and Jill Stephen posit that being analytical doesn't mean just breaking something down. It also means constructing understandings. Don't assume you need to have deeper interpretations all figured out as you start your work.

When you decide upon the main claim, make sure it is reasoned. In other words, if it is very unlikely anyone else would reach the same interpretation you are making, it might be off base. Not everyone needs to see an idea the same way you do, but a reasonable person should be able to understand, if not agree, with your analysis.

? ? Try It

Look for analytical thesis statements in the following activity.

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290920118213584118/embed

Using Evidence

An effective analytical thesis statement (or claim) may sound smart or slick, but it requires evidence to be fully realized. Consider movie trailers and the actual full-length movies they advertise as an analogy. If you see an exciting one-minute movie trailer online and then go see the film only to leave disappointed because all the good parts were in the trailer, you feel cheated, right? You think you were promised something that didn't deliver in its execution. A paper with a strong thesis statement but lackluster evidence feels the same way to readers.

So what does strong analytical evidence look like? Think again about "what," "how," and "so what." A claim introduces these interpretations, and evidence lets you show them. Keep in mind that evidence used in writing analytically will build on itself as the piece progresses, much like a good movie builds to an interesting climax.

? ? Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20272

? ? Key Takeaways about evidence

Be selective about evidence. Having a narrow thesis statement will help you be selective with evidence, but even then, you don't need to include any and every piece of information related to your main claim. Consider the best points to back up your analytic thesis statement and go deeply into them. (Also, remember that you may modify your thesis statement as you think and write, so being selective about what evidence you use in an analysis may actually help you narrow down what was a broad main claim as you work.) Refer back to our movie theme in this section: You have probably seen plenty of films that would have been better with some parts cut out and more attention paid to intriguing but underdeveloped characters and/or ideas.

Be clear and explicit with your evidence. Don't assume that readers know exactly what you are thinking. Make your points and explain them in detail, providing information and context for readers, where necessary. Remember that analysis is critical examination and interpretation, but you can't just assume that others always share or intuit your line of thinking. Need a movie analogy? Think back on all the times you or someone you know has said something like "I'm not sure what is going on in this movie."

Move past obvious interpretations. Analyzing requires brainpower. Writing analytically is even more difficult. Don't, however, try to take the easy way out by using obvious evidence (or working from an obvious claim). Many times writers have a couple of great pieces of evidence to support an interesting interpretation, but they feel the need to tack on an obvious idea—often more of an observation than analysis—somewhere in their work. This tendency may stem from the conventions of the five-paragraph essay, which features three points of support. Writing analytically, though, does not mean writing a five-paragraph essay (not much writing in college does). Develop your other evidence further or modify your main idea to allow room for additional strong evidence, but avoid obvious observations as support for your main claim. One last movie comparison? Go take a look at some of the debate on predictable Hollywood scripts. Have you ever watched a movie and felt like you have seen it before? You have, in one way or another. A sharp reader will be about as interested in obvious evidence as he or she will be in seeing a tired script reworked for the thousandth time.

✓ ✓ Watch It

One type of analysis you may be asked to write is a literary analysis, in which you examine a piece of text by breaking it down and looking for common literary elements, such as character, symbolism, plot, setting, imagery, and tone.

The video below compares writing a literary analysis to analyzing a team's chances of winning a game—just as you would look at various factors like the weather, coaching, players, their record, and their motivation for playing. Similarly, when analyzing a literary text you want to look at all of the literary elements that contribute to the work.

The video takes you through the story of Cinderalla as an example, following the simplest possible angle (or thesis statement), that "Dreams can come true if you don't give up." (Note that if you were really asked to analyze Cinderella for a college class, you would want to dig deeper to find a more nuanced and interesting theme, but it works well for this example.) To analyze the story with this theme in mind, you'd want to consider the literary elements such as imagery, characters, dialogue, symbolism, the setting, plot, and tone, and consider how each of these contribute to the message that "Dreams can come true if you don't give up."

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

You can view the transcript for "How to Analyze Literature" here (opens in new window).

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1. UCLA Undergraduate Writing Center. *"What, How and So What?" Approaching the Thesis as a Process.*https://wp.ucla.edu/wp-content/uploads/2016/01/UWC_handouts_What-How-So-What-Thesis-revised-5-4-15-RZ.pdf↵

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8.8: Making Inferences

Learning Objectives

- Use analytical thinking to make inferences

Making inferences means coming to a conclusion based on evidence and reasoning. Sometimes we need to infer the main idea of a passage, or figure out an implied thesis by carefully "reading between the lines." This may be necessary if the main idea is not clearly stated, if the reading begins with a question that has no direct answer, when the text compares or contrasts various things, or if the reading is satirical. A satire is a type of humorous writing that relies on exaggeration to make its points, and the effectiveness of this strategy depends on the reader recognizing the details being scrutinized by the writer. This means that the reader will need to read analytically and pay close attention to specific parts of the text.

Watch It

Some thesis statements are **explicit**—stated directly in the text itself. Others are **implicit**—implied by the content but not written in one distinct sentence. The following video describes these terms and introduces the excellent idea of the reading voice and the thinking voice that strong readers use as they work through a text.

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

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

You can view the transcript for "explicit v implicit" here (download).

When you are left to make inferences, you can check whether your inference is logical or not by asking these questions:

- Is it based on words and sentences in the text?
- Is it based more on the author's words than on your point of view?
- Does it manage to avoid contradicting other statements made in the text?
- Does it align with the author's attitude or tone about the topic?
- Could it function as the thesis or topic sentence?

The video below offers several examples that show how we make inferences in different situations based on the available evidence. Pay close attention to the details that might lead us to a particular interpretation of meanings that are not directly stated. Also be sure to answer the two multiple choice questions that accompany the examples, and to listen carefully to the explanation for how we can arrive at an accurate understanding based on inference.

Watch It

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

You can view the transcript for "Inferencing" here (opens in new window).

GLOSSARY

implicit: a perspective that is implied without being stated directly in a single sentence

explicit: a perspective that is directly stated in a single locatable sentence

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- explicit v implicit. **Authored by**: Michele Armentrout. **Located at**: https://youtu.be/eHjRogrFZ28. **License**: *All Rights Reserved*. **License Terms**: Standard YouTube License

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8.9: Introduction to Types of Analysis

What you'll learn to do: identify and apply different types of analytic processes



You will be facing many analytical writing tasks during your time at college, regardless of your major or field. As you learned in the last section, analysis is a function of mature critical thinking. In fact, analysis is a component of almost all academic and professional writing tasks. You will encounter various synonyms for analysis in assignment descriptions including interpretation, inquiry, or evaluation. All of these terms denote the same skill: "to break down or investigate." In this section, we will "break down" several common analytical writing assignments. This section will teach you how to apply context-appropriate analytic processes to your writing tasks.

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8.10: Rhetorical Analysis

Learning Objectives

- Describe rhetorical analysis
- Analyze an argument using rhetorical analysis

Sometimes, the best way to learn how to write a good argument is to start by analyzing other arguments. When you do this, you get to see what works, what doesn't, what strategies another author uses, what structures seem to work well and why, and more.

When we understand the decisions other writers make and why, it helps us make more informed decisions as writers. We can move from being the "accidental" writer, where we might do well but are not sure why, to being a "purposeful" writer, where we have an awareness of the impact our writing has on our audience at all levels.

The Importance of Rhetoric

Rhetoric is the art of effective and persuasive communication that is appropriate to a given situation. Although a thorough understanding of effective oral, written, and visual communication can take years of study, the foundation of such communication begins with rhetoric. With this foundation, even if you are just starting out, you can become a more powerful, more flexible writer. Rhetoric is key to being able to write effectively and persuasively in a variety of situations.

Every time you write or speak, you're faced with a different rhetorical situation. Each rhetorical situation requires thoughtful consideration on your part if you want to be as effective and impactful as possible. Often, a successful essay or presentation is one that manages to persuade an audience to understand a question or issue in a particular way, or to respond to a question or issue by taking a particular action. Urging one's reader to think or act in response to an important question or issue is one way of addressing the "so what?" element of analysis.

Many times, when students are given a writing assignment, they have an urge to skim the assignment instructions and then just start writing as soon as the ideas pop into their minds. But writing rhetorically and with intention requires that you thoroughly investigate your writing assignment (or rhetorical situation) before you begin to write the actual paper.

Thinking about concepts like purpose, audience, and voice will help you make good decisions as you begin your research and writing process.

Rhetorical Analysis

Take a look at the following definition of rhetorical analysis:

Rhetorical analysis shows how the words, phrases, images, gestures, performances, texts, films, etc. that people use to communicate work, how well they work, and how the artifacts, as discourse, inform and instruct, entertain and arouse, and convince and persuade the audience; as such, discourse includes the possibility of morally improving the reader, the viewer, and the listener.[1]

Basically, when you conduct a rhetorical analysis, you're examining the way authors (or speakers) communicate their message. This means you can conduct a rhetorical analysis of **any** act of communication. Naturally, this makes rhetorical analysis one of the most common types of analysis you will perform at the college level.

Read the following short article by Richard Stallman about "open" educational resources (which, incidentally, you are using right now), and think about **how** Stallman makes his argument (not **what** he is arguing).

Online Education Is Using a Flawed Creative Commons License

By Richard Stallman

September 2012

Prominent universities are using a nonfree license for their digital educational works. That is bad already, but even worse, the license they are using has a serious inherent problem.

When a work is made for doing a practical job, the users must have control over the job, so they need to have control over the work. This applies to software, and to educational works too. For the users to have this control, they need certain freedoms (see

gnu.org), and we say the work is “free” (or “libre,” to emphasize we are not talking about price). For works that might be useful in commercial contexts, the requisite freedom includes commercial use, redistribution and modification.

Creative Commons publishes six principal licenses. Two are free/libre licenses: the Sharealike license CC-BY-SA is a free/libre license with copyleft, and the Attribution license (CC-BY) is a free/libre license without copyleft. The other four are nonfree, either because they don’t allow modification (ND, Noderivs) or because they don’t allow commercial use (NC, Noncommercial).

In my view, nonfree licenses that permit sharing are OK for works of art/entertainment, or that present some party’s viewpoint (such as this article itself). Those works aren’t meant for doing a practical job, so the argument about the users’ control does not apply. Thus, I do not object if they are published with the CC-BY-NC-ND license, which allows only noncommercial redistribution of exact copies.

Use of this license for a work does not mean that you can’t possibly publish that work commercially or with modifications. The license doesn’t give permission for that, but you could ask the copyright holder for permission, perhaps offering a quid pro quo, and you might get it. It isn’t automatic, but it isn’t impossible.

However, two of the nonfree CC licenses lead to the creation of works that can’t in practice be published commercially, because there is no feasible way to ask for permission. These are CC-BY-NC and CC-BY-NC-SA, the two CC licenses that permit modification but not commercial use.

The problem arises because, with the internet, people can easily (and lawfully) pile one noncommercial modification on another. Over decades this will result in works with contributions from hundreds or even thousands of people.

What happens if you would like to use one of those works commercially? How could you get permission? You’d have to ask all the substantial copyright holders. Some of them might have contributed years before and be impossible to find. Some might have contributed decades before, and might well be dead, but their copyrights won’t have died with them. You’d have to find and ask their heirs, supposing it is possible to identify those. In general, it will be impossible to clear copyright on the works that these licenses invite people to make.

This is a form of the well-known “orphan works” problem, except exponentially worse; when combining works that had many contributors, the resulting work can be orphaned many times over before it is born.

To eliminate this problem would require a mechanism that involves asking someone for permission (otherwise the NC condition turns into a nullity), but doesn’t require asking all the contributors for permission. It is easy to imagine such mechanisms; the hard part is to convince the community that one such mechanisms is fair and reach a consensus to accept it.

I hope that can be done, but the CC-BY-NC and CC-BY-NC-SA licenses, as they are today, should be avoided.

Unfortunately, one of them is used quite a lot. CC-BY-NC-SA, which allows noncommercial publication of modified versions under the same license, has become the fashion for online educational works. MIT’s “Open Courseware” got it stared, and many other schools followed MIT down the wrong path. Whereas in software “open source” means “probably free, but I don’t dare talk about it so you’ll have to check for yourself,” in many online education projects “open” means “nonfree for sure”.

Even if the problem with CC-BY-NC-SA and CC-BY-NC is fixed, they still won’t be the right way to release educational works meant for doing practical jobs. The users of these works, teachers and students, must have control over the works, and that requires making them free. I urge Creative Commons to state that works meant for practical jobs, including educational resources and reference works as well as software, should be released under free/libre licenses only.

Educators, and all those who wish to contribute to on-line educational works: please do not to let your work be made non-free. Offer your assistance and text to educational works that carry free/libre licenses, preferably copyleft licenses so that all versions of the work must respect teachers’ and students’ freedom. Then invite educational activities to use and redistribute these works on that freedom-respecting basis, if they will. Together we can make education a domain of freedom.

A copyleft license has the advantage that modified versions must be free also. That means either CC-BY-SA or the GNU Free Documentation License, or a dual license offering the two of them as options.

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? ? Try It

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How to Write a Rhetorical Analysis

As a part of thinking rhetorically about an argument, your professor may ask you to write a formal or informal rhetorical analysis essay. Rhetorical analysis is about "digging in" and exploring the strategies and writing style of a particular piece. Rhetorical analysis can be tricky because, chances are, you haven't done a lot of rhetorical analysis in the past.

To add to this trickiness, you can write a rhetorical analysis of any piece of information, not just an essay. You may be asked to write a rhetorical analysis of an ad, an image, or a commercial.

When you analyze a work rhetorically, you explore the following concepts in a piece:

- Audience
- Purpose
- Style or Tone
- Supporting Appeals and Claims: Ethos, Pathos, and Logos
  - **Ethos** – an appeal to ethical considerations. Is the author credible and knowledgeable? Are the actions or understandings that they are calling for ethical?
  - **Pathos** – an appeal to emotions. Is the author trying to evoke strong feelings for or against something?
  - **Logos** – an appeal to rational, logical understanding. Is the author using facts and "hard" research to present a case? Is the argument coherent and cohesive?
  - Note that these three rhetorical modes are closely interrelated. Consider that a strong logical appeal will often convince us that a writer is ethical and diligent in his analysis, whereas an emotional appeal that seems manipulative or a weak substitute for a substantive argument may undermine a writer's ethos, that is, his credibility.

In a rhetorical analysis, you will think about the decisions that author has made regarding the supporting appeals, the styple, tone, purpose, and audience, considering whether these decisions are effective or ineffective.

? ? Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20273

✓ ✓ Watch It

Part of understanding the rhetorical context of a situation includes understanding an author's intent. This video walks you through the process of thinking critically about why, how, and to whom the author is speaking.

When analyzing an author's intent, you will consider their point of view, their purpose in writing, the audience, and their tone. Taking all of this into consideration is part of understanding the broader context in which a person is writing.

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290922675810696988/embed

You can view the transcript for "Evaluating an Author's Intent" here (opens in new window).

? ? Sample Rhetorical Analysis

Here you can see a sample rhetorical analysis with some notes to help you better understand your goals when writing a formal rhetorical analysis.

GLOSSARY

rhetoric: the art of effective and persuasive communication that is appropriate to a given situation

ethos: a rhetorical appeal to ethical considerations, whether regarding the author or the topic at hand

pathos: a rhetorical appeal to emotion

> **logos**: a rhetorical appeal to logic, often utilizing facts and figures in a strong organizational structure

1. https://en.Wikipedia.org/wiki/Rhetorical_criticism ↵

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8.11: Process Analysis

Learning Objectives

- Explain process analysis

Process analysis is one of the most common types of analysis writing that you will encounter in business and in technical fields. Process analysis can directly result in changes to the process. If you were to analyze the process of order distribution at an underperforming fast-food restaurant, you could, for example, use the analysis to develop changes to improve the restaurant's performance.

Writing About Processes

In order to effectively analyze a particular process, you first have to understand how to write about processes more generally.



Figure 1. If you were to effectively analyze the SEO (Search Engine Optimization) process, you would first have to understand and comprehend the many different parts of that process.

Process is a rhetorical style that provides step-by-step directions or explanatory guidance. You may encounter quite a few process essays of various types in academic writing—everything from a traditional process essay in which you choose a topic and describe the process, to a lab report in which you describe the process of conducting a lab experiment.

A process essay is structured around the goal of providing the reader with directions or guidance. Most of the time, students write process essays that discuss how to do something. Process essays are the recipes or technical brochures of essay writing.

Processes can be classified a few ways, but for our purposes, they can be broken down into **processes by people**, **processes by machines**, and **processes by nature.**

Let's think of some examples for each category:

People	Machines	Nature
• Explanation of how to change a tire • Description of how students collaboratively write a report • Description of how people embark and disembark from an airplane	• Explanation of how a photocopier works • Description of how highway designs facilitate traffic flow • Description of how a car detects that fuel is low	• Explanation of the changing of the seasons • Description of how a caterpillar becomes a butterfly • Description of how a river changes its flow path

Analyzing a Process

The first step in analyzing a process is understanding what the process is. In fact, part of writing the analysis is usually describing the process itself. Process analysis relies heavily on exposition but, depending upon the purpose of your analysis, may be more or less comprehensive. Process analysis can be classified as **descriptive** and **prescriptive**.

Descriptive	Prescriptive
Explain, speculate, or argue about "How is this done?" Audiences: Students, researchers, curious people Media: Essays, magazines, websites, video	Explain "How should this be done?" Audiences: technicians, users, decision-makers Media: User manuals, policy guides, tutorials

? ? Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20274

What does this mean for you as a college student given an assignment to write a “process analysis”? Well, it means you should pay very close attention to the assignment description to find out what kind of analysis you should do. Let’s look at the following sample assignment:

? ? Try It

Imagine that you are taking a class and receive the following assignment prompt:

> Engineers are generally great problem solvers. But first they need to thoroughly understand and analyze the problem before they can suggest a solution.
>
> Your assignment is to analyze a problem or issue that you routinely encounter on your campus or in your community. You will identify the problem or issue, investigate it to understand how or why it exists, collect and analyze data through field observations, and finally present the results of your analysis in the form of a 3–4 page report. Your report will conclude with recommendations for resolving the issue.
>
> **Purpose**: To recommend a resolution to a problem or issue on the basis of an analysis you conduct using field observations.
>
> **Audience**: Members of your college or local community who would be interested in the resolution of the issue.
>
> **Format:** 3–4-page report format with at least one graphic. Raw data should be collected on the Field Observation template and attached to the final report.

Answer the following questions to help you develop a plan for writing to this process analysis assignment.

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GLOSSARY

process: a rhetorical style that provides step-by-step directions or explanatory guidance

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8.12: Critical Analysis

Learning Objectives

- Describe techniques for critical analysis

Critical analysis is probably what you think of first when you hear the word *analysis*. You probably wrote analyses of poems or stories in high school, or you may have even analyzed films or advertisements. Analysis of a specific artifact is called **critical analysis** or critique. This is typically a process of developing a line of interpretation, or a "reading," and of identifying the interrelated parts of the text that are meaningful.

For this section, we'll use analysis of ads for our examples. However, you can apply critical analysis to any artifact.

Take a look at the old cigarette ad below. How would you start to analyze it?

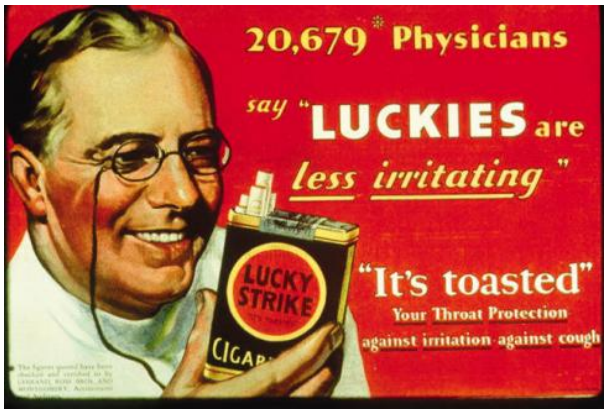


Figure 1. What are some important components of a critical analysis? Use them to analyze this cigarette ad.

There are three possible structures you might use for a critical analysis paper.

Description followed by analysis	Thematic	Part by Part
Introduction with thesis addressing composer's choices and motivations (how and why)Description of artifact Analysis of artifact Conclusion examining larger significance (so what)	Introduction with summary description and thesis (how and why)Identify a theme or pattern Provide examples (Continue this as needed) Conclude with larger significance (so what)	Introduction with summary description and thesis (how and why)Analyze first section of artifact Analyze next section of artifact (Continue this as needed) Conclude with larger significance (so what)

Analytical paragraphs generally follow the claim, evidence, explanation model. A writer establishes a claim, then supports that claim with evidence, and then explains how the evidence supports the claim. In a critical analysis, the details of the artifact serve as the evidence supporting the claim.

In the example below, explore the hotspots to learn about how the writer of this analysis of the Lucky Strike ad uses a claim, evidence, and support of evidence in a paragraph.

explore the hotspots

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

[reveal-answer q="226191"]View Accessible Version[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="226191"][1] The Lucky Strikes ad uses the perceived authority of a respectable physician to sell (what we now know as) unhealthy products. [2] The physician depicted is somewhat anachronistic, even for the time period of the ad (with the glasses especially). [3] The appearance of the physician evokes associations with wisdom and respect. The design of this ad works to reassure the consumer that the Lucky Strikes brand of cigarettes is "less" irritating than other brands. Thus, the ad uses language

to imply that other brands of cigarettes may be damaging to the throat, but Lucky Strikes are the exception. All of the language in this ad strikes a negative tone about other brands: in fact, other than “it’s toasted,” all of the adjectives describe the brand in relation to other brands.

[1] The claim of this analysis paragraph is that the image of the physician is being used to sell unhealthy products. The rest of the analysis, including the supporting evidence about the language choices, are in service to this claim.

[2] The description of the physician in the ad and the explanation of his depiction is the central evidence for the claim.

[3] The rest of the paragraph provides support and further explanation of the central evidence in the claim. The analysis of the language choices complement the evidence about the physician. [/hidden-answer]

? ? Try It

So what does a typical critical analysis assignment look like? Consider the example, below:

> For this essay, you will identify and work with an advertisement. The ad you choose may be print or online, but it must be static (i.e., no television or radio commercials). Your purpose is to analyze how and why the ad goes about reaching an audience and to construct and support an original thesis that guides your essay. You should be moving your thinking beyond the obvious, not necessarily to conclusions no one else has ever considered, but at least to conclusions that many people do not consider upon first glance of the ad. Your final product should include brief summary of the ad you have chosen, analysis of how the ad works to appeal to an audience, and then any conclusions you reach about the advertising strategies, including context.

Answer the following questions to help you develop a plan for responding to this critical analysis assignment.

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GLOSSARY

critical analysis: an analysis of a particular artifact that develops a line of interpretation and identifies interrelated parts of the text that are meaningful

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8.13: Introduction to Synthesis

What you'll learn to do: examine strategies for successful synthesis



In some writing assignments, you will be asked to not just analyze material, but to synthesize. Analysis would have you recognize hidden meanings, see patterns, or identify the underlying parts of something. In an analysis paper, you may be asked to do things like separate, order, connect, classify, divide, or explain.

Instead of breaking something down into components to look at the pieces and patterns, in synthesis, your goal is to relate and combine knowledge from different areas to draw conclusions. In a synthesis paper, you may be asked to do things like modify, rearrange, substitute, design, invent, or generalize.

In this section, we'll take a closer look at synthesis.

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8.14: Synthesis

Learning Objectives

- Explain synthesis

What is Synthesis?

Synthesis is the combining of two or more things to produce something new. When you read and write, you will be asked to synthesize by taking ideas from what you read and combining them to form new ideas.

Analyzing consists of breaking something down into its parts and examining it closely. For example, you can break down a pizza into its ingredients. Synthesizing, on the other hand, consists of combining ideas to form new ones. So in the pizza example, you could break down the ingredients, then you can take those same ingredients and create something new, like a calzone.

Synthesizing is also different from summarizing; while summarizing consists of restating someone's ideas in as few as words as possible, synthesizing means taking those ideas and creating new ones.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20275

Synthesis in Writing

Synthesis is something you already do in your everyday life. For example, if you are shopping for a new car, the research question you are trying to answer is, "Which car should I buy"? You explore available models, prices, options, and consumer reviews, and you make comparisons. For example: Car X costs more than car Y but gets better mileage. Or: Reviewers A, B, and C all prefer Car X, but their praise is based primarily on design features that aren't important to you. It is this analysis *across* sources that moves you towards an answer to your question.

Early in an academic research project, you are likely to find yourself making initial comparisons—for example, you may notice that Source A arrives at a conclusion very different from that of Source B—but the task of synthesis will become central to your work when you begin drafting your research paper or presentation.

Remember, when you synthesize, you are not just compiling information. You are organizing that information around a specific argument or question, and this work—your own intellectual work—is central to research writing.

Watch It

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290919207594054158/embed

You can view the transcript for "Synthesizing What You Read" here (opens in new window).

GLOSSARY

synthesis: the combining of two or more things to produce something new

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8.15: Synthesis in Practice

Learning Objectives

- Demonstrate strategies for synthesis

Professors frequently expect you to interpret, make inferences, and otherwise synthesize—bring ideas together to make something new or find a new way of looking at something old. (It might help to think of synthesis as the opposite of analysis. To synthesize is to combine; to analyze is to break down.)

Getting Better at Synthesis

To get an A on essays and papers in many courses, such as literature and history, what you write in reaction to the work of others should use synthesis to create new meaning or to show a deeper understanding of what you learned.

To do so, it helps to look for connections and patterns. One way to synthesize when writing an argument essay, paper, or other project is to look for themes among your sources. So try categorizing ideas by topic rather than by source—making associations across and between sources.

Synthesis can seem difficult, particularly if you are used to analyzing others' points but not used to making your own. Like most things, however, it gets easier with practice. So don't be hard on yourself if it seems difficult at first.

EXAMPLE: Synthesis in an Argument



Imagine that you have to write an argument essay about Woody Allen's 2011 movie *Midnight in Paris*. Your topic is "nostalgia," and the movie is the only source you can use.

In the movie, a successful young screenwriter named Gil is visiting Paris with his girlfriend and her parents, who are more politically conservative than he is. Inexplicably, every midnight he time-travels back to the 1920's Paris, a time period he's always found fascinating, especially because of the writers and painters—Hemingway, Fitzgerald, Picasso—with whom he's now on a first-name basis. Gil is enchanted and always wants to stay in this fantastical past. But every morning, he's back in the real present—feeling out of sync with his girlfriend and her parents.

For your essay, you've tried to come up with a narrower topic, but so far nothing seems right. Suddenly, you start paying more attention to the girlfriend's parents' dialogue about politics, which amount to such phrases as "we have to go back to…," "it was a better time," "Americans used to be able to…" and "the way it used to be."

And then it clicks with you that the girlfriend's parents are like Gil—longing for a different time, whether real or imagined. That kind of idea generation, where you find the connection and theme across related elements of the movie, is synthesis.

You decide to write your essay to answer the research question: How is the motivation of Gil's girlfriend's parents similar to Gil's? Your thesis becomes "Despite seeming to be very different, Gil and his girlfriend's parents are similarly motivated, and Woody Allen's *Midnight in Paris's* message about nostalgia can be applied to all of them."

Of course, you'll have to try to convince your readers that your thesis is valid, and you may or not be successful,—but that's true with all theses. And your professor will be glad to see the synthesis.

Synthesizing From Multiple Sources

Below are some questions that highlight ways in which the act of synthesizing brings together ideas and generates new knowledge.

How do the sources speak to your specific argument or research question?

Your argument or research question is the main unifying element in your project. Keep this in the forefront of your mind when you write about your sources. Explain how, specifically, each source supports your central claim/s or suggests possible answers to your question. For example: Does the source provide essential background information or a definitional foundation for your argument or inquiry? Does it present numerical data that supports one of your points or helps you answer a question you have posed? Does it present a theory that might be applied to some aspect of your project? Does it present a recognized expert's insights on your topic?

How do the sources speak to each other?

Sometimes you will find explicit dialogue between sources (for example, Source A refutes Source B by name), and sometimes you will need to bring your sources into dialogue (for example, Source A does not mention Source B, but you observe that the two are advancing similar or dissimilar arguments). Attending to ***interrelationships among sources*** is at the heart of the task of synthesis.



Figure 1. A strong argument will utilize many different sources to support itself. Synthesizing by identifying interrelationships among these sources will help to strengthen your paper.

Begin by asking: What are the points of agreement? Where are there disagreements?

But be aware that you are unlikely to find your sources in pure positions of "for" vs. "against." You are more likely to find agreement in some areas and disagreement in other areas. You may also find agreement but for different reasons—such as different underlying values and priorities, or different methods of inquiry.

Where are there, or aren't there, information gaps?

Where is the available information unreliable (for example, it might be difficult to trace back to primary sources), or limited, (for example, based on just a few case studies, or on just one geographical area), or difficult for non-specialists to access (for example, written in specialist language, or tucked away in a physical archive)?

Does your inquiry contain sub-questions that may not at present be answerable, or that may not be answerable without additional primary research—for example, laboratory studies, direct observation, interviews with witnesses or participants, etc.?

Or, alternatively, is there a great deal of reliable, accessible information that addresses your question or speaks to your argument or inquiry?

In considering these questions, you are engaged in synthesis: you are conducting an overview assessment of the field of available information and in this way generating composite knowledge.

Remember, synthesis is about pulling together information from a range of sources in order to answer a question or construct an argument. It is something you will be called upon to do in a wide variety of academic, professional, and personal contexts. Being able to dive into an ocean of information and surface with meaningful conclusions is an essential skill.

? ? Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20276

? ? Synthesis in Literature Reviews

One place synthesis is usually required is in literature reviews for honors' theses, master's theses, and Ph.D. dissertations. In all those cases, literature reviews are intended to contribute more than annotated bibliographies do and to be arguments for the research conducted for the theses or dissertations. If you are writing an honors thesis, master's thesis, or Ph.D. dissertation, you will find more help with Susan Imel's Writing a Literature Review .

Showing Synthesis

Some ways to demonstrate synthesis in your writing is to compare and contrast multiple sources. Below are some examples of sentence structures that demonstrate synthesis:

Synthesis that indicates agreement/support:

- Source A asserts that… Source B agrees when he or she states…
- According to both A & B…
- The combined conclusions of sources B & C seem to indicate that…
- The evidence shows that…
- Source B is correct that…
- Source C makes a convincing case when she argues…
- I agree with Source A's conclusion that…

Synthesis that indicates disagreement/conflict:

- Source A asserts that…Yet Source B offers a different perspective by…
- Source C & B would likely disagree regarding…
- My view, however, contrary to what Source A has argued, is…
- I argue that X & Y are the best solution, though Source B offers a different option.
- In contrast, I would like to offer some objections to the opinions expressed by source C…
- While source A makes an intriguing argument, I would disagree…

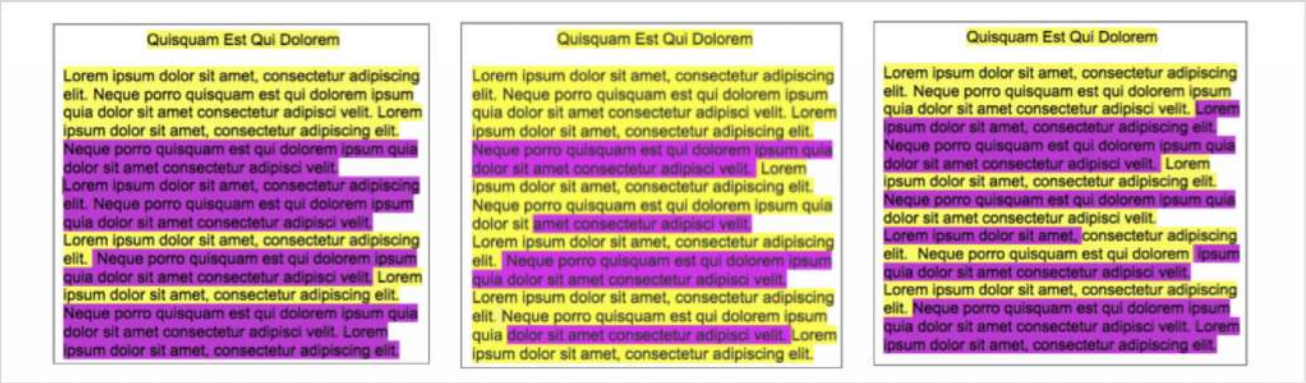
What the above examples indicate is that synthesis is the careful weaving in of outside opinions in order to show your reader the many ideas and arguments on your topic and further assert your own. Notice, too, that the above examples are also **signal phrases**: language that introduces outside source material to be either quoted or paraphrased, i.e., "contrary to what Source A has argued, source B maintains _____ ."

? ? Try It: Balancing Sources and Synthesis

Here's a technique to quickly assess whether there is enough of your original thought in your essay or paper, as opposed to information from your sources: Highlight what you have included as quotes, paraphrases, and summaries from your sources. Next, highlight in another color what you have written yourself. Then take a look at the pages and decide whether there is enough of your own thinking in them.

For the mocked-up pages below, assume that the yellow-highlighted lines were written by the writer and the pink-highlighted lines are quotes, paraphrases, and summaries she pulled from her sources.

Which page most demonstrates the writer's own ideas?



Mocked-up passages showing the division between quotes, paraphrases, and summaries and original ideas

Source: Joy McGregor. “A Visual Approach: Teaching Synthesis,” School Library Monthly, Volume XXVII, Number 8/May-June 2011.

[reveal-answer q=”149882″]Show Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a=”149882″]

Answer: The Middle Sample.

The yellow-highlighted sections in the middle sample shows more contributions from the author than from quotes, paraphrases, and summaries of other sources.

[/hidden-answer]

GLOSSARY

signal phrase: a phrase that introduces outside sources material that will be quoted or paraphrased

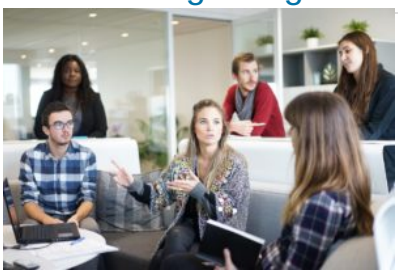
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8.16: Putting It Together- Analysis and Synthesis



The ability to analyze effectively is fundamental to success in college and the workplace, regardless of your major or your career plans. Now that you have an understanding of what analysis is, the keys to effective analysis, and the types of analytic assignments you may face, work on improving your analytic skills by keeping the following important concepts in mind:

1. Recognize that analysis comes in many forms. Any assignment that asks how parts relate to the whole, how something works, what something means, or why something is important is asking for analysis.
2. Suspend judgment before undertaking analysis.
3. Craft analytical theses that address how, why, and so what.
4. Support analytical interpretations with clear, explicitly cited evidence.
5. Remember that all analytical tasks require you to break down or investigate something.

Analysis is the first step towards synthesis, which requires not only thinking critically and investigating a topic or source, but combining thoughts and ideas to create new ones. As you synthesize, you will draw inferences and make connections to broader themes and concepts. It's this step that will really help add substance, complexity, and interest to your essays.

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8.17: Discussion- Ad Rhetorical Analysis

A rhetorical analysis requires taking a closer look at the persuasiveness of a message. In this discussion forum, you will find an advertisement of any sort—a video, print, or radio ad—and complete a critical analysis.

STEP 1: Post a link to the advertisement you've selected. Analyze its effectiveness by first answering the following questions:

1. What is the purpose of the ad?
2. What is the argument of the ad?
3. Who is the "author" of the ad?
4. Who is the intended audience for the ad?
5. What is the tone of the ad?
6. What is the style and tone of the ad?
7. What kind of supporting appeals, evidence, or examples does this ad use or rely on?

Write a summary paragraph about why you believe the ad is effective or ineffective. This paragraph should include a *claim* (whether or not you think it is effective), *evidence*, as demonstrated in the ad, and *support* for that evidence (as explained in the reading on critical analysis from the module).

STEP 2: Respond in two separate posts to two classmates (in at least 75 words). Explicitly address their examples and try to extend, complicate, or redirect their points in a substantive, knowledge-demonstrating way.

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8.18: Assignment- The Role of Inference in Reading and Understanding Satire

The 18th century Irish essayist and clergyman Jonathan Swift published his influential satire "A Modest Proposal" in 1729. In the module we learned that satire is a type of humorous writing that relies on exaggeration to make its points. Unlike an argumentative essay that directly states its main claim and strives to clearly contextualize its evidence, a satire implies its meanings so as to persuade the reader to reach certain conclusions or to ponder certain issues. Given this indirect mode of persuasion, we can see that readers of satire will need to read analytically, carefully noting related details in order to infer the writer's meaning.

In Swift's piece, he is addressing the real and pressing issue of material poverty in his time. Much of its impact comes from the jarring mismatch between his serious tone and the absurd nature of the "proposal" he offers and then elaborates upon.

STEP 1: First, read Swift's satire here.

Be sure to read analytically, looking for ideas that seem to be related to each other and to the main question or issue that drives the piece. Pay close attention to any perspectives, concepts, or solutions that you think are being implied but not directly stated.

STEP 2: Next, answer the following questions in complete sentences and with sufficient detail to demonstrate understanding:

1. What are four benefits that Swift explicitly claims will follow from adopting his proposal?
2. What perspectives does Swift seem to be mocking through his exaggerations?
3. What authorities or individuals seem to be responsible for the suffering and misfortune that Swift describes?
4. What more realistic actions is Swift implying have not been taken previously, thus making his proposal necessary and plausible?
5. Finally, what are some recent forms of satire you've encountered? What current events or issues do you think those films, novels or TV shows were addressing? Write at least a paragraph for this answer.

Criteria	Proficient	Developing	Points
Degree of analysis	Correctly answers questions 1-3 and provides evidence showing an understanding of Swift's proposal.	Partially answers questions 1 through 3 or does not give enough of a response to demonstrate an understanding of the text	__/5
Understanding of inference	Correctly answers questions four with evidence and understanding from Swift's essay	Does not thoroughly answer question four about implications of Swift's essay	__/5
Application of concept	Answers questions five and provides a detailed response with an example that demonstrates an understanding of what satire is and what it looks like.	Partially answers question five or provides insufficient example of satire	__/5
		Total	__/15

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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9.2: Introduction to Argumentative Essays
9.3: The Argumentative Essay
9.4: Argumentative Thesis Statements
9.5: Introduction to Logical Arguments
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9.1: Why It Matters- Academic Argument



Why learn to evaluate and construct academic arguments?

You may question why you need to study argument. After all, the internet often seems as though it is one big shouting match—arguing is everywhere! But academic argument is different from much of the arguing that happens in day-to-day life. Academic arguments value certain approaches and follow established strategies.

In this module, you will be introduced to methods for composing an effective academic argument, including constructing an arguable thesis, building common ground, avoiding logical fallacies, and refuting counterargument. These strategies will not only benefit you in your academic career but will also help you be more persuasive in your professional and personal life.

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9.2: Introduction to Argumentative Essays

What you'll learn to do: evaluate argumentative essays and thesis statements



An academic argument asserts a claim and supports that claim with evidence.

The goal of an argument is to convince readers that the writer's position is reasonable, valid, and worthy of consideration. Therefore, an argumentative thesis statement needs to be not only clear and focused, but also debatable, assertive, and reasoned. Additionally, an argumentative thesis must be able to be supported with evidence.

In this section, you'll learn about argumentative essays and how they are shaped around strong, clear thesis statements.

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9.3: The Argumentative Essay

Learning Objectives

- Examine types of argumentative essays

Argumentative Essays

You may have heard it said that all writing is an argument of some kind. Even if you're writing an informative essay, you still have the job of trying to convince your audience that the information is important. However, there are times you'll be asked to write an essay that is specifically an argumentative piece.

An argumentative essay is one that makes a clear assertion or argument about some topic or issue. When you're writing an argumentative essay, it's important to remember that an academic argument is quite different from a regular, emotional argument. Note that sometimes students forget the academic aspect of an argumentative essay and write essays that are much too emotional for an academic audience. It's important for you to choose a topic you feel passionately about (if you're allowed to pick your topic), but you have to be sure you aren't too emotionally attached to a topic. In an academic argument, you'll have a lot more constraints you have to consider, and you'll focus much more on logic and reasoning than emotions.



Figure 1. When writing an argumentative essay, students must be able to separate emotion based arguments from logic based arguments in order to appeal to an academic audience.

Argumentative essays are quite common in academic writing and are often an important part of writing in all disciplines. You may be asked to take a stand on a social issue in your introduction to writing course, but you could also be asked to take a stand on an issue related to health care in your nursing courses or make a case for solving a local environmental problem in your biology class. And, since argument is such a common essay assignment, it's important to be aware of some basic elements of a good argumentative essay.

Techniques

When your professor asks you to write an argumentative essay, you'll often be given something specific to write about. For example, you may be asked to take a stand on an issue you have been discussing in class. Perhaps, in your education class, you would be asked to write about standardized testing in public schools. Or, in your literature class, you might be asked to argue the effects of protest literature on public policy in the United States.

However, there are times when you'll be given a choice of topics. You might even be asked to write an argumentative essay on any topic related to your field of study or a topic you feel that is important personally.

Whatever the case, having some knowledge of some basic argumentative techniques or strategies will be helpful as you write. Below are some common types of arguments.

- Causal Arguments
  - In this type of argument, you argue that something has caused something else. For example, you might explore the causes of the decline of large mammals in the world's ocean and make a case for your cause.
- Evaluation Arguments
  - In this type of argument, you make an argumentative evaluation of something as "good" or "bad," but you need to establish the criteria for "good" or "bad." For example, you might evaluate a children's book for your education class, but you would need to establish clear criteria for your evaluation for your audience.
-

Proposal Arguments

- In this type of argument, you must propose a solution to a problem. First, you must establish a clear problem and then propose a specific solution to that problem. For example, you might argue for a proposal that would increase retention rates at your college.

- Narrative Arguments
  - In this type of argument, you make your case by telling a story with a clear point related to your argument. For example, you might write a narrative about your experiences with standardized testing in order to make a case for reform.
- Rebuttal Arguments
  - In a **rebuttal** argument, you build your case around refuting an idea or ideas that have come before. In other words, your starting point is to challenge the ideas of the past.
- Definition Arguments
  - In this type of argument, you use a definition as the starting point for making your case. For example, in a definition argument, you might argue that NCAA basketball players should be defined as professional players and, therefore, should be paid.

? ? Try It

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? ? Essay Examples

- Click here to read an argumentative essay on the consequences of fast fashion. Read it and look at the comments to recognize strategies and techniques the author uses to convey her ideas.
- In this example, you'll see a sample argumentative paper from a psychology class submitted in APA format. Key parts of the argumentative structure have been noted for you in the sample.

? ? Link to Learning

For more examples of types of argumentative essays, visit the Argumentative Purposes section of the Excelsior OWL.

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9.4: Argumentative Thesis Statements

Learning Objective

- Recognize an argumentative thesis

A strong, argumentative thesis statement should take a stance about an issue. It should explain the basics of your argument and help your reader to know what to expect in your essay.

Watch It

This video reviews the necessary components of a thesis statement and walks through some examples.

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

You can view the transcript for "Purdue OWL: Thesis Statements" here (opens in new window).

Key Features of Argumentative Thesis Statements

Below are some of the key features of an argumentative thesis statement. An argumentative thesis is debatable, assertive, reasonable, evidence-based, and focused.

Debatable

An argumentative thesis must make a claim about which reasonable people can disagree. Statements of fact or areas of general agreement cannot be argumentative theses because few people disagree about them. Let's take a look at an example:

- **BAD:** Junk food is bad for your health.

This is not a debatable thesis. Most people would agree that junk food is bad for your health. A debatable thesis would be:

- **GOOD:** Because junk food is bad for your health, the size of sodas offered at fast-food restaurants should be regulated by the federal government.

Reasonable people could agree or disagree with the statement.

Assertive

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

- **BAD:** Federal immigration law is a tough issue about which many people disagree.

This is not an arguable thesis because it does not assert a position.

- **GOOD:** Federal immigration enforcement law needs to be overhauled because it puts undue constraints on state and local police.

This is an argumentative thesis because it asserts a position that immigration enforcement law needs to be changed.

Reasonable

An argumentative thesis must make a claim that is logical and possible. Claims that are outrageous or impossible are not argumentative theses. Let's take a look at an example:

- **BAD:** City council members are dishonest and should be thrown in jail.

This is not an argumentative thesis. City council members' ineffectiveness is not a reason to send them to jail.

- **GOOD:** City council members should be term-limited to prevent one group or party from maintaining control indefinitely.

This is an arguable thesis because term limits are possible, and shared political control is a reasonable goal.

Evidence-Based

An argumentative thesis must be able to be supported by evidence. Claims that presuppose value systems, morals, or religious beliefs cannot be supported with evidence and therefore are not argumentative theses. Let's take a look at an example:

- **BAD:** Individuals convicted of murder will go to hell when they die.

This is not an argumentative thesis because its support rests on religious beliefs or values rather than evidence.

- **GOOD:** Rehabilitation programs for individuals serving life sentences should be funded because these programs reduce violence within prisons.

This is an argumentative thesis because evidence such as case studies and statistics can be used to support it.

Focused

An argumentative thesis must be focused and narrow. A focused, narrow claim is clearer, more able to be supported with evidence, and more persuasive than a broad, general claim. Let's take a look at an example:

- **BAD:** The federal government should overhaul the U.S. tax code.

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

- **GOOD:** The U.S. House of Representatives should vote to repeal the federal estate tax because the revenue generated by that tax is negligible.

This is an effective argumentative thesis because it identifies a specific actor and action and can be fully supported with evidence about the amount of revenue the estate tax generates.

? ? Try It

In the practice exercises below, you will use this information from your reading to see if you can recognize and evaluate argumentative thesis statements. Keep in mind that a sound argumentative thesis should be debatable, assertive, reasonable, evidence-based, and focused.

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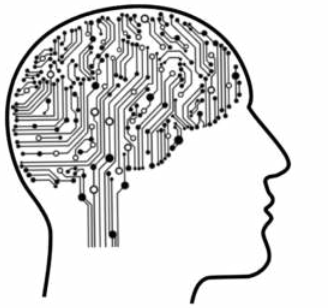
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9.5: Introduction to Logical Arguments

What you'll learn to do: examine the structure of logical arguments and types of supporting claims



A sound, well-reasoned, and compelling text is one of the most effective and persuasive communicative acts that human beings ever create. In this section, we'll look take a closer look at logic to see how understanding the science of reasoning can make you a better reader and writer.

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9.6: Logical Arguments

Learning Objectives

- Examine the elements of an argument

Logical Arguments

Anything you read that includes an attempt to persuade you to think a certain way is likely to include logical argument as part of that persuasion. Philosophers are trained to study arguments, the reasoning and logic behind them, and the validity of their claims. In an English course, you will not analyze arguments in as much depth or detail as you would in a course on Philosophy or Logic, but you should still be familiar with key components of argumentation. Knowing the basic elements of an argument will help you identify the logic behind any arguments you read and also help you construct effective arguments in your own writing.

Elements of an Argument

An **argument** is a claim that contains premises which support a conclusion. In analyzing arguments, you can first look for the **claim**, or a statement or opinion on a topic. Claims are also called statements or propositions. For example, all of the following are claims:

- This class is easy.
- The Detroit Lions have the potential to make the NFL playoffs.
- Democratic socialism is superior to a pure democracy.

Each of these could be the *start* of an argument, but they are incomplete arguments as-in; an argument needs both a claim and a conclusion. A **premise** is a claim, or piece of evidence, that supports the conclusion, and a **conclusion** is the main idea (or the "so what?") of the argument, which is supported by the premises. Now let's look at the examples above as premises, and we add in a conclusion to make them an argument. For example:

- This class is easy so it should not be mandatory.
- The Detroit Lions have the potential to make the NFL playoffs because they have three of the best players in the league.
- Democratic socialism is superior to a pure democracy because it results in better outcomes and greater equality for more people.

An **argument** is an assertion that contains both a conclusion and a supporting premise. It is a statement of fact or opinion that is based on evidence, or premises. Keep in mind that not all statements are arguments, and some statements may contain multiple arguments.

Watch It

This video explains the components of an argument.

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

You can view the transcript for "What is an Argument?" here (opens in new window).

Try It

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A **conclusion** is the main claim of an argument that is supported by one or more premises. It is the logical result of the relationship between the premises. Identifying the conclusion is the first step in understanding the argument.

But how do you identify the conclusion? Follow these steps:

1. Ask, "Is the statement the main point, or is it a claim given to support another statement in the argument?"
2. Identify the indicator word that often precedes the conclusion, such as:
   - therefore
   - thus

- this means
- this shows
- as a result
- it follows that
- that's why
- this suggests
- consequently
- hence
- so
- accordingly

? ? Try It

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A **premise** is a reason offered as support, or evidence, for another claim. It is often indicated by these words:

- because
- for
- as
- since
- inasmuch as
- as shown by
- given that
- as indicated by
- the reason is that

Consider the following statement:

- Today's freshmen cannot write very well. Joe is a freshman, so he must be a poor writer.

The premises and conclusion are identified as follows:

Premise	Today's freshmen cannot write very well
Premise	Joe is a freshman,
Conclusion	so he must be a poor writer.

Practice identifying the premises and conclusions

In order to identify the premises and conclusion, you should first rewrite the argument in standard form. You do this by identifying which claim is the conclusion, then working backward to identify which claims are premises that support the conclusion. It should look like this:

Standard Form	
Premise 1:	
Premise 2:	
Conclusion:	

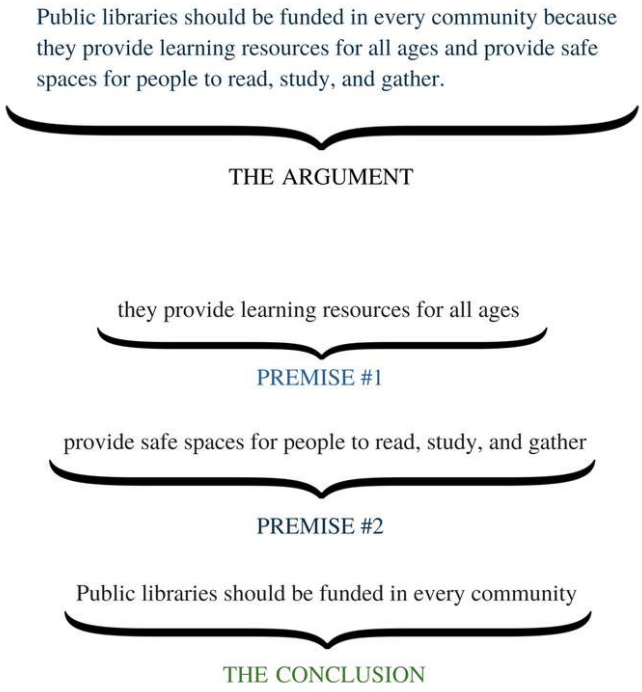


Figure 1. Breaking down an argument into the standard form can help you identify the premises and conclusion.

? ? Try It

Click through the following presentation for some review and additional practice in identifying premises and conclusions.

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

Evaluating Arguments

A formal argument may be set up so that, on its face, it looks logical. However, no matter how well-constructed the argument is, the premises must be true or any inferences based on the premises will be unsound.

One way to test the accuracy of a premise is to determine whether the premise is based upon a sample that is both representative and sufficiently large, and ask yourself whether all relevant factors have been taken into account in the analysis of data that leads to a generalization. Another way to evaluate a premise is to determine whether its source is credible. Are the authors identified? What is their background? Was the premise something you found on an undocumented website? Did you find it in a popular publication or a scholarly one? How complete, how recent, and how relevant were the studies or statistics discussed in the source? Take all of these things into consideration when evaluating an argument.

Glossary

argument: a claim containing premises which support a conclusion.

claim: a statement or opinion that is either true or false

conclusion: the main claim in an argument that each premise supports.

premises: claims that support an argument's conclusion

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9.7: Inductive and Deductive Reasoning

Learning Objectives

- Differentiate between deductive and inductive reasoning

Deductive and Inductive Arguments: Two Ways of Understanding

We have two basic approaches for how we come to believe something is true.

The first way is that we are exposed to several different examples of a situation, and from those examples, we conclude a general truth. For instance, you visit your local grocery store daily to pick up necessary items. You notice that on Friday, two weeks ago, all the clerks in the store were wearing football jerseys. Again, last Friday, the clerks wore their football jerseys. Today, also a Friday, they're wearing them again. From just these observations, you can conclude that on *all* Fridays, these supermarket employees will wear football jerseys to support their local team.

This type of pattern recognition, leading to a conclusion, is known as **inductive reasoning**.

Knowledge can also move the opposite direction. Say that you read in the news about a tradition in a local grocery store, where employees wore football jerseys on Fridays to support the home team. This time, you're starting from the overall rule, and you would expect individual evidence to support this rule. Each time you visited the store on a Friday, you would expect the employees to wear jerseys.

Such a case, of starting with the overall statement and then identifying examples that support it, is known as **deductive reasoning**.

Deduction

In the process of deduction, you begin with some statements, called "premises," that are assumed to be true, you then determine what else would have to be true if the premises are true.

For example, you could begin by assuming that God exists, and is good, and then determine what would logically follow from such an assumption. With this premise, you would look for evidence supporting a belief in God.

With deduction, you can provide absolute proof of your conclusions, given that your premises are correct. The premises themselves, however, remain unproven and unprovable.

Examples of deductive logic:

- All men are mortal. Joe is a man. Therefore Joe is mortal. If the first two statements are true, then the conclusion must be true.
- Bachelors are unmarried men. Bill is unmarried. Therefore, Bill is a bachelor.
- To get a Bachelor's degree at a college, a student must have 120 credits. Sally has more than 130 credits. Therefore, Sally has a bachelor's degree.

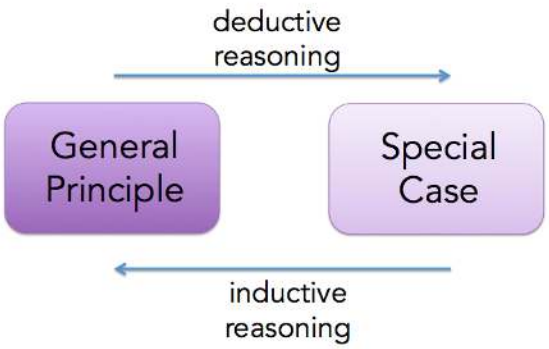


Figure 1. Deductive reasoning starts with an understanding of a general principle, then special cases help support that principle. Inductive reasoning works the other way around, where a special case is observed first, which leads to the eventual understanding of a general principle.

Induction

In the process of induction, you begin with some data, and then determine what general conclusion(s) can logically be derived from those data. In other words, you determine what theory or theories could explain the data.

For example, you note that the probability of becoming schizophrenic is greatly increased if at least one parent is schizophrenic, and from that you conclude that schizophrenia may be inherited. That is certainly a reasonable hypothesis given the data.

However, induction does not prove that the theory is correct. There are often alternative theories that are also supported by the data. For example, the behavior of the schizophrenic parent may cause the child to be schizophrenic, not the genes.

What is important in induction is that the theory does indeed offer a logical explanation of the data. To conclude that the parents have no effect on the schizophrenia of the children is not supportable given the data, and would not be a logical conclusion.

Examples of inductive logic:

- This cat is black. That cat is black. A third cat is black. Therefore all cats are black.
- This marble from the bag is black. That marble from the bag is black. A third marble from the bag is black. Therefore all the marbles in the bag black.
- Most universities and colleges in Utah ban alcohol from campus. Therefore most universities and colleges in the U.S. ban alcohol from campus.

Deduction and induction by themselves are inadequate to make a compelling argument. While deduction gives absolute proof, it never makes contact with the real world, there is no place for observation or experimentation, and no way to test the validity of the premises. And, while induction is driven by observation, it never approaches actual proof of a theory. Therefore an effective paper will include both types of logic.

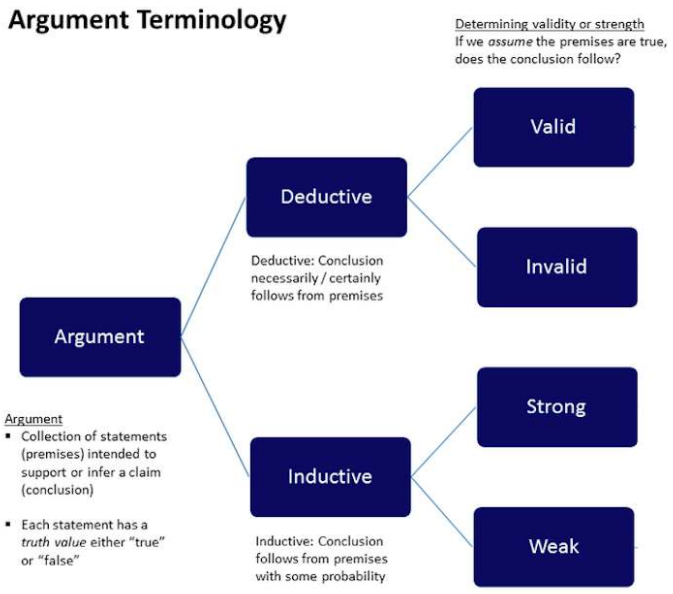


Figure 2. This diagram summarizes some of the key terminology related to arguments: they can be either deductive, in which the conclusion follows the general premises, or inductive, in which a probable conclusion is reached based on some observed premises. You can determine the validity or the strength of an argument by assuming that the premises are true, then seeing if the conclusion is the expected result.

✔ ✔ Watch It

This video reviews some of the distinctions between inductive and deductive reasoning.

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

You can view the transcript for "Inductive VS Deductive Reasoning by Shmoop" here (opens in new window).

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Glossary

deductive reasoning: top-down reasoning; a method of reasoning in which a certain conclusion follows general premises.

inductive reasoning: bottom-up reasoning; a method of reasoning in which several premises provide evidence of a probable conclusion.

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9.8: Analyzing Arguments

Learning Objectives

- Evaluate logical structures in arguments

Analyzing Arguments

Sometimes an argument will have an **unstated** or **suppressed premise**, rather than stating something outright. Consider this highly unscientific poll conducted by a TV news station. "Which do you believe politician Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez is most out of touch with: illegal immigration, border security, or the American people?" The pollster is operating as if it is unquestionable that Ocasio-Cortez is out of touch with *something*. In other words, the question presupposes that she is "out of touch." However, this unstated premise is debatable once it is brought out into the open. Is she in fact out of touch at all?

A listener or reader who is not alert to such unstated or suppressed premises is, without realizing it, agreeing to debate on the communicator's terms—when those terms may be unfair. In fact, on more complex or serious issues it is often things people take for granted that may actually deserve the most critical scrutiny. For example, in the argument, "This medication is labeled as totally natural, so it is safe for me to take it," the suppressed premise—that "natural" guarantees "safe"—is not trivial and can certainly be challenged.

Argument Diagramming

Besides recognizing the use of induction and deduction, you can use diagramming or outlining to develop an understanding of an argument's overall structure. Remember that an argument as defined here isn't a "quarrel," but rather a group of statements, some of which, the premises, are offered in support for another, the conclusion. So the first order of business in analyzing an argument is to recognize what the main claim is—the conclusion—and what other claims are being used to support it—the premises. This is much easier to do when the author is explicit about the steps in the argument, where premise and conclusion "indicator" terms appear in the text as signposts.

Finding the Conclusion

Words that introduce or signal an argument conclusion include:

- *therefore*
- *so*
- *we may conclude/infer*
- *thus*
- *consequently*

Words that introduce argument premises include:

- *it follows that*
- *implies that*
- *as a result*
- *because* (non-causal meaning)
- *since*
- *or the reason that*
- *for*
- *and* (this often signals the introduction of a further premise, as in "You should believe Z ***because of*** reason 1 ***and*** reason 2.")

When you are diagramming or outlining an argument, if the "flow" of an argument from premises to conclusion isn't readily apparent, then remember to use the above indicator terms to help you decide which claim is the conclusion and which claims are the premises. Using the indicator terms is particularly helpful because a conclusion may be stated first, last, or anywhere in between. People do all three when they write or talk in real life, so we cannot tell whether a statement is a conclusion simply by where it is positioned in the argument.

✔ ✔ Watch It

This video reviews the ways you can break apart an argument to find premises and conclusions, then determine if they are logical.

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

You can view the transcript for "Analyzing the argument- Part 1 of 2" here (opens in new window).

The Purpose Behind Diagramming an Argument

Diagramming or mapping someone else's argument serves a double purpose. First, the process helps you clearly see just what the other person is saying. It helps you identify the logical structure of the argument, which is necessary if you are to assess the strengths and weaknesses of the argument in order to know whether or not to accept it. Second, you develop skills of analysis that you will need in order to organize and present arguments in support of a position that *you* may want to take on some question or issue.

Steps in Diagramming an Argument

Here are the basic moves that are required in order to create a clear diagram or outline of an argument.

1. Identify all the claims made by the author. Since a sentence can contain multiple claims, rewrite statements so that you have one claim per sentence. Adopt some sort of numbering or labeling system for the claims.
2. Eliminate "fluff." Ignore repetitions, assurances (assertions not backed by evidence or reasons), and information that is unrelated to the argument.
3. Identify which statements are premises and which statement is the main conclusion.
4. Recognize that there may be sub-conclusions in addition to a final or main conclusion. You may think of a sub-conclusion as the endpoint of a sub-argument nested inside the larger argument. Although the sub-conclusion is itself the conclusion of a nested argument, supported by premises, it also functions as a premise supporting the final or main conclusion.
5. Recognize that some premises are independent and others linked. If you were drawing or mapping the argument, you would be able to draw an arrow from an independent premise directly to the conclusion it supports. Linked premises, however, are multiple statements that must be combined to provide support for a conclusion. If you were drawing or mapping the argument, you would have to find some way to show that the linked premises as a group support the conclusion. You might use color coding, or underlining, or circling, or + signs—some way to connect the linked premises before drawing ***one*** arrow from the clustered premises to the conclusion they support.

Using the Argument's Paragraphing to Evaluate the Premises

An author must organize her material to guide the audience through her argument. One tool available to an author is the paragraph. The sentences clustered together in a paragraph should be tightly connected in terms of content. In the most common form of paragraph, the clustered sentences collectively develop an idea explicitly stated in a topic sentence. The paragraphs themselves should be placed in an order that reflects some overall plan so that the paragraphs reveal the steps or stages of the argument.

The premises may be said to be key steps or stages in the argument. A well-constructed argument therefore may use each premise as a topic sentence for a paragraph. Additionally, a premise may serve as the guiding idea for a group of paragraphs, each developing a subtopic. For example, the premise, reached by induction, that "College students overestimate the amount of binge drinking that is taking place" might introduce a cluster of three paragraphs, each showing that the overestimation varies by subgroup—with member of sororities, member of fraternities, and non-Greek populations arriving at different estimates.

Look to see whether the author has used paragraphing-by-premise to organize their argument and outline its structure for the audience. You should also ask yourself whether any paragraphs are missing. That is, as you consider what premises serve as the foundations of the argument, be alert for the suppressed ones, the premises that the author presupposes. These unacknowledged premises may be ones that the author hopes the audience will not notice or question. In your analysis call her on it by determining where a paragraph on that premise should have appeared in the argument.

WAtch It

Now that you know how to identify premises and conclusions, let's apply that to looking at arguments in paragraphs. You should ask yourself the following:

- What is the point, or conclusion, of this paragraph?
- Is there sufficient evidence for this conclusion?
- Is the evidence relevant to the conclusion?

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

You can view the transcript for "Analyzing the Argument- Part 2 of 2" here (opens in new window).

The Similarity Between Conclusions and Thesis Statements

When we talk about a paper, we usually talk about the paper's main claim as being its thesis statement. But of course a paper that just makes a claim or states an opinion but offers no supporting reasons or arguments isn't much of a paper. We would be bothered by reading an editorial in which someone stated a strong opinion on some public issue yet did nothing to justify that opinion.

When an author supports a thesis with reasons, then the thesis statement can be described as the conclusion of an argument, with the supporting reasons being that argument's premises. The argument now has a structure that can be outlined or diagrammed.

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9.9: Introduction to Rhetorical Appeals



What you'll learn to do: describe and apply the rhetorical appeals of logos, pathos, and ethos

When writing or analyzing arguments, we begin by examining how the argument appeals to the reader. There are three types of appeals utilized in arguments: logos or logical, pathos or emotional, and ethos or ethical appeals. Aristotle identified these rhetorical appeals as fundamental elements in the art of persuasion. In this section, you will learn how to recognize and utilize these appeals in your own speaking and writing.

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9.10: Logos

Learning Objectives

- Recognize appeals to logos
- Use the STAR method to evaluate appeals to logos

Appeals to Logos

Logos is about appealing to your audience's logical side. You have to think about what makes sense to your audience and use that as you build your argument. As writers, we appeal to logos by presenting a line of reasoning in our arguments that is logical and clear. We use evidence, such as statistics and factual information, when we appeal to logos.

In order to develop strong appeals to logos, we have to avoid faulty logic. Faulty logic can be anything from assuming one event caused another to making blanket statements based on little evidence.

Appeals to logos are an important part of academic writing, but you will see them in commercials, as well. Although they more commonly use pathos and ethos, advertisers will sometimes use logos to sell products. For example, commercials based on saving consumers money, such as car commercials that focus on miles per gallon, are appealing to the consumers' sense of logos.

As you work to build logos in your arguments, keep the following strategies in mind:

- **Both experience and source material can provide you with evidence to appeal to logos.** While outside sources will provide you with excellent evidence in an argumentative essay, in some situations, you can share personal experiences and observations. Just make sure they are appropriate to the situation and you present them in a clear and logical manner.
- **Remember to think about your audience as you appeal to logos**. Just because something makes sense in your mind, doesn't mean it will make the same kind of sense to your audience. You need to try to see things from your audience's perspective. Having others read your writing, especially those who might disagree with your position, is helpful.
- **Be sure to maintain clear lines of reasoning throughout your argument**. One error in logic can negatively impact your entire position. When you present faulty logic, you lose credibility.
- When presenting an argument based on logos, **it is important to avoid emotional overtones and maintain an even tone of voice.** Remember, it's not just a matter of the type of evidence you are presenting; how you present this evidence is important as well.

practice

Watch the video below and think about how it appeals to logos.

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

You can view the transcript for "2009 Toyota Prius Hybrid Cars- Safety Review" here (opens in new window).

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...sessments/5611

Evaluating Logos

Logos may seem like the most straightforward of the logical appeals, but recognizing such appeals is trickier than you might expect. Especially in the age of "alternative facts," it is important that you be able to recognize valid logical and/or factual evidence. The STAR criteria—**S**ufficiency, **T**ypicality, **A**ccuracy, and **R**elevance—are a handy means of evaluating content and deciding whether or not it is logically valid.

Measure	Question	Examples and Notes

Sufficiency	Is there *enough* cited evidence to support the conclusion?	Generally, only “strongly” and not “weakly” supported conclusions should be accepted. The more controversial a claim is, the more evidence authors should provide before expecting an audience to accept it. If the evidence is not sufficient, the author may need to modify or qualify the claim, by stating that something is true ‘sometimes’ rather than ‘always’.
Typicality	Is the cited evidence typical or representative?	If an author makes a claim about a whole group but the evidence is based on a small or biased sample of that group, the evidence is not “typical.” Similar problems stem from relying just on personal experiences (anecdotal evidence) and from “cherry picking” data by citing only the parts that support a conclusion while ignoring parts that might challenge it.
Accuracy	Is the cited evidence up to date and accurate?	Authors using polls, studies and statistics must ask whether the data were produced in a biased way and also ask whether the sample was large and representative of its target population so that results were outside the “margin of error.” (**Margin of error**: If a sample is too small or not well chosen, results may be meaningless because they may represent random variation.)
Relevance	Is the cited evidence directly relevant to the claim(s) it is being used to support?	An author may supply lots of evidence, but the evidence may support something different from what the person is actually claiming. If the evidence is not relevant to the claim, the author may need to modify or qualify the claim—or even to acknowledge that the claim is indefensible.

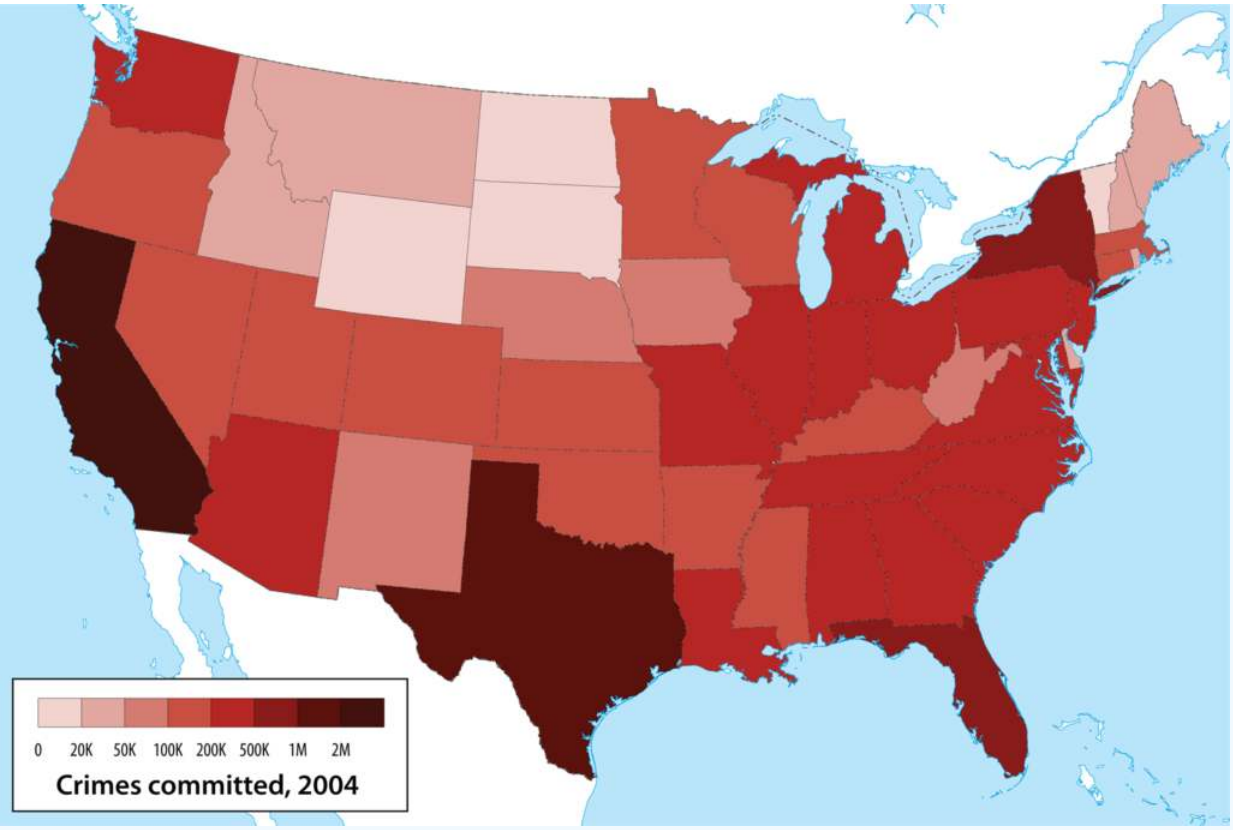
Manipulative Appeals to Logos

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

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

? ? Try It

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



https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...sessments/5612

The misrepresentation of information or data is often accompanied by **logical fallacies**. We'll examine these in more detail later, but they generally jump to conclusions, make generalizations, or frame the argument in a way that manipulates the logic of an argument.

Logos and Kairos

Kairos is the fourth rhetorical appeal, but it is almost always best explained in context with the other rhetorical appeals. The word comes from the ancient Greek καιρός (kairós), and means when time or conditions are right for the accomplishment of a crucial action; the opportune and decisive moment.

In his article "Critical-Rhetorical Ethnography: Rethinking the Place and Process of Rhetoric," Aaron Hess provides a definition of kairos for the present day that bridges the two classical applications. Hess addresses Poulakos's view that, "In short, kairos dictates that what is said must be said at the right time." He suggests that kairos also considers appropriateness. According to Hess, kairos can either be understood as "the decorum or propriety of any given moment and speech act, implying a reliance on the given or known" or as "the opportune, spontaneous, or timely."

Kairos is an important part of appeals to logos because all logical information is contextual. In other words, you can not use data from a 1960s study about cancer treatment without contextualizing it: it is no longer timely in 2017.

The appropriateness of information is also related to kairos. Even if information is logical and factually correct, it may not always be timely to present it. You must evaluate the rhetorical situation in order to balance the appeals appropriately, and an important part of the rhetorical situation is the time.

Glossary

kairos: a time when conditions are right for the accomplishment of a crucial action; the opportune and decisive moment.

logical fallacy: a flaw in reasoning or a flawed structure that undermines the validity of an argument

logos: appeal to logic

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9.11: Pathos

Learning Objective

- Recognize appeals to pathos

Appeals to Pathos

An appeal to pathos is an appeal to someone's emotions. For example, ads for unhealthy fast food are meant to appeal to your sense of hunger and your cravings, not to your logic that warns against such cuisine. We are exposed to appeals to emotions on an almost constant basis, so it is easy to become numb to such tactics; however, it is important to be aware of such rhetorical strategies both as readers and writers. As a reader, you should be able to analyze how some artifacts turn up the pathos to persuade; as a writer, you need to be careful not to overly rely on pathos as an attempt to sway readers. Remember that while some people may lean heavily on their emotions, others will not be persuaded by strong appeals to pathos, and you will need to consider how to reach them.

People may be uninterested in an issue unless they can find a personal connection to it, so a communicator may try to connect to his or her audience by evoking emotions or by suggesting that author and audience share attitudes, beliefs, and values—in other words, by making an appeal to pathos. Even in formal writing, such as academic books or journals, an author often will try to present an issue in such a way as to connect to the feelings or attitudes of his or her audience (however, academic writing moves beyond reliance solely on appeals to pathos).



Figure 1. Knowing your audience well is vital when considering an appeal to pathos- will it arouse sympathy and interest in your readers?

When you evaluate pathos, you are asking whether a piece of writing, a speech, etc. arouses the audience's interest and sympathy. You are looking for the elements that might cause the audience to feel (or not feel) an emotional connection to the content.

An author may use an audience's attitudes, beliefs, or values as a kind of foundation for his or her argument—a layer that the writer knows is already in place at the outset of the argument. So one of the questions you can ask yourself as you evaluate an author's use of pathos is whether there are points at which the writer or speaker makes statements assuming that the audience shares the same feelings or attitudes. For example, in an argument about the First Amendment, does the author write as if he or she takes it for granted that the audience is religious?

Manipulative Appeals to Pathos

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

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

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

Pathos and Kairos

Kairos means the right moment or, more simply, timeliness. Appeals to emotion are more likely to be effective work if they are also timely. For example, people were more likely to give to charities related to 9/11 soon after the tragedy than they are now. However, donations still rise nearer the actual date of September 11 each year. This is an intersection of kairos and pathos. In other words, people's emotions are heightened because of a particular time.

Timeliness and emotion might be tied to an annual event, such as sadness or depression on the anniversary of a loved one's death or pride in America on the 4th of July. Other examples could have much larger time frames, such as suspicion and fear of one's neighbors during the Communist witch hunts of the 1940s and 50s. Or they could be on a much smaller scale, like someone being more generous and cheerful than normal on Friday evenings. When writing and considering an appeal to pathos, also consider the timeliness. If you were writing a piece on why present-day Americans should fear a widespread viral infectious disease outbreak, it might seem untimely to use the example of smallpox, which was eradicated decades ago, especially since there have been more recent diseases that present greater threats to the limits of modern medicine.

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9.12: Ethos

Learning Objective

- Describe appeals to ethos
- Differentiate between types of rhetorical appeals

Appeals to Ethos

Ethos is the defining character or disposition of a person, community, or group. When we refer to ethos as a rhetorical appeal, we are referring to the ways in which credibility, or good character, is established and maintained. As a reader, viewer, or consumer, you need to be aware of the ways an individual or artifact manipulates ethos appeals to strengthen persuasiveness. As an author, you need to craft strong ethos appeals to highlight the credibility of your own work.

Good speakers or writers lead the audience to feel comfortable with their knowledge of a topic. The audience sees them as people worth listening to—clear or insightful thinkers, or at least people who are well informed and genuinely interested in the topic.

When you evaluate an appeal to ethos, you examine how successfully a speaker or writer establishes authority or credibility with his or her intended audience. You ask yourself what elements of the essay or speech would cause an audience to feel that the author is (or is not) trustworthy and credible.

Author's Background

The first and most obvious marker of ethos is the author's background. Ask yourself whether the writer's education or experience provides credibility to speak or write about this issue. Will the audience be persuaded that this individual has authority in this area? Evaluating an appeal to ethos should not stop there, however.

Evidence and Sources

You should also consider the evidence and sources used by the author. Investigate whether the writer or speaker has cited sources or provided opportunities for the audience to access further information on the issue. Does the writer provide complete and accurate information about the issue? Does the writer use the evidence fairly? Does he or she avoid selective use of evidence or other types of manipulation of data? Fair incorporation of credible evidence from authoritative, accessible sources builds ethos.

Acknowledgment of Opposition and Complexity

Finally, consider the author's willingness to examine the scope and depth of the issue, including arguments that may oppose the author's position. Does the writer demonstrate familiarity with different opinions and perspectives? Does the writer speak respectfully about people who may have different opinions and perspectives? Does the writer use unbiased language? Does the writer accurately convey the positions of people with whom he or she disagrees? Does the writer avoid oversimplification? Full, even-handed treatment of topics is a marker of ethos.

Manipulative Appeals to Ethos

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

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

Establishing Ethos

Establishing ethos in your own writing is all about using credibility—either your own or that of your sources—in order to be persuasive. Essentially, ethos is about believability. Will your audience find you believable? What can you do to ensure that they

do?

You can establish ethos—or credibility—in two basic ways: you can use or build your own credibility on a topic, or you can use credible sources, which, in turn, builds your credibility as a writer.

Credibility is extremely important in building an argument, so, even if you don't have a lot of built-in credibility or experience with a topic, it's important for you to work on your credibility by integrating the credibility of others into your argument.

Aristotle argued that ethos was the most powerful of the modes of persuasion, and while you may disagree, you can't discount its power. After all, think about the way advertisers use ethos to get us to purchase products. Taylor Swift sells us music, and LeBron James sells us basketball. Their fame, names, and expertise are selling us products.

With the power of ethos in mind, here are some strategies you can use to help build your ethos in your arguments.

? ? strategies for building ethos

If you have specific experience or education related to your issues, mention it in some way.

If you don't have specific experience or education related to your issue, make sure you find sources from authors who do. When you integrate that source information, it's best if you can address the credibility of your sources. When you have credible sources, you want to let your audience know about them. Introduce your sources with signal phrases that highlight their authority, such as, "Harvard Distinguished Professor of Philosophy Joseph Menson notes" or "According to a study by the University of Berkeley's School of Economics." Highlight any other factors about the source that might accentuate credibility, such as the nature, length, or size of research studies.

Use a reasoned tone that is appropriate to your writing situation and will make you sound credible as a writer. Controversial issues can often bring out some extreme emotions in us when we write, but we have to avoid sounding extreme, especially in academic arguments. You may not convince everyone to agree with you, but you at least need your audience to listen to what you have to say.

Avoid logical fallacies that misuse ethos appeals, such as ad hominem, false authority, guilt by association, poisoning the well, transfer fallacy, name-calling, plain folk, and testimonial.

Kairos and Ethos

You can also use kairos as a strategy for building ethos. You'll recall that *kairos* refers to a favorable moment for action. Most issues have energy or agency within certain time frames. Think about Martin Luther King, Junior's "I Have a Dream" speech. It was the right speech for the right time. Choosing to write about an issue that has current energy and interest contributes to your ethos by presenting you as an engaged, aware writer who is willing to tackle important issues in critical times.

Summarizing Rhetorical Appeals

Rhetorical appeals are powerful tools of persuasion for writers and speakers. Now that you have learned to recognize, evaluate, and establish those appeals, apply them to your own college work and keep these basic principles in mind:

1. Understand that appeals to logos are contextual and must be sufficient, typical, accurate, and relevant to be valid in an argument. Also, be aware that facts and data can be easily manipulated and misused.
2. Be aware of appeals to pathos as both reader and writer. As a reader, be aware of how a piece works to connect through emotions, attitudes, values, and/or beliefs rather than through logos and ethos. As a writer, be careful not to overly rely on appeals to emotion.
3. Establish ethos appeals by highlighting relevant education and experience, acknowledging opposition and complexity, and avoiding manipulative appeals.

✓ ✓ Watch It

Watch this video to see one student share an analysis of ethos, pathos, and logos in an article he read for class.

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

You can view the transcript for "Analyze This: Modes of Persuasion" here (opens in new window).

? ? Try It

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9.13: Introduction to Logical Fallacies

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

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

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

Watch It

This video introduces you to some common fallacies, which we'll examine in more detail soon.

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

You can view the transcript for "Critical Thinking Part 3: The Man Who Was Made of Straw" here (opens in new window).

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9.14: Common Logical Fallacies

Learning Objectives

- Explain common logical fallacies
- Differentiate between types of logical fallacies

A logical fallacy is a flaw in reasoning or a flawed structure that undermines the validity of an argument. A fallacious argument can make productive conversation impossible. Logical fallacies are often used by politicians and the media to fool people because they have the deceptive appearance of being reasonable—despite their exploitation of our emotional, intellectual, and psychological weaknesses. Having the ability to recognize fallacies in an argument is one way to reduce the likelihood of such occurrences in your own writing.

Watch It

This videos walks you through techniques for evaluating an argument and looks at some common fallacies.

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

You can view the transcript for "Evaluating an Argument" here (opens in new window).

Some of the most common types of logical fallacies are discussed below. Read each one carefully, then try to come up with your own example of how you've seen that fallacy. First are some fallacies that misuse appeals to logos or attempt to manipulate the logic of an argument:

Fallacies related to logos

Fallacy	Description	Example
Hasty generalization	jumping to conclusions based upon an unrepresentative sample or insufficient evidence.	"10 of the last 14 National Spelling Bee Champions have been Indian American. Indian Americans must all be great spellers!" OR Example: "Some teenagers in our community recently vandalized the park downtown. Teenagers are so irresponsible and destructive."
Appeal to ignorance—true believer's form	arguing along the lines that if an opponent can't prove something isn't the case, then it is reasonable to believe that it is the case; transfers the burden of proof away from the person making the claim (the proponent).	"You can't prove that extraterrestrials haven't visited earth, so it is reasonable to believe that they have visited earth."
Appeal to ignorance—skeptic's form	confusing absence of evidence with evidence of absence; assumes that if you cannot now prove something exists, then it is shown that it doesn't exist.	"There's no proof that starting classes later in the day will improve the performance of our high school students; therefore, this change in schedule will not work."
Begging the question	circular argument because the premise is the same as the claim that you are trying to prove.	"This legislation is sinful because it is the wrong thing to do."
False dilemma or false dichotomy	misuse of the either/or argument; presenting only two options when other choices exist	"Either we pass this ordinance or there will be rioting in the streets." OR " If you are not with us, you are against us."

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

Fallacies related to pathos

See below for the most common fallacies that misuse appeals to pathos, or emotion.

Fallacy	**Description**	**Example**
Appeal to fear	using scare tactics; emphasizing threats or exaggerating possible dangers.	“Without this additional insurance, you could find yourself broke and homeless.” OR “Elizabeth Smith doesn’t understand foreign policy. If you elect Elizabeth Smith as president, we will be attacked by terrorists.”
Appeal to guilt/appeal to pity	trying to evoke an emotional reaction that will cause the audience to behave sympathetically even if it means disregarding the issue at hand.	“I know I missed assignments, but if you fail me, I will lose my financial aid and have to drop out.”
Slippery Slope	making an unsupported or inadequately supported claim that “One thing inevitably leads to another.” This may be considered a fallacy of logos as well as pathos but is placed in this section because it often is used to evoke the emotion of fear.	“We can’t legalize marijuana; if we do, then the next thing you know people will be strung out on heroin.”

Bandwagon	The bandwagon fallacy is also sometimes called the “appeal to common belief” or “appeal to the masses” because it’s all about getting people to do or think something because “everyone else is doing it” or “everything else thinks this.”	“Everyone is getting tattoos in college, so you might as well do it too.”

Fallacies related to ethos

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

Fallacy	Description	Example
Ad Hominem	Attacking the person making an argument rather than the argument itself. Sometimes called name-calling or the personal-attack fallacy.	Of course that doctor advocates vaccination—he probably owns stock in a pharmaceutical company. OR Person 1: “I am for raising the minimum wage in our state.” Person 2: “She is for raising the minimum wage, but she is not even smart enough to run a business.”
False Authority	Relying on claims of expertise when the claimed expert (a) lacks adequate background/credentials in the relevant field, (b) departs in major ways from the consensus in the field, or (c) is biased, e.g., has a financial stake in the outcome.	Dr. X is an engineer, and he doesn’t believe in global warming.
Guilt by Association	Linking the person making an argument to an unpopular person or group.	My opponent is a card-carrying member of the K.K.K.

The first step to avoiding logical fallacies in your own writing is learning how to identify them in other writing. You can find examples of logical fallacies on the news, on the internet, and on the street. Sometimes these fallacies are egregious and obvious (think about the headlines you see in the tabloids), but other times the logical issues are less obvious.

In the following exercises, consider the fallacies you have learned about in this section. Try to apply those definitions to the following scenarios. Choose the fallacy that most accurately describes what’s going on in each statement.

? ? Try It

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✓ ✓ Watch It

In this video example, a student was asked to find logical fallacies in advertisements. Watch to see which fallacies he identifies, and consider if you’ve encountered media making similar arguments.

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

You can view the transcript for “Analyze This- Logical Fallacies” here (opens in new window).

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9.15: Spotting Logical Fallacies

Learning Objectives

- Evaluate logical fallacies in texts



Figure 1. Identifying logical fallacies is important as you analyze the credibility of the author and his or her argument.

When you evaluate an argument for logical fallacies, you consider what elements of the argument, if any, would cause an audience to believe that the argument is illogical or inappropriately manipulative. If you determine that these fallacies have been committed, you should question the credibility of the author and the legitimacy of the argument. If you employ these fallacies when making your own arguments, be aware that they may undermine or destroy your credibility.

Read the following passage and note where you see logical fallacies.

Passage: against the smoking ban

The University of Mississippi recently passed a policy banning smoking on campus. I am a smoker, and I have a lot of friends who are smokers, and we all agree that this policy should be overturned. This policy is framed in terms of health outcomes and promoting individual well-being, but the University has not instituted policies regarding many other behaviors related to health, such as exercising. Furthermore, the University does nothing to sanction other forms of air pollution, such as automobile exhaust.

Smoking is a right, and Americans have rights, so the smoking ban is wrong. What's next? Will we ban potato chips and Cokes on campus? Will we force-feed broccoli and carrots to first-year students? People eighteen years old and up are adults and have the ability to make their own decisions regarding their health and habits. The policy also states, "All members of the university community share in the responsibility for adhering to and enforcing this policy." That type of language asks students and faculty to be informants against each other.

A college campus is a place for free expression of ideas and behaviors. It's simple: either we are a freedom-loving campus or we aren't. I choose freedom, and I believe all of America's veterans would agree with me. Perhaps the Chancellor has an ulterior motive for instituting the ban and is using smokers as a scapegoat.

Each question below will show you a section from the passage. Decide which logical fallacy best applies to the statement, or select "no fallacy."

Try It

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Sample Assignment

Let's take a look at a hypothetical assignment to see if we can help Mateo to spot fallacies in his research. This is the assignment:

> For our next project, you will be required to write an argumentative essay on a topic of your choice. Ideally, your topic should be related to your major, as this will give you an opportunity to explore issues you are interested in.
>
> You must choose at least a relatively controversial issue because I want you to really investigate controversy and disagreement.

Your final essay should include at least six outside sources. Remember to look for sources that are credible and logical.

Mateo is a nursing major and has thought about what he might like to explore for his essay. He has decided he wants to write about the obesity epidemic in America.

His instructor is requiring some outside sources and Mateo has learned about the different kinds of sources he can use and what kinds of logical fallacies he should be aware of as he looks for quality, credible sources.

Mateo is ready to see if he can find the kinds of sources he needs and to make sure his sources avoid the logical fallacies. If Mateo uses sources that contain logical fallacies, he knows his credibility will be affected.

Mateo's First Source

Mateo found a documentary on obesity in America. He is not sure about its credibility, however, as he heard one person in the documentary say this:

> "As individuals, we need to address obesity. Since 1 in 3 Americans is expected to be obese in the coming years, Americans will be facing horrible, painful, difficult deaths associated with diseases caused by obesity."

What type of fallacy is demonstrated in this passage?

[reveal-answer q="839859"]Show Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="839859"]

Let's see what Mateo thinks:

"Hmm… This might be true, but it feels like this source is really focusing a lot on the horrible deaths.

I learned that the appeal to fear fallacy is one where a person is making a claim that is meant to be purposefully fearful and is usually exaggerated. I'm sure there can be some painful deaths associated with this disease, but I feel like it's exaggerated here.

I think this might be an appeal to fear fallacy."

[/hidden-answer]

Mateo's Second Source

Mateo found a blog post from a person who seems to be a doctor. The doctor seems to have the right credentials, but Mateo read this and had some questions.

> "Because children spend so much time playing video games, it is inevitable that they will become obese."

What type of fallacy is demonstrated in this passage?

[reveal-answer q="803041"]Show Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="803041"]

Let's see what Mateo thinks:

"I know for sure this issue is much more complicated than this. I've read some sources that point to things like the amount of sleep children get and the processed foods they often eat. I don't think you can say playing video games will result in obesity. Just because some children who play video games are obese, doesn't mean playing video games causes the problem.

This seems like a hasty generalization fallacy to me."

[/hidden-answer]

Mateo's Third Source

Mateo found another documentary that looked interesting. In the documentary, one of the experts had this to say about the causes of obesity in America.

> "It's plain and simple. The obesity crisis is caused by too much food or too little exercise—or both. There's not a lot of in between here."

What type of fallacy is demonstrated in this passage?

[reveal-answer q="803041"]Show Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="803041"]

Let's see what Mateo thinks:

"Since I've read information that says the obesity crisis may be more complex, I'm worried about the oversimplification here. It seems like we're getting an "either-or" choice here, but there could be other causes.

I think this is a false dilemma fallacy."

[/hidden-answer]

Mateo's Fourth Source

In one magazine article, Mateo found some information with an interview from a nutritionist who was making an argument that the chemicals and sugars put into processed foods were designed to make people eat more and would cause people to gain weight quickly. Later in the article, another expert disagreed and said this about the nutritionist:

> "Basically, this idea gives people a pass. This nutritionist is saying it's not your fault if you are obese that you have no responsibility in the matter. It's not all the food companies' fault."

What type of fallacy is demonstrated in this passage?

[reveal-answer q="803041"]Show Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="803041"]

Let's see what Mateo thinks:

"I feel like both sides make a good point, but the expert who disagreed really seemed to distort what the nutritionist was saying. The nutritionist didn't seem to be saying it is all the food companies' fault, just that things may be more complicated here. It feels like the second expert is really twisting the first argument.

I think this is a straw man fallacy, so I'll be careful what I use from this source."

[/hidden-answer]

Mateo's Fifth Source

Mateo found a helpful website that presented a lot of different sides to the issue. This seemed great, but he noticed he would have to be careful about what he used because some of the "experts" quoted on the site were not presenting themselves in a credible way. One expert had this to say:

> "The health 'experts' who point to processed foods as the root cause of this epidemic are missing the point and really are no better than the wacko 'experts' who tell us one minute that wine is good for us and the next minute it isn't."

What type of fallacy is demonstrated in this passage?

[reveal-answer q="803041"]Show Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="803041"]

Let's see what Mateo thinks:

"Wow! I was surprised to read an "expert" on this site essentially calling some people who have a different opinion on this issue "wackos." This is a real concern and is a classic logical fallacy. This person does not address the issue and just calls those who disagree names.

This seems like an ad hominem fallacy. It's clearly a personal attack against someone and does not address the issue."

[/hidden-answer]

Mateo's Sixth Source

Mateo conducted a personal interview with someone he thought might be a good resource, at least for one aspect of the debate. He interviewed a local activist who was working to bring local fruits and vegetables to poorer families in his community. This interview would provide an important perspective for his argumentative essay. However, he was worried when, at the end of the interview, the activist seemed to lose his focus and go off on a tangent.

> "If we don't fight against the big food companies and big agriculture, there is no telling where we might end up. If we keep going the direction we are going, we will end up with no choice, and pretty soon, we could have no food. When you are that specialized, you are just one step away from a blight that could lead to food shortages everywhere in the U.S."

What type of fallacy is demonstrated in this passage?

[reveal-answer q="803041"]Show Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="803041"]

Let's see what Mateo thinks:

"I really liked a lot of what this activist was saying, and it seems like he is doing great work to help bring local, fresh food to families who need it. But, I wonder about his logic in the last part of the interview. I understand that big agriculture is causing some problems, but this activist provided no evidence for this really big claim that one thing would lead to another, and we would have no food.

This feels like a slippery slope fallacy to me. I don't think I should make that claim in my own essay. It's doesn't make good sense."

[/hidden-answer]

Mateo's Seventh Source

Mateo found one more source. This was another documentary a friend had recommended on the issue of obesity in America. The documentary was interesting and made some good points, Mateo thought. But, parts of it felt a little too "conspiracy theory" like, and Mateo wasn't sure if he could really use this source. The narrator at one point said this about finding solutions to the obesity epidemic:

> "Our government officials are not going to help us fight the food companies that poison us with their chemicals. Our government officials take campaign contributions from these big companies. If you think you can trust your government official to stop big agriculture, think again. Our government is too much connected with these evil companies."

What type of fallacy is demonstrated in this passage?

[reveal-answer q="803041"]Show Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="803041"]

Let's see what Mateo thinks:

"I definitely understand the concern about how our government officials take campaign contributions from the very companies we need to regulate, but can you really say all government officials are taking money from these "evil" companies? I really need to see some evidence. This claim feels like a logical fallacy.

I need to look into this more. So, I can't trust a claim that doesn't address the issue and simply sidesteps by associating someone with someone I might have doubts about. When someone is making a claim about another person by associating that person with someone who is "bad" in some way or someone the audience wouldn't like, that is a guilt by association fallacy."

[/hidden-answer]

? ? Try It

Test your ability to spot logical fallacies in the following exericse.

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

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9.16: Introduction to Counterarguments

What you'll learn to do: evaluate strategies for rebuttal and refutation of counterargument



An integral part of composing a strong argument is including counterargument. This can be difficult, especially if a writer is arguing for a position s/he already agrees with. In such cases, writers can sometimes make good points to support their stances; however, their arguments are vulnerable unless they anticipate and address counterarguments. When a writer does this, it is often referred to as rebuttal or refutation. Some scholars of rhetoric differentiate the two words in terms of if you can actually disprove a claim or just argue against it; however, in this section, we will use the terms as basically interchangeable to help get you more used to their function in argument.

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9.17: Formula for Refutation and Rebuttal

Learning Objective

- Describe strategies for effective refutation and rebuttal

Counterargument

An integral part of composing a strong argument is including a counterargument. This can be difficult, especially if a writer is arguing for a position they already agree with. In such cases, writers can sometimes make good points to support their stances; however, their arguments are vulnerable unless they anticipate and address counterarguments. When a writer does this, it is often referred to as **rebuttal** or **refutation**. Some scholars of rhetoric differentiate the two words in terms of if you can actually disprove a claim or just argue against it; however, in this section, we will use the terms as basically interchangeable to help get you more used to their function in argument.

When writers are able to skillfully rebut or refute a view that runs counter to their claims, it strengthens their work. Rebuttal and refutation are common in all types of argument, including academic argument. As you complete more advanced work in college, you will be expected to address counterargument often. And while you might not always need to or be able to prove that other points of view are wrong, you may at least need to try to argue against them.

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

1. Accurately represent opposing viewpoints

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



Figure 1. Being aware and respectful of other people's viewpoints as you argue your own is important for your credibility as a writer. The "Coexist" word graphic tries to do just that- spread awareness and understanding for the beliefs and opinions of everyone.

2. Use a respectful, non-incendiary tone

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

3. Use reliable information in your rebuttal/refutation

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

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

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

Glossary

refutation: proving a claim is false; arguing against something

rebuttal: contradicting or opposing a claim

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9.18: Further Your Understanding- Refutation and Rebuttal

Learning Objectives

- Evaluate strategies for rebuttal and refutation of counterargument

Now let's take a look at examples of rebuttal and refutation and consider how students follow these guidelines to approach counterarguments to their viewpoints:

1. They accurately represent opposing viewpoints
2. They use a respectful, non-incendiary tone
3. They use reliable information
4. They use qualifying words

Felix is writing his argument paper on why his university should not have cut funding to the school's library. His arguable thesis reads as follows: Because Northern State University has a mission statement that includes becoming a Research 1 (R1) institution, full funding should be restored to the library to ensure faculty and students have adequate resources to enhance their research agendas.

Felix has done his research, and he knows that a couple of the main counterarguments are that the school needs funds to renovate the student union and to construct a new building for the Engineering Department. Thus, he can anticipate counterarguments and include them in his paper. While Felix cannot prove beyond doubt that the school should use more funding for the library instead of using it to address other needs, he can try to make the case.

Read over Felix's passage below to see how he strengthens his case, and note the annotations to help you see parts of the formula in action.

Download the PDF of these examples

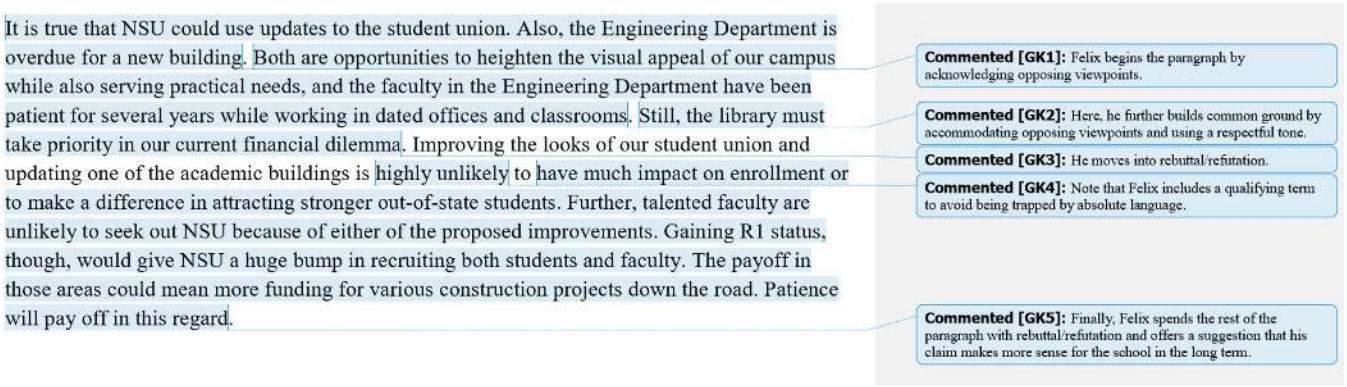


Figure 1. Felix's essay along with comments pointing out the way he addresses the counterargument. Notice how he uses qualifying language like "highly unlikely" instead of absolutes.

Now let's take a look at another example:

Janae is also writing her argument paper on why NSU should not have cut funding to the library. During her research, though, she found evidence that some people on campus feel that the library has been careless with previous funding by mismanaging a $200,000 direct donation. Janae looked closer into the library budget, however, and found that the $200,000 donation was used to establish an emergency account for future years when funding did not meet their anticipated needs. Janae included as a source an editorial from the school newspaper written by a non-library faculty member who argued that since the library squandered $200,000, it should lose funding in favor of the student union and new Engineering building.

See Janae's example in the passage below, and again, read over the annotations to see how she uses parts of the formula:

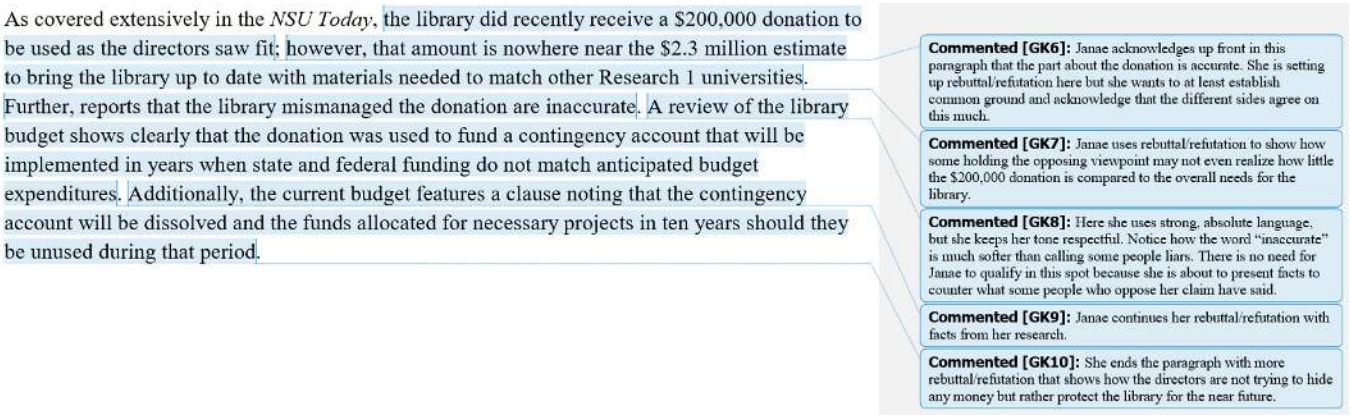


Figure 2. Janae is respectful, yet direct, in her approach to refuting the claims that the library mismanaged donated funds.

Notice how each student has a different goal and approach, yet they both still use parts of the formula to help them accomplish their rhetorical aims.

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9.19: Organizing an Argument

Learning Objectives

- Examine methods for organizing an argument, such as Toulmin's schema

Organizing the Argument

There are several effective ways to organize an argument so that you have room for rebuttal. Using the block method, you could present your ideas first, then refute the counterarguments towards the end of your essay, before the conclusion. You could also use incorporate the rebuttal throughout the entire essay, by introducing the possible counterargument to each of your claims and the rebuttal in each body paragraph.

No matter which method of organization you use, the important thing is to systematically address the counterarguments to your viewpoints and provide support for your claims. For example, you could follow the Aristotelian, or classical, argumentative essay framework, in which you present your side of the issue first, then address the opposition, then provide evidence supporting your side of the issue. It looks like this:

1. **Introduce your issue.** At the end of your introduction, most professors will ask you to present your thesis. The idea is to present your readers with your main point and then dig into it.
2. **Present your case** by explaining the issue in detail and why something must be done or a way of thinking is not working. This will take place over several paragraphs.
3. **Address the opposition.** Use a few paragraphs to explain the other side. Refute the opposition one point at a time.
4. **Provide your proof.** After you address the other side, you'll want to provide clear evidence that your side is the best side.
5. **Present your conclusion.** In your conclusion, you should remind your readers of your main point or thesis and summarize the key points of your argument. If you are arguing for some kind of change, this is a good place to give your audience a call to action. Tell them what they could do to make a change.

Toulmin's Schema

The Toulmin method, developed by philosopher Stephen Toulmin**,** is another tool that's helpful in analyzing an argument and identifying the rebuttal.

There are six elements for analyzing or presenting arguments that are important to the Toulmin method. When you're analyzing arguments as a reader, you can look for these elements to help you understand the argument and evaluate its validity. When you're writing an argument, you can include these same elements to ensure your audience will see the validity of your claims. You can also use these elements to help outline your argument in the early stages of your writing.

These are the six parts of an argument in 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."



Figure 1. Step 2 of Toulmin's schema is using data to support the claim(s) that were made in Step 1.

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 (backing, rebuttal, and qualifier) may not be needed in all arguments.

Watch It

The following video introduces the components of the Toulmin model.

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

You can view the transcript for "The Toulmin Model of Argumentation" here (download).

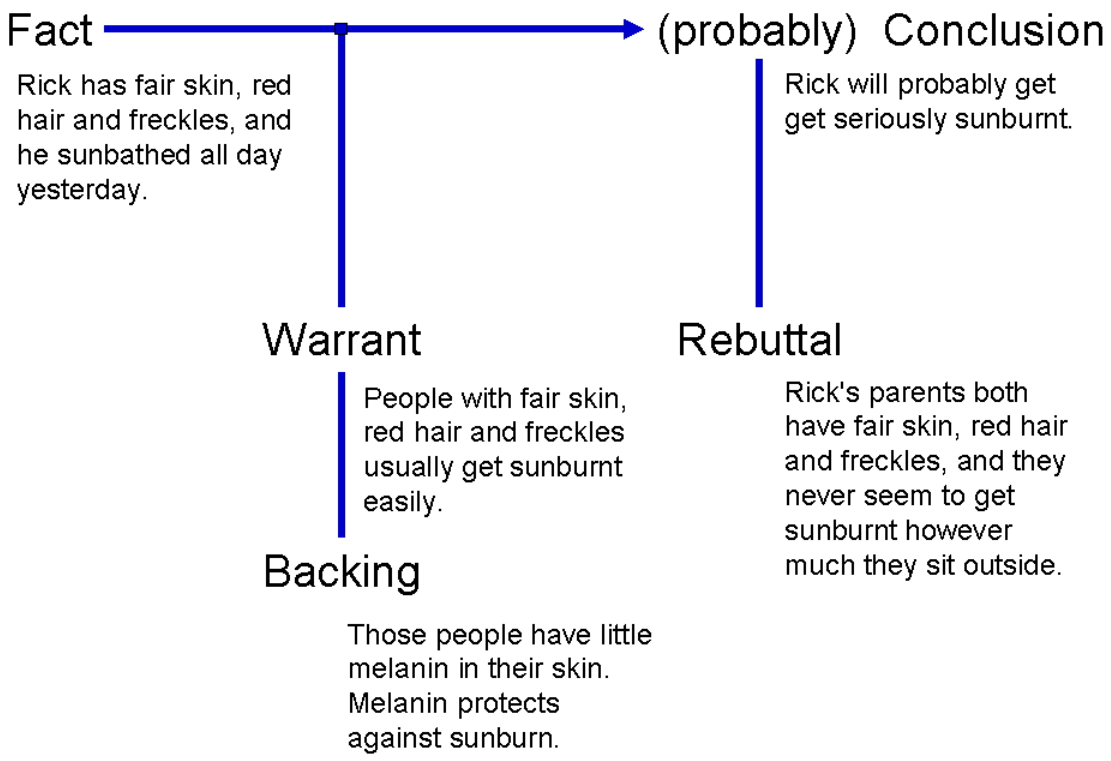


Figure 2. This image shows how conclusions are reached, using the Toulmin model of arguments.

? ? Toulmin's Method Examples

Example 1

Suppose you watch a commercial 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 show your real smile."
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 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 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?

? ? Sample Essay

Now that you have had the chance to learn about Toulmin, it's time to see what a Toulmin argument might look like. Here you'll see a sample argumentative essay, written according to MLA formatting guidelines, with a particular emphasis on Toulmin elements.

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9.20: Putting It Together- Academic Argument

Now that you have learned the keys to a successful argument, apply them in your own writing. As you compose an argument, remember to do the following:

- Construct a thesis that is focused, debatable, assertive, reasonable, and able to be supported with evidence;
- Avoid logical fallacies, such as post hoc, straw man, false dichotomy, bandwagon, ad hominem, hasty generalization, slippery slope, and begging the question;
- Build common ground with readers, paying attention to tone, language, and rhetorical appeals;
- Incorporate rebuttal and refutation, fairly acknowledging counterargument while still arguing the strengths of your claim.

Remember that academic argument, as well as effective persuasion in the professional and personal arenas, is guided by careful research and reasoned discourse.



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9.21: Discussion- Logical Fallacy Advertisement

STEP 1: First, pick a product or service to advertise. It could be a fictitious object, or something real—products such as food items, cleaning or office supplies, furniture, tickets to an event or venue, or services such as tutoring help, lawn care, painting, cleaning, etc.

Create an advertisement for your product using a minimum of 3 fallacies you learned about in the module. You won't explicitly say what fallacies you are incorporating in your ad, but you should make it obvious enough so that others can easily tell that you are exaggerating or manipulating claims. This can be a print advertisement, a radio advertisement (no longer than 1 minute), or a video advertisement (no longer than 2 minutes). You may use whatever format or program you'd like (PhotoShop, Microsoft PowerPoint, Prezi, Canva, YouTube, etc.). Your submission should include links to all of the resources you used to develop your advertisement.

STEP 2: Post your advertisement to the discussion forum.

STEP 3: Respond in two separate posts to two classmates (in at least 75 words). Try to guess which fallacies they included and why you think that. Elaborate on their post by thinking of other examples of those same logical fallacies or other ways they could include even more logical fallacies in a similar advertisement.

STEP 4: At the end of the week, return to your original post and let everyone know which logical fallacies you included in your advertisement.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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14.1: Why It Matters- The Research Process—Finding and Evaluating Sources

Why learn to find and evaluate sources?

Have you heard about the dangers of dihydrogen monoxide? Did you know that it is commonly found in many household products, is readily available, but can also cause severe burns, erosion, corrosion, and is the major component in acid rain? Jennifer Abel from *Consumer Affairs* tells us, "search online for information about dihydrogen monoxide, and you'll find a long list of scary and absolutely true warnings about it: used by the nuclear power industry, vital to the production of everything from pesticides to Styrofoam, present in tumors removed from cancer patients, and guaranteed fatal to humans in large quantities."

Read more about the dangers at this DHMO website.

Are you starting to feel like something is not quite right about this information? What exactly *is* DHMO? How can it be found so easily, yet pose so many risks? If you haven't tried it already, do a quick Google search for dihydrogen monoxide. Aside from the dhmo.org website, what other search results do you see?



Figure 1. A funny meme depicting how easy it is to misrepresent information and give people the wrong impression. While Obama did prohibit waterboarding as a torture technique, banning water in schools would have obvious disastrous consequences.

Source Reliability

You probably found the Wikipedia page titled "Dihydrogen Monoxide Hoax" or a Snopes.com article debunking the circulating myths. It turns out that dihydrogen monoxide is really just a fancy way of referencing water, or H_2O, and is certainly something we don't want to ban or protest against. This new context about the real meaning of DHMO certainly provides amusing insight into the "horrors" you read about on the DHMO website: Does it enhance athletic performance? Can it improve your marriage? What are its overdose symptoms?



Nowadays, we are surrounded with so much readily available information at our fingertips, that it is sometimes hard to differentiate fact from fiction. Of course, not everything you read on the internet is true, but how do you know what's a good source to rely on for personal information in your life? How about for an academic essay?

In this section, you'll learn about tools you can use and steps you can follow in order to find credible information. You'll learn how to find information, evaluate it, integrate it, and document it correctly for your research paper.

These skills will help you excel in your academic writing, but also pave the way for a more critical eye when hearing or reading about any newfound information.

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14.2: Introduction to Research

What you'll learn to do: describe research writing and the importance of starting with a research question



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

Creating a research paper can be divided into three main steps: finding sources, evaluating sources, and integrating sources. Before we start those other steps, we first need to establish a research question and know how to begin our search. In this section, we'll better understand what research writing is and how to narrow down a topic to get started.

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14.3: What is Research?

Learning Objectives

- Explain the essential components of research writing

What is Research?

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



Figure 1. Research means searching for the answer to your research question and compiling the information you find in a useful and meaningful way.

First, research is about acquiring new information or new knowledge, which means that it always begins from a gap in your knowledge—that is, something you don't know. More importantly, research is always goal-directed: that is, it always begins from a specific question you need to answer (a specific gap in your body of information that you need to fill) in order to accomplish some particular goal. This **research question** is the statement of the thing you don't know that motivates your research.

Sometimes the answer to your question already exists in exactly the form you need. For example,

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

For the purposes of this course, **research** is the process of finding the information needed to answer your research question and then deriving or building the answer from the information you found.

Research Writing

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

One way to consider this distinction is to think of research as the goal-directed process of gathering information and building the answer to a research question, and source-based writing to refer to the many other types of information gathering and source-based writing one might do.



Figure 2. In true research-based writing, you begin with a research question and go hunt for the answer.

One important indicator of the difference between research and other source-based writing tasks is when in the process you develop the thesis (main point) of your paper. In a research project, you begin with a question, gather the data from which you will derive or build the answer to the question, build the answer, and then state your answer in a single sentence. This one-sentence statement of your answer to your research question then becomes your thesis statement and serves as the main point of your paper.

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

Being aware of this distinction is helpful, as it can shape the way you approach your writing assignments, whether they be true research papers or source-based writing tasks. The work processes that lead to efficiency and success with research projects are different from the work processes you may have used successfully for other types of source-based papers. Both offer valuable learning experiences, but it is important to understand which type of assignment you are being asked to do so that you can plan your work.

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

Research Writing

We defined research as the physical process of gathering information plus the mental process of deriving the answer to your research question from the information you gather. **Research writing**, then, is the process of sharing the answer to your research question along with the evidence on which your answer is based, the sources you use, and your own reasoning and explanation. The essential components or building blocks of research writing are the same no matter what kind of question you are answering or what kind of reader you are assuming as you share your answer.

The Essential Building Blocks of Research Writing

These guidelines will help you as you approach research writing.

1. Begin with a question to which you don't know the answer and that can't be answered just by going to the appropriate reference source. That is, begin from a research question, not a homework question.

1. Decide what kind of information or data will be needed in order to build the answer to the question.
2. Gather information and/or collect data.
3. Work with the information/data to construct your answer.

2. Do real research
    1. This is the *research process*, and it happens before you begin to write your paper. Without research, you can't have research writing, so don't shortchange this part of the process.
3. Create a one-sentence answer to your research question.
    1. This will become the thesis statement/main point/controlling idea of your research paper.
4. Share your answer to research questions in a way that makes it believable, understandable, and usable for your readers. To do this:
    1. Include plentiful and well-chosen examples from the data/information you gathered
    2. Indicate the validity of your data by accurately reporting your research method (field or lab research)
    3. Indicate the quality of your information by accurately citing your sources (source-based research)

? ? ? Try It

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Learning Objectives

homework question: a question for which a definite answer exists and can easily be found by consulting the appropriate reference source

research: the physical process of gathering information plus the mental process of deriving the answer to your research question from the information you gathered

research question: a question that can be answered through a process of collecting relevant information and then building the answer from the relevant information

research writing: the process of sharing the answer to your research question along with the evidence on which your answer is based, the sources you use, and your own reasoning and explanation

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14.4: The Research Process

Learning Objectives

- Explain the research process

The Research Process



Figure 1. Although there is a suggested and maybe even logical sequence of steps in the Research Process, don't feel the need to completely finish one step before moving on to the next. As you gain more experience and practice, these steps will become more fluid and flexible.

The research process is not a linear process in which you must complete step one before moving on to step two or three. You don't need to put off writing your paper until you've gathered all of your sources, in fact, you may want to start writing as soon as possible and adjust your search, thesis statement, and writing as you continue to work through the research process. For that reason, consider the following research process as a guideline to follow as your work through your paper. You can (and should!) revisit the steps as many times as needed to create a finished product.

1. **Decide on the topic**, or carefully consider the topic that has been assigned.
2. **Narrow the topic** in order to narrow search parameters. When you go to a professional sports event, concert, or event at a large venue, your ticket has three items on it: the section, the row, and the seat number. You go in that specific order to pinpoint where you are supposed to sit. Similarly, when you decide on a topic, you often start large and must narrow the focus; you move from a general subject, to a more limited topic, to a specific focus or issue. The reader does not want a cursory look at the topic; they wants to walk away with some newfound knowledge and deeper understanding of the issue. For that, details are essential. For example, suppose you want to explore the topic of autism. You might move from:
    - **General topic:** special needs in a classroom
    - **Limited topic:** autistic students in a classroom setting
    - **Specific focus:** how technology can enhance learning for autistic students
3. **Do background research**, or pre-research. Begin by figuring out what you know about the topic, and then fill in any gaps you may have on the basics by looking at more general sources. This is a place where general Google searches, Wikipedia, or another encyclopedia-style source will be most useful. Once you know the basics of the topic, start investigating that basic information for potential sources of conflict. Does there seem to be disagreement about particular aspects of the topic? For instance, if you're looking at a Civil War battle, are there any parts of the battle that historians seem to argue about? Perhaps some point to one figure's failing as a reason for a loss, and some point instead to another figure's spectacular success as a reason his side won?
4. **Create a research question.** Once you have narrowed your topic so that it is manageable, it is time to generate research questions about your topic. Create thought-provoking, open-ended questions, ones that encourage debate. Decide which question addresses the issue that concerns you—that will be your main research question. Secondary questions will address the who, what, when, where, why, and how of the issue. As an example:
    - **Main question:** Does the media stereotype women in such a way that women do not believe they can be leaders?

- **Secondary questions:** How can more women get involved in politics? Why aren't more women involved in politics? What role do media play in discouraging women from being involved? How many women are involved in politics at a state or national level? How long do they typically stay in politics, and for what reasons do they leave?

5. Next, "answer" the main research question to create a **working thesis statement**. The thesis statement is a single sentence that identifies the topic and shows the direction of the paper while simultaneously allowing the reader to glean the writer's stance on that topic. A working thesis performs four main functions:
    1. Narrows the subject to the single point that readers should understand
    2. Names the topic and makes a significant assertion about that topic
    3. Conveys the purpose
    4. Provides a preview of how the essay will be arranged (usually).
6. **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?
7. **Create a bibliography** as you gather and reference sources. Make sure you are using credible and relevant sources. It's always a good idea to utilize reference management programs like Zotero, Mendeley, or EndNote so you can keep track of your research and citations while you are working and searching, instead of waiting until the end.
8. **Write and edit your paper!** Finally, you'll incorporate the research into your own writing and properly cite your sources.

? ? ? Try It

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Walking, Talking, Cooking, and Eating

During this module, we'll examine the research writing process through the example of Marvin, a student at Any University who gets advice from an online professor on writing his research paper. You'll read bits and pieces of their dialogue throughout the module and come to understand how the research writing process can be compared to ***walking***, ***talking, cooking***, and ***eating***. In the following dialogue, consider the professor's recommendations to Marvin about how to think more deeply about his assignment and what angle to take for his paper. Just like Martin, you should begin your research by thinking about the importance of your topic and what about it you find interesting. It also helps to talk with someone about your paper, whether that be a friend, family member, classmate, teaching assistant, librarian, or professor.

? ? Getting Started: Walking to Sources

Marvin, a college student at Any University, sits down at his computer. He logs in to the "Online Professor," an interactive advice site for students. After setting up a chat, he begins tapping the keys.

Marvin: Hi. I'm a student in the physician assistant program. The major paper for my health and environment class is due in five weeks, and I need some advice. The professor says the paper has to be 6–8 pages, and I have to cite and document my sources.

O-Prof: Congratulations on getting started early! Tell me a bit about your assignment. What's the purpose? Who's it intended for?

Marvin: Well, the professor said it should talk about a health problem caused by water pollution and suggest ways to solve it. We've read some articles, plus my professor gave us statistics on groundwater contamination in different areas.

O-Prof: What's been most interesting so far?

Marvin: I'm amazed at how much water pollution there is. It seems like it would be healthier to drink bottled water, but the plastic bottles hurt the environment.

O-Prof: Who else might be interested in this?

Marvin: Lots of people are worried about bad water. I might even get questions about it from my clients once I finish my program.

O-Prof: OK. So what information do you need to make a good recommendation?

Marvin thinks for a moment.

Marvin: I don't know much about the health problems caused by contaminated drinking water. Whether the tap water is safe depends on where you live, I guess. The professors talked about arsenic poisoning in Bangladesh, but what about the water in the U.S.? For my paper, maybe I should focus on a particular location? I also need to find out more about what companies do to make sure bottled water is pure.

O-Prof: Good! Now that you know what you need to learn, you can start looking for sources.

Marvin: When my professors talk about sources, they usually mean books or articles about my topic. Is that what you mean?

O-Prof: Books and articles do make good sources, but you might think about sources more generally as "forms of meaning you use to make new meaning." It's like your bottled water. The water exists already in some location but is processed by the company before it goes to the consumer. Similarly, a source provides information and knowledge that you process to produce new meaning, which other people can then use to make their own meaning.

A bit confused, Marvin scratches his head.

Marvin: I thought I knew what a source was, but now I'm not so sure.

O-Prof: Think about it. Sources of meaning are literally everywhere—for example, your own observations or experiences, the content of other people's brains, visuals and graphics, experiment results, TV and radio broadcasts, and written texts. And, there are many ways to make new meaning from sources. You can give an oral presentation, design a web page, paint a picture, or write a paper.

Marvin: I get it. But how do I decide which sources to use for my paper?

O-Prof: It depends on the meaning you want to make, which is why it's *so* important to figure out the purpose of your paper and who will read it. You might think about using sources as *walking, talking, cooking, and eating.* These aren't the only possible metaphors, but they do capture some important things about using sources.

Marvin: Hey! I thought we were talking about writing!

O-Prof: We are, but these metaphors can shed some light on writing with sources. Let's start with the first one: *walking.* To use sources well, you first have to go where they are. What if you were writing an article on student clubs for the school newspaper? Where would you go for information?

Marvin: I'd probably walk down to the Student Activities office and get some brochures about student clubs. Then I'd attend a few club meetings and maybe interview the club leaders and some members about their club activities.

O-Prof: OK, so you'd ***walk*** to where you could find relevant information for your article. That's what I mean by ***walking***. You have to get to the sources you need.

Marvin: Wait a minute. For the article on student clubs, maybe I could save some walking. Maybe the list of clubs and the club descriptions are on the Student Activities web page. That'd save me a trip.

O-Prof: Yes, the Internet has cut down on the amount of physical walking you need to do to find sources. Before the Internet, you had to either travel to a source's physical location, or bring that source to your location. Think about your project on bottled water. To get information about the quality of a city's tap water in the 1950s, you would have had to figure out who'd have that information, then call or write to request a copy or ***walk*** to wherever the information was stored. Today, if you type "local water quality" into Google, the Environmental Protection Agency page comes up as one of the first hits. Its home page links to water quality reports for local areas.

Marvin pauses for a second before responding, thinking he's found a good short cut for his paper.

To be continued. . .

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14.5: Narrowing the Topic

Learning Objectives

- Describe strategies for narrowing a topic for a research paper

Types of Research Papers

Most research assignments ask you to engage in one of two approaches:

1. Explore and evaluate (present an analysis)
2. Persuade (present an argument)

The sections below will give you more information about each approach. Your professor may allow you to choose between these strategies or may ask you to use only one. If you're not sure which type you should use, be sure to ask!

Analytic Papers

In a paper that explores and evaluates, you may present a specific analysis of a literary text, examine how a historical figure came to his or her beliefs, or analyze how changes in a particular animal's habitat have affected its breeding patterns.

Your purpose isn't to rebut another critic's reading of that text, challenge another writer's analysis of that historical figure's growth, or disprove another experimenter's theorem. Instead, your focus is on researching and presenting your own analysis of a set of materials or experiments.

Examples of Analytical Questions

- In what way is Coleridge's poem, "Rime of the Ancient Mariner," an extended metaphor of colonial exploration?
- Why was Martin Luther King, Jr.'s stance against the Vietnam War late in his life so controversial in the civil rights movement?
- What methods are available to governments and zoos to ensure the preservation of endangered tigers?

Argumentative Papers

An argumentative paper takes a position on a debatable question. Here, you review the various arguments surrounding that question and present material arguing for a particular answer.

A good argument paper not only fairly and clearly presents the views of those with whom you disagree, but also points out where and how you believe those arguments are flawed.

In this paper, you need to show why your argument presents a stronger response to the question than the responses of others who might disagree with your position.

Examples of Argumentative Questions

- Should employers be allowed to monitor the content of their employees' email and internet browsing?
- Should the U.S. government subsidize the development of ethanol-based biofuels?

Planning

Patience is critical to constructing and finishing a solid research paper. Give yourself time. In some cases, when you have a class project, a college research paper requires ten to fourteen weeks of work, but you may take a course requiring a research paper in a shorter time frame.

Click below to view the timeline for research papers over the course of eight weeks. Please note that some research papers are written in an even shorter time frame. If that's the case for you, you'll want to adjust your schedule accordingly.

Remember, even if you have a shorter time frame, you should not leave out the steps of a good process!

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Narrowing the Topic

Suppose you want to write your research paper on World War II. The material written on World War II has filled whole libraries, so you obviously won't be able to complete a research paper on *all* of WWII in just a few weeks or months.

First-level Narrowing

The first question to ask yourself is: "What aspect of WWII am I interested in understanding better?"

- Strategies?
- Weapons?
- Major characters?
- Specific battles?

Let's say you want to understand more about WWII weapons. OK, what types of weapons were used in WWII?

Second-level Narrowing

You consult a couple of encyclopedia articles on WWII weapons and discover that the general categories of weapons at that time were tanks, artillery, and firearms.

Each of these categories includes several dozen to several hundred specific weapons.

Can you cover all of these in one paper? Sure, if you write a sentence on each one. But then you're not really writing a research paper; you're writing a list. You need to go deep, not wide. No one, including you, wants to read a paper that treats a great deal of material in a very superficial manner.

Third-level Narrowing

You continue to survey general information sources on WWII weapons. You read a little bit on each of the categories listed in the Second-Level Narrowing tab and decide that the one you are most interested in is artillery. OK, but what kind?

- Surface-to-air missiles (SAMS)?
- Machine guns?
- Anti-aircraft guns (Flaks)?

As you continue to poke around, you learn that air defense tactics and the various models of anti-aircraft guns were extremely critical in various battles, so you decide to focus on that.

Fourth-level Narrowing

Look at your previous terminology: "critical in various battles." Do you think you'll be able to do a paper on the role of anti-aircraft guns in all battles of WWII? No, you won't. So the next logical step is to look at encyclopedias and websites to determine what were some of the major battles of WWII where the use of anti-aircraft guns were critical.

You remember hearing something about "the Blitz" of London, so you look that up and decide to focus on the role of anti-aircraft guns in defending London from German aerial attacks.

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? ? Preliminary Search Tips

Even when you are early in the stages of your paper, just deciding on a topic, you'll need to use outside sources to help you decide how to narrow your focus. At this stage, you should bookmark and save websites or sources you think will be useful later on, but the focus at this point will be gathering general information to see what jumps out to you as interesting or helpful. Below are some preliminary search tips:

1. It is okay to start with Wikipedia as a reference, but do not use it as an official source. Look at the links and references at the bottom of the page for more ideas.
2. Use "Ctrl+F" to find certain words within a webpage in order to jump to the sections of the article that interest you.

3. Use Google Advanced Search to be more specific in your search. You can also use tricks to be more specific within the main Google Search Engine:
    1. Use quotation marks to narrow your search from just tanks in WWII to “Tanks in WWII” or “Tanks” in “WWII”.
    2. Find specific types of websites by adding “site:.gov” or “site:.edu” or “site:.org”. You can also search for specific file types like “filetype:.pdf”.
4. Click on “Search Tools” under the search bar in Google and select “Any time” to see a list of options for time periods to help limit your search. You can find information just in the past month or year, or even for a custom range.

This first stage of gathering information is sometimes called pre-research. Watch this video to learn more:

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

You can view the transcript for “Doing Some Background Checks on Your Research” here (download).

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14.6: Research Questions

Learning Objectives

- Examine effective research questions

Now that you have seen how to narrow a topic, it's time to see how you can take your topic and develop a good research question.



Figure 1. The "how", "why", and "what" questions give ample room for elaboration as you write and research your topic. Most of the time they are very difficult to answer with a single word or sentence.

Here are some ideas for your research question

- **How questions:** How were anti-aircraft guns used in the defense of London through the Blitz?
- **Why questions:** Why were anti-aircraft guns initially limited in their ability to defend London during the Blitz?
- **What questions:** What were the initial and later strategies for deploying anti-aircraft guns during the Blitz of London?

As you continue to work, you might find yourself combining some of these into a single question. For example, "What changes were made in the technology and deployment of anti-aircraft guns during the Blitz that allowed them to be used more effectively as the Blitz wore on?"

Notice that the question above allows you to go deep with a single, limited topic and master some important information in one area of weapons and those weapons used in WWII. By the time you're finished writing this paper, you'll be a semi-expert on the Blitz of London and the use of anti-aircraft guns by the British during that period.

No matter what your topic is, you can follow the same four-level process in narrowing your topic and developing your research question.

Try following these steps once you have settled on a general topic:

1. How many different aspects of this topic am I able to list? You may want to consult encyclopedias or web pages to get you started here if you are stuck. Write down the list.
2. Of those aspects listed above, which am I most interested in learning more about? Write down one or two and follow steps 3 and 4 for each one. You may find that you come up with more than one interesting research question. Then you'll need to choose!
3. Of the aspect that most interests me, what elements of it am I able to find information about in an encyclopedia or on a web page? (Notice that you may need to repeat this step more than once to really get down to a workable limited focus.) Make a list.
4. What relationships between these elements are suggested by combining them using what, when, where, why, or how words?

Change can be a good thing.

Remember, too, that a research question is a beginning point to writing your paper. Once you start digging more deeply into the research process and start drafting your paper, you may find that the focus of your question shifts somewhat. Maybe you thought you were going to do a **Why** question, but as you research, you find that the most interesting material really relates to a **How** question. That's OK! You're not absolutely committed to your original writing and focus.

Keep in mind, though, that you don't want to go off into another direction entirely (for example, switching from a focus on the use of anti-aircraft guns during the Blitz to the process and perils of evacuating the children of London during the Blitz). Tweak, but don't put yourself in a position where you need to start all over by changing your entire direction. You'll find lots of interesting material related to your topic. Rather than changing direction entirely, however, save some of that intriguing but different material for a future paper that examines another aspect of your topic.

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14.7: Introduction to Finding Sources

What you'll learn to do: evaluate methods for finding various types of sources using search engines and databases



Have you ever heard a song, made a mental note to look it its name, but then forgot all of the words? You remember wanting to hear it again and add it to your workout playlist, but all you remember is a short bit of the tune? How did go about finding the song?

Chances are, you had to:

- ***Investigate*** to find out the song's melody. Maybe you hummed the tune for a few friends, or remember that it sounded somewhat similar to another song you already heard, and used that song as a reference point.
- ***Investigate*** to find out the song's title (E.T., The Lazy Song, Born This Way, Latinoamérica).
- ***Investigate*** to find out who performed the song (Lady Gaga, Bruno Mars, Katy Perry, Maroon 5, Kanye West, Calle 13).
- ***Investigate*** to find out what CD that song was on (Teenage Dream, Doo-Wops & Hooligans, Born This Way, Entren Los Que Quieran) and if there are other songs you might also enjoy.
- ***Investigate*** to find out where you can purchase or download the song for the best price.

You can't (and won't) get what you want without ***investigating***. And it's really no different with researching. Investigating is essential to your research because the questions you ask will help create a convincing and compelling argument. Researching will take time and effort, so it pays to take the time upfront to learn about the best strategies for maximizing your research. The wrong approach can waste your time and effort and result in a weak paper.

So, where do you start investigating? First, you'll want to follow the research process. Once you have a good understanding of your research assignment and goals, you can begin to search for the right sources. In this section, you'll learn how to use search engines and library databases to find scholarly articles you'll need to write a top-notch paper.

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14.8: Finding Sources

Learning Objectives

- Describe strategies for beginning Internet research, including using Google Scholar

Beginning the Search

You probably shouldn't start your research by just typing your research question into Google 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. An abstract is a brief summary of a longer academic journal article.

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 aspects that would represent a *national problem*.

When you are researching on the web, search engines are effective tools for locating web pages relevant to your research, and they can save you time and frustration. However, for searches to yield the best results, you need a strategy and some basic knowledge of how search engines work. Without a clear search strategy, using a search engine is like wandering aimlessly in a field of corn looking for the perfect ear.

Watch It

Click on the video below to learn more techniques for effective Internet searching.

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290977906915703838/embed

Beginning your research with Google or another search engine is an easy way to quickly get an overview of your topic. Even more effective than Google Search is Google Advanced Search, and even better than that for academic resources is Google Scholar. Let's consider Marvin's experience.

Finding Sources

Marvin, a college student at Any University, continues his discussion with the online professor about where to find sources.

Marvin: So can I just use Google or Bing to find sources?

O-Prof: Internet search engines can help you find sources, but they aren't always the best route to getting to a good source. Try entering the search term "bottled water quality" into Google, without quotation marks around the term. How many hits do you get?

Marvin types it in.

Marvin: 94,000,000. That's pretty much what I get whenever I do an Internet search. Too many results.

O-Prof: Which is one of the drawbacks of using only Internet search engines. The Internet may have cut down on the physical *walking* needed to find good sources, but it's made up for the time savings by pointing you to more places than you could possibly go! But there are some ways you can narrow your search to get fewer, more focused results.

Marvin: Yeah, I know. Sometimes I add extra words in and it helps weed down the hits.

O-Prof: By combining search terms with certain words or symbols, you can control what the search engine looks for. If you put more than one term into a Google search box, the search engine will only give you sites that include both terms, since it uses the Boolean operator AND as the default for its searches. If you put OR between two search terms, you'll end up getting even more results, because Google will look for all websites containing either of the terms. Using a minus sign in front of a term eliminates things you're not interested in. It's the Google equivalent of the Boolean operator NOT. Try entering bottled water quality health -teeth.

Marvin types in the words, remembering suddenly that he has to make an appointment with the dentist.

Marvin: 42,000,000 hits.

O-Prof: Still a lot. You can also put quotation marks around groups of words and the search engine will look only for sites that contain all of those words in the exact order you've given. And you can combine this strategy with the other ways of limiting your search. Try "bottled water quality" (in quotation marks) health -teeth.

Marvin: 950,000. That's a little better.

O-Prof: Now try adding what type of website you are looking for, maybe a .gov or an .edu. Try typing "bottled water quality" heath -teeth site:.edu

Marvin: Okay, under 17,000 results now.

O-Prof: Yes, a definite improvement. Sometimes you want to be careful though not to narrow it so far that you miss useful sources. You have to play around with your search terms to get to what you need. A bigger problem with Internet search engines, though, is that they won't necessarily lead you to the sources considered most valuable for college writing.

Marvin: My professor said something about using peer-reviewed articles in scholarly journals.

O-Prof: Professors will often want you to use such sources. Articles in scholarly journals are written by experts; and if a journal's peer-reviewed, its articles have been screened by other experts (the authors' peers) before being published.

Marvin: So that would make peer-reviewed articles pretty reliable. Where do I find them?

O-Prof: Google's got a specialized search engine, Google Scholar, that will search for scholarly articles that might be useful. But often the best place is the college library's bibliographic databases.

To be continued. . .

Google Scholar

Google Scholar is Google's academic search engine that searches across scholarly literature. It has extensive coverage, retrieving information from academic publishers, professional organizations, university repositories, professional websites, and government websites.

The benefits of searching within Google Scholar are numerous, but a search solely using Google Scholar will be insufficient for your research. Consider the following benefits of Google Scholar and library databases.

Google Scholar benefits	Library Databases benefits
• Like other Google search products, 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 Google Scholar sidebar.	

Google Scholar benefits

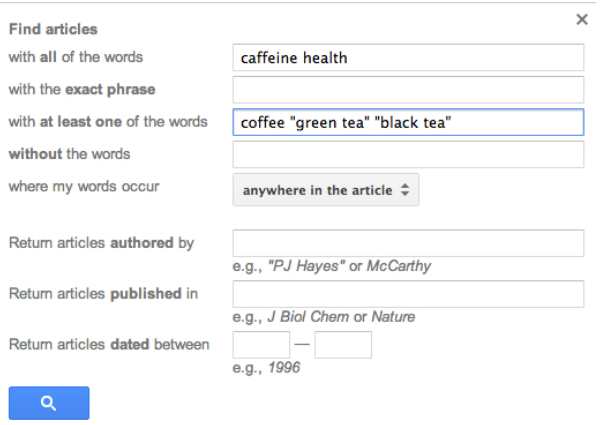


Figure 1. The advanced search features of Google Scholar.

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. One of the greatest features of Google Scholar is the "Cited by" link found below each search result. If you find one article you like, you can click on the link to find other articles that reference that same work.

Watch It

While the following video is specific to the University of West Florida, the same tips and principles still apply to most institutions. Contact your library to ensure you can set up your library account through Google Scholar so you have greater access to articles housed behind paywalls.



A Vimeo element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: pb.libretexts.org/ec1/?p=482

18 – Google Scholar from Joshua Vossler on Vimeo.

Google Scholar Search Results

Click on the links below to see how search results vary when using different search parameters.

- caffeine health: A simple Google Scholar search for caffeine and health.
- caffeine health coffee OR "green tea" OR "black tea": Results of the search listed above, where the search specifies articles

Library Databases benefits

Google Scholar benefits

covering caffeine and health, and noting coffee, black tea, or green tea.

- caffeine health author:"RR McCusker": A search for articles on a topic by a specific author, Rachel R. McCusker.
- caffeine health [2012-2016]: These results have been limited to those published from 2012-2016.

Library Databases benefits

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14.9: What are Scholarly Articles?

Learning Objectives

- Describe types of academic sources, including scholarly, peer-reviewed, primary, and secondary sources



Figure 1. Beginning your research with very specific terms will most likely prove unsuccessful. Beginning with a broad search and narrowing down as you go will yield the best results.

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 and Peer-Reviewed Articles

A scholarly source is an article or book that was written by an expert in the academic field. Most are written by professors or doctoral students for publication in peer-reviewed academic journals.

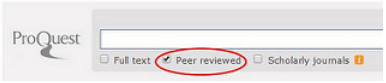


Figure 2. Major search databases like ProQuest, have checkboxes to narrow search results to only peer-reviewed articles.

The terms “scholarly article” and “peer-reviewed” articles are often used interchangeably, but there is a distinction.

Scholarly articles are written by subject-matter experts, often appear in journals, and include bibliographies, but may be passed off by a review board instead of undergoing the same amount of scrutiny as peer-reviewed articles. Databases typically have a checkbox you can click to search only for peer-reviewed content.

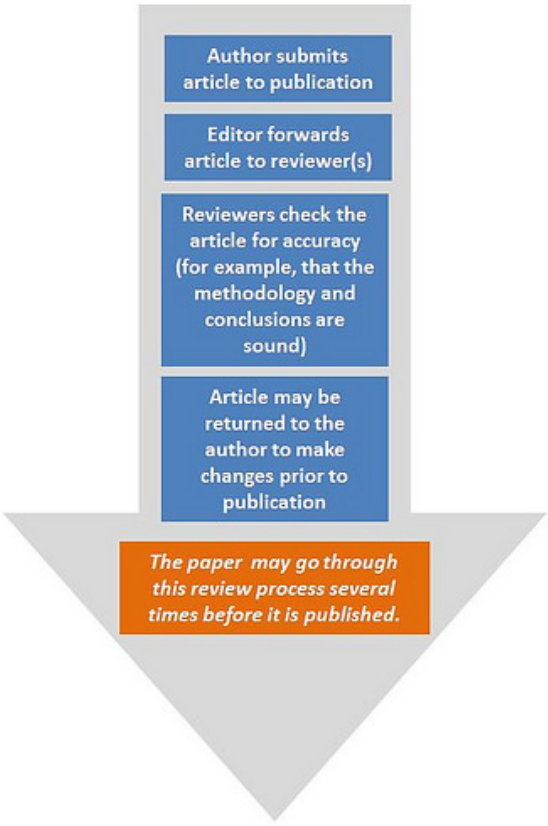


Figure 3. Steps involved in the peer-review process.

Understanding the peer-review process gives insight as to why your instructors want you to focus on these resources. First, hopeful authors send their article manuscript to the journal editor, a role filled by some prominent scholar in the field. The editor reads over the manuscript and decides whether it seems worthy of peer-review. If it's not rejected and looks appropriate and of sufficiently high quality, the editor will recruit a few other experts in the field to act as anonymous peer reviewers. The editor will send the manuscript (scrubbed of identifying information) to the reviewers who will read it closely and provide a thorough critique. Reviewers send their comments to the editor who then decides whether to (1) reject the manuscript, (2) ask the author(s) to revise and resubmit the manuscript or (3) accept it for publication. Editors send the reviewers' comments to authors along with their decisions. A manuscript that has been revised and resubmitted usually goes out for peer-review again; editors often try to get reviews from one or two first-round reviewers as well as a new reviewer. The whole process, from start to finish, can easily take a year, and it is often another year before the paper appears in print.

? ? Walking to Sources

Let's revisit Marvin's situation and see what the online professor has to say about finding peer-reviewed articles.

Marvin: My professor said something about using peer-reviewed articles in scholarly journals.

O-Prof: Professors will often want you to use such sources. Articles in scholarly journals are written by experts; and if a journal's peer-reviewed, its articles have been screened by other experts (the authors' peers) before being published.

Marvin: So that would make peer-reviewed articles pretty reliable. Where do I find them?

O-Prof: Google's got a specialized search engine, Google Scholar, that will search for scholarly articles that might be useful (www. googlescholar.com). But often the best place is the college library's bibliographic databases. A database is a collection of related data, usually electronic, set up for easy access to items in the collection. Library bibliographic databases contain articles from newspapers, magazines, scholarly journals, and other publications. They can be very large, but they're a lot smaller than the whole Internet, and they generally contain reliable information. The Internet, on the other hand, contains both good and bad information.

Marvin looks down at his feet.

Marvin: Sounds sort of like looking for shoes. When I was buying my running shoes, I went to a specialty running shop instead of a regular shoe store. The specialty shop had all the brands I was looking for, and I didn't have to weed through sandals and dress shoes. Is that kind of like a library's bibliographic database?

O-Prof: Exactly. But remember, a database search engine can only find what's actually in the database. If you're looking for information on drinking water, you won't find much in a database full of art history publications. The library has some subject guides that can tell you the best databases to use for your topic.

Marvin: What about books? I did check out the library catalog and found a couple of good books on my topic.

O-Prof: Yes, don't forget about books. You generally have to walk physically to get information that's only in print form, or have someone else bring it to you. Even though Google has now scanned many of the world's books into its database, they won't give you access to the entire book if the book is still under copyright.

Marvin: So I'm back to real walking again.

O-Prof: Yes. Don't forget to ask for help when you're looking around for sources. Reference librarians make very good guides; it's their job to keep up on where various kinds of knowledge are located and help people find that knowledge. Professors also make good guides, but they're most familiar with where to find knowledge in their own fields.

Marvin: I could ask my health and environment professor for help, of course, and maybe my geology and chemistry professors. I'm guessing my music teacher would be less helpful.

O-Prof: One last hint about finding sources. If you find an article or book that's helpful for your paper, look at its reference list. There might be some useful sources listed there.

? ? ? Try It

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Primary and Secondary Sources

While most scholarly sources are secondary sources, you will sometimes be asked to find primary sources in your research. For this reason, you should understand the differences between primary, secondary, and tertiary sources.

- **Primary sources** allow researchers to get as close as possible to original ideas, events, and empirical research as possible. Such sources may include creative works, first hand or contemporary accounts of events, and the publication of the results of empirical observations or research. These include diaries, interviews, speeches, photographs, etc.
- **Secondary sources** analyze, review, or summarize information in primary resources or other secondary resources. Even sources presenting facts or descriptions about events are secondary unless they are based on direct participation or observation. These include biographies, journal articles, books, and dissertations.
- **Tertiary sources** provide overviews of topics by synthesizing information gathered from other resources. Tertiary resources often provide data in a convenient form or provide information with context by which to interpret it. These are often grouped together with secondary sources. They include encyclopedias and dictionaries.

Types of Sources in Various Disciplines

Subject	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Art	Painting	Critical review of the painting	Encyclopedia article on the artist
History	Civil War diary	Book on a Civil War battle	List of battle sites
Literature	Novel or poem	Essay about themes in the work	Biography of the author
Political science	Geneva Convention	Article about prisoners of war	Chronology of treaties
Agriculture	Conference paper on tobacco genetics	Review article on the current state of tobacco research	Encyclopedia article on tobacco
Chemistry	Chemical patent	Book on chemical reactions	Table of related reactions

Physics	Einstein's diary	Biography on Einstein	Dictionary of relativity

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14.10: Reading and Using Scholarly Sources

Learning Objectives

- Examine strategies for reading and using scholarly sources

How to Read Scholarly Articles

Academic papers are essentially reports that scholars write to their peers—present and future—about what they've done in their research, what they've found, and why they think it's important. Depending on the discipline, they often have a structure reminiscent of the lab reports you've written for science classes. They often look like this:

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.

Link to Learning: Scholarly Articles

Visit this webpage from North Carolina State University to see an example of the main components in a scholarly article.

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

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

You can view the transcript for "How to Read a Scholarly Article" here (opens in new window).

As shown in the video above, understanding the structure of scholarly articles tells you a lot about how to find, read and use these sources:

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

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14.11: Finding Scholarly Articles

Learning Objectives

- Examine ways to find scholarly articles and books using library databases and catalogs

Finding Books

Scholarly articles are often found in journals, which compile several peer-reviewed articles on similar topics in the same place. You will often find these articles in online databases or in the periodicals section of your library, but it is still valuable to find pertinent information in actual, physical, 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 if you want lots of information on a topic or want to put your topic in context with other important issues.

To find books, you should look in the library catalog, which is typically the main search bar located on the library homepage. The catalog includes books, reference books, media, maps, and titles of periodicals (like magazines, journals, and newspapers). Note that the catalog **does not** search for articles within periodicals and journals, and you'll need to utilize a separate article search to find those.

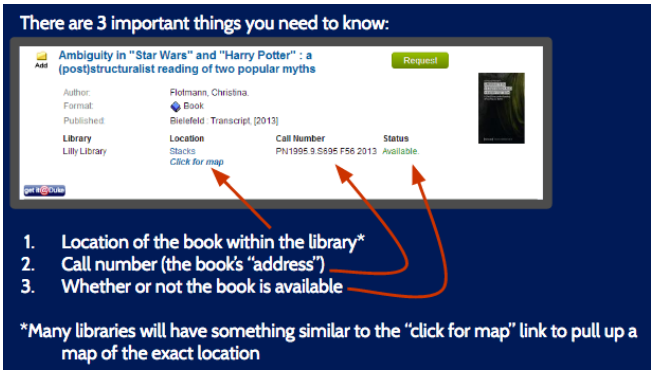


Figure 1. Search result from a library catalog search.

You can locate the book by finding the call number. Call numbers are arranged in alphanumeric order. The call number is based on the book's subject, author's last name, and publication date. Call numbers are designated based on the library's classification system, which determines how books are organized. Many academic libraries use the Library of Congress Classification, while others use the Dewey Decimal System.

Let's say you are looking for the book called Cyberspace romance: the psychology of online relationships by Monica Whitty and Adrian Carr. You searched in the library catalog and found the call number: *HQ 801.82 .W55 2006*. Here's what that means:

- HQ: Subclass HQ refers to The Family, Marriage, Women
- 801.82 refers to Man-Woman relationships, Courtship, Dating
- W refers to the first author's last name, "Whitty"
- 2006 is the year the book was published

Finding Articles in Databases

So far you have learned how to locate a book you want on the library shelves. What if your project also requires scholarly articles?

To find scholarly articles, you need to look in a database. A research database lets you search across the text of millions of articles published in thousands of academic journals. General databases have a little bit of everything (like a big retail store). Examples of general databases include Google Scholar, the library articles search, or JSTOR. These are good starting points when you're starting out and shopping around for articles on a wide range of topics, but you may find there are too many search results to sift through. If you're getting too much irrelevant stuff, try a specialized database.

A specialized database—often called a research or library database—allows targeted searching on one or more specific subject areas (i.e., engineering, medicine, Latin American history, etc.), for a specific format (i.e., books, articles, conference proceedings,

video, images), or for a specific date range during which the information was published. Most of what specialized databases contain can not be found by Google or Bing.

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

You can view the transcript for “What’s a Library Database?” here (opens in new window).

Your library will probably have an “article search” or “database search” link to begin your search. When you search article databases, your results list contains citations to a variety of information sources. Depending on the database, you might also find citations to book chapters or to books. Below is an excerpt of search results in ***PsycINFO***. Note the different types of information sources that appear.

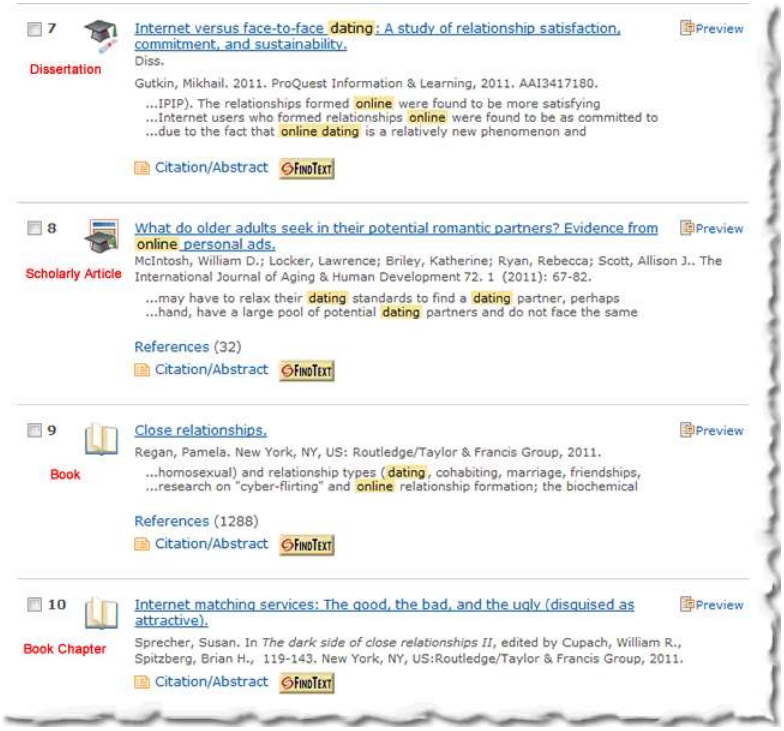


Figure 2. This *PsycInfo* search resulted in a variety of information sources.

Everything you need to locate your article is in the citation: the title of the article, the author, the title of the journal, the volume and issue number, the date of publication, and page numbers.



Figure 3. The important components of an article are all found within the citation.

You can typically click on the links below the citation to view the text of the article, or your library may direct you to the location of the article.

? ? ? Try It

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Finding Sources from Sources

Every source contains rich clues to other useful sources. It's a treasure map that can lead you to sources you would never find by pure searching. This skill can help you discern a conversation occurring among a set of scholars or writers about your topic. Think of each good source as giving clues along two axes:

- **Forward and backward** in time. If you look at a source and see in its bibliography that there are fifty references, you can do a quick scan of the titles and authors to look for other sources you might investigate. These previously cited sources give you a rough map of how the topic has been researched to that point. Similarly, you can look at the "cited by" feature within a database (or Google Scholar) to look for other sources who are continuing the conversation and cited your source.
- **Side to side** across the scholarly conversation. When looking at a source you like, collect key terms, phrases, and names to find other sources that are similar. These other keywords can lead to other types of evidence and examples that offer more coverage of your topic.

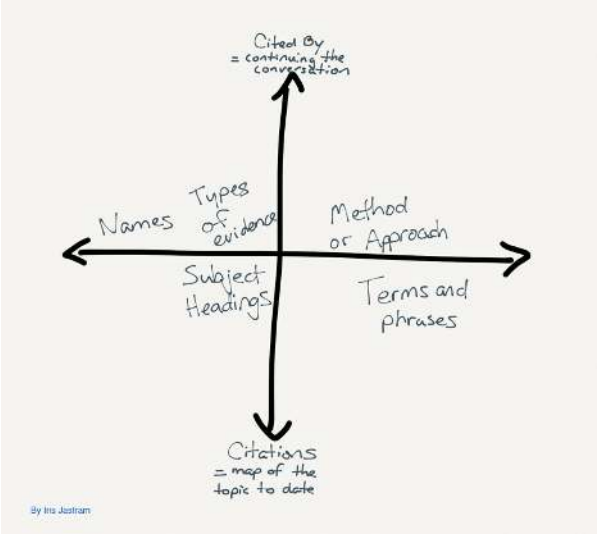


Figure 4. Each source is part of a larger conversation on a subject. Looking closely at a source's keywords, headings, methods, and terms can help find other sources on similar topics. A source's citations also give clues into past and future research.

Using Keywords and Similar Subjects

If you're reading a scholarly article in a library database, you can make use of both the keywords (selected by the author) and the subject-terms (usually determined by the database).

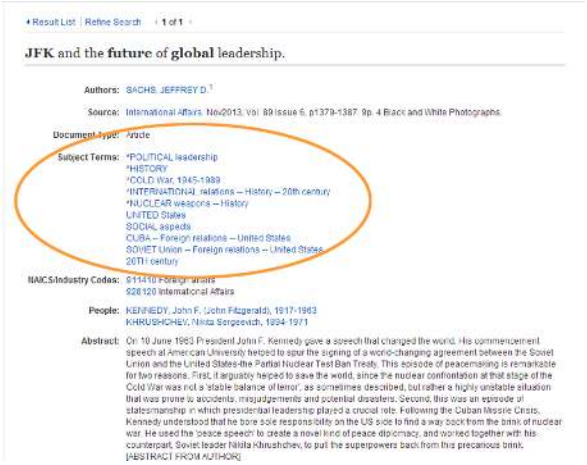


Figure 5. Look at the subject terms in your search results to find articles on similar topics.

If you're reading a book, you have two options. First, using the book's call number (generally found on the side or spine of the book), find the book in the stacks. Nearby books should be on a similar subject. You can also go back to the book's record in the library catalog. Each book is assigned at least one library subject. Click the subject to find other books with the same subject.

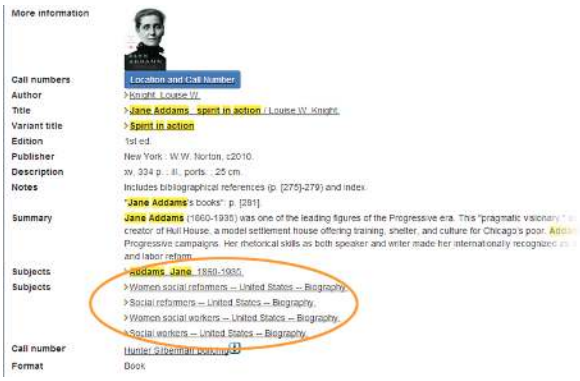


Figure 6. A database search result can take you to other books on the same subject.

Read the Bibliography

When you have finished the article, you can give the Works Cited page a once-over in order to identify any interesting readings that look useful.

? ? Link to Learning

Check out this tutorial from Hunter College Libraries to learn how to read the information in a bibliography or works cited page (look in the left column of the screen for instructions).

Search by Author

Academic writers often write on the same topic and publish several books or articles about the topic. Put the author's name into a database or Google Scholar search and see what else s/he has published about the topic. The authors may have even published an update to the current study you are reading.

? ? Using Databases

Take a look at Marvin's success in finding information within a specialized database.

O-Prof: Let's go back to your initial Google search for a minute. Did any Wikipedia articles come up for bottled water?

Marvin: Yeah, and I took a quick look at one of them. But some of my professors say I shouldn't use Wikipedia.

O-Prof: That's because the quality of information in Wikipedia varies. It's monitored by volunteer writers and editors rather than experts, so you should double-check information you find in Wikipedia with other sources. But Wikipedia articles are often good places to get background info and good places to connect with more reliable sources. Did anything in the Wikipedia article seem useful for finding sources on bottled water?

Marvin clicks back to the Wikipedia site.

Marvin: It does mention that the National Resources Defense Council and the Drinking Water Research Foundation have done some studies on the health effects of bottled water ("Bottled Water").

O-Prof: So, you could go to the websites for these organizations to find out more about the studies. They might even have links to the full reports of these studies, as well as other resources on your topic. Who else might have something to say about the healthfulness of bottled and tap water?

Marvin: Maybe doctors and other health professionals? But I don't know any I could ask.

O-Prof: You can look in the **library's subject guides or ask the librarian about databases for health professionals**. The Cumulative Index to Nursing & Allied Health Literature (CINAHL) database is a good one. Are you logged in to the library? Can you try that one?

Marvin logs in, finds the database, and types in "bottled water AND health."

Marvin: Here's an article called "Health Risks and Benefits of Bottled Water." It's in the journal *Primary Care Clinical Office Practice* (Napier and Kodner).

O-Prof: If that's a peer-reviewed journal, it might be a good source for your paper.

Marvin: Here's another one: "Socio-Demographic Features and Fluoride Technologies Contributing to Higher Fluorosis Scores in Permanent Teeth of Canadian Children" (Maupome et al.). That one sounds pretty technical.

O-Prof: And pretty narrow, too. When you start using sources written by experts, you move beyond the huge porch of public discourse, where everyone *talks* about all questions on a general level, into some smaller conversational parlors, where groups of specialists *talk* about more narrow questions in greater depth. You generally find more detailed and trustworthy knowledge in these smaller parlors. But sometimes the conversation may be too narrow for your needs and difficult to understand because it's experts *talking* to experts.

Way ahead of the professor, Marvin's already started reading about the health risks and benefits of bottled water.

Marvin: Here's something confusing. The summary of this article on risks and benefits of bottled water says tap water is fine if you're in a location where there's good water. Then it says that you should use bottled water if the purity of your water source is in question. So which is better, tap or bottled?

O-Prof: As you read more sources, you begin to realize there's not always a simple answer to questions. As the CINAHL article points out, the answer depends on whether your tap water is pure enough to drink. Not everyone agrees on the answers, either. When you're advising your future clients (or in this case, writing your paper), you'll need to "listen" to what different people who *talk* about the healthfulness of bottled and tap water have to say. Then you'll be equipped to make your own recommendation.

Things to Consider

One last tip for your research is to keep an open mind. If you are not finding good sources, don't get discouraged. Try a different combination of keywords, synonyms, or ask your librarian or professor for help. Keep in mind that you don't need a perfect source that aligns with your paper. You can take small bits of information from multiple sources and combine them into your own argument.

✓ ✓ ✓ Watch It

This video reminds us that there is not one perfect source for your research, so you may need to use multiple strategies to find the information you need.

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

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14.12: Using Databases

Learning Objectives

- Describe the value and importance of using library databases

Why Use Databases?

You are already comfortable with using Google and other search engines, so why take the time to learn about library databases? While it may take some getting used to initially, library databases are far superior for academic research and can provide lots of pertinent results in a fraction of the time you'd need to find the material in a search engine. Here are some other reasons that databases are so valuable:

- You can access tons of scholarly journal articles, but also find books, reference book articles, popular magazine articles, and newspaper articles
- Databases don't have sponsors, pop-ups, or advertisements
- All material in a database is evaluated for accuracy and credibility by subject experts and publishers.
- Databases are reviewed and updated regularly.
- Library database subscriptions are paid for through your library so you shouldn't have to pay for articles
- The search capabilities enable you to search for focused results.
- Published content from journals, magazines, newspapers, and books does not change.
- Most material remains in the database for a significant length of time and can be easily retrieved again.
- Many databases include a citation tool that will automatically generate an APA or MLA style references for the article you select. You may still need to "tweak" this citation but these tools serve as a good starting point for citing your articles in a particular format.

Watch It

Watch this video to review the distinctions of a scholarly article and to see why library databases are so valuable to your academic research.

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

You can view the transcript for "What is Scholarly Research?" here (download).

Database Searching

Research databases don't search like Google. One major difference is that not all databases let you search with everyday or "natural language" terms. Learning a few tricks and search strategies will help you find more relevant results. You'll want to begin by boiling your topic idea down into a few key concepts and terms. For example, if your paper is about the mental health of immigrants in school settings, you would search for keywords like mental health, immigrants, and school. Next, you'll want to think of synonyms for those words and more precise terms so that you can try different approaches to your research. For example, mental health might also be well-being, psychology, or mental state, or it could be a specific mental disorder such as depression, anxiety, PTSD, or drug or alcohol abuse. Immigrants could also be refugees or migrant workers, or you could focus on a specific group of immigrants. Similarly, school could also be written as education, academics, or more precisely as elementary school, high school, or college.

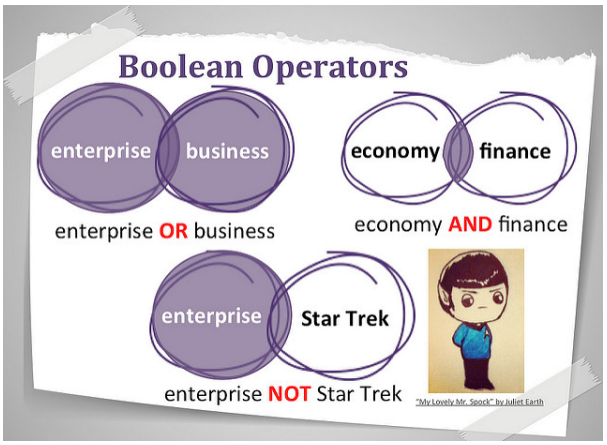


Figure 1. Boolean Operators will help you narrow and refine your search.

Database searches enable you to use Boolean operators to specify what you are searching for. You could type in *mental health AND refugees* into the search bar to narrow your results to things that only contain both of those concepts. You can use the operator OR to broaden your results to search for *mental health AND refugees OR immigrants*. You can also add in quotation marks to search for exact words or phrases.

Databases also have options to revise your search by using limiters, such as searching for only peer-reviewed articles, within a specific date, a specific type of source, or by subject. Watch the following video to learn more about tips and shortcuts for effective database searching. Some of the tips include:

- Use the advanced search within a database
- Use the Boolean operators AND or NOT to combine your keywords in a single search
- If you know you want the entire article, check the box for the full text
- Don’t do a search that is too broad or too narrow
- Use quotation marks around a compound term
- Add other keywords to narrow your search, and use search limiters like source type, publication year, source type, etc.
- Using the subject terms index or the thesaurus in the database to find the best search terms
- Remember that you can also use databases to search within a certain publication
- Utilize the cite feature in databases to help you create citations

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14.13: Introduction to Source Analysis

What you'll learn to do: examine methods used to assess the quality and reliability of sources



You have been asked to write an article for your university newspaper about what we've learned in the 30+ years since the Chernobyl Disaster. In 1986, an explosion at the Chernobyl nuclear power plant in the Soviet Union released radioactive particles into the air over much of the USSR and Western Europe. You've already done some basic research on Wikipedia, then used Google Scholar to investigate some more of the health effects. Finally, you searched in your university health, science, and medicine databases to learn specifics about the impact of the disaster.

How do you know which sources are worth using in your article? How will you know if the sources are even good? Journalists famously cover the 5 Ws (who, what, where, when, why…and how) in their articles, and these similar questions can be used to evaluate your search results:

- ***Who:*** Who is the author and what are his/her credentials in this topic?
- ***What:*** Is the material primary or secondary in nature?
- ***Where:*** Is the publisher or organization behind the source considered reputable? Does the website appear legitimate?
- ***When:*** Is the source current or does it cover the right time period for your topic?
- ***Why:*** Is the opinion or bias of the author apparent and can it be taken into account?
- ***How:*** Is the source written at the right level for your needs? Is the research well-documented?

If you can answer all of these questions, you'll understand more about the quality and usefulness of a source for your article.

In this section, you'll learn more about tools like this that help you examine the usefulness and appropriateness of information for your research. You'll use the C.R.A.A.P. test to evaluate a source, four moves to evaluate online information, and consider techniques to help you synthesize pieces from multiple sources in your writing.

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14.14: Evaluating Sources

Learning Objectives

- Examine the suitability and the trustworthiness of a source



Figure 1. As you research, you'll encounter many different voices competing for your attention. Your task as a writer is to determine which of these voices are credible, trustworthy, and suitable for your current assignment.

As you gather sources for your research, you'll need to know how to assess the validity and reliability of the materials you find.

Keep in mind that the sources you find have all been put out there by groups, organizations, corporations, or individuals who have some motivation for getting this information to you. To be a good researcher, you need to learn how to assess the materials you find and determine their reliability—before deciding if you want to use them and, if so, how you want to use them.

Whether you are examining material in books, journals, magazines, newspapers, or websites, you want to consider several issues before deciding if and how to use the material you have found.

The two main questions you should ask yourself when evaluating sources are:

- Is this source suitable? (Is it relevant to my research question?)
- Is this source trustworthy? (It is credible—should I believe it?)

Not every suitable source is trustworthy, and not every trustworthy source is suitable. In Marvin's example that follows, you'll see that the online professor encourages Marvin to *talk* to the right sources. Remember that Marvin already learned about the importance of *walking* to the right places to find good sources. Now, Marvin needs to talk with his sources in order to become a part of the conversation on his topic. To do this, he needs to find authors who are trustworthy *and* knowledgeable.

? ? Talking and Listening to Sources

Let's revisit Marvin and see how he can gather information about his topic by "talking" and joining the dialogue surrounding bottled water. Then, he needs to really "listen" to his sources to determine if they are trustworthy.

Marvin: If I used a university or government website on bottled water quality, readers would trust me more than if I just used a bottled water company website?

O-Prof: Yes. But to dig deeper into the question of trust, let's move on to a second metaphor: *talking*. Although the metaphor of *walking* is useful for understanding how to find and document sources, it can give the impression that sources are separate, inert, and neutral things, waiting to be snatched up like gold nuggets and plugged into your writing. In reality, sources are parts of overlapping knowledge networks that connect meanings and the people that make and use them. Knowledge networks are always in flux, since people are always making new meaning. Let's go back to your health and environment project. Refresh my memory. What kinds of questions do you need answers to before you can write your paper?

Marvin: Well, I need to know if bottled water is truly healthier, like the beverage companies claim. Or would I be just as well off drinking tap water?

O-Prof: To answer this question, you'll want to find out who's *talking* about these issues. As Kenneth Burke put it, you can think of sources as voices in an ongoing conversation about the world:

> Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and they are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone answers; you answer him; another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either the embarrassment or gratification of your opponent, depending upon the quality of your ally's assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress. (110–111)

The authors of texts aren't speaking aloud, of course, but they're making written statements that others can "listen" and "respond" to. Knowing which texts you can trust means understanding which authors you can trust.

Marvin: How do I figure that out?

O-Prof: It helps to know who the authors are. What they're saying. Where, when, and to whom they're saying it. And what their purposes are. Imagine the world as divided into many parlors like the one Kenneth Burke described. You'd want to go to the parlors where people who really know something are *talking* about the topics you're interested in.

Determining Suitability

Your task as a researcher is to determine the appropriateness of the information your source contains, for your particular research project. It is a simple question, really: will this source help me answer the research questions that I am posing in my project? Will it help me learn as much as I can about my topic? Will it help me write an interesting, convincing essay for my readers?

Here are some reasons to include information:

- 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
- may have a clear explanation of something

Reasons to exclude information:

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

Determining Trustworthiness

To determine the trustworthiness of a source, you want to ensure that a source is current, written by an expert, accurate, and unbiased. You'll want to consider the rhetorical context of a source, including its purpose, audience, and focus.

One excellent tool to examine both the reliability and trustworthiness of a source is the C.R.A.A.P method, which stands for:

- **Currency**: The timeliness of the information
- **Relevance**: The importance of the information for your needs
- **Authority**: The source of the information
- **Accuracy**: The reliability, truthfulness, and correctness of the information
- **Purpose**: The reason the information exists

Sources should always be evaluated relative to your purpose. But because there often aren't clear-cut answers when you evaluate sources, most of the time it requires you to make inferences–educated guesses from available clues–about whether to use information from particular sources.

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14.15: The CRAAP Method

Learning Objectives

- Examine the criteria used in the CRAAP Method
- Use the CRAAP method to analyze the currency, relevance, authority, accuracy, reliability, and purpose of a source

Using the acronym CRAAP, we can carefully evaluate the effectiveness, authority, and credibility of a source. CRAAP stands for currency, relevance, authority, accuracy, and purpose. Let's take a closer look at each of these pieces below.

Currency: The timeliness of the information

Key Question: When was the item of information published or produced?



Figure 1. Taking into account every aspect of the CRAAP acronym will help you to choose the most reliable and applicable sources which will increase your credibility as a writer.

Determining when an item of information was published or produced is an aspect of evaluating information. The date information was published or produced tells you how current it is or how contemporaneous it is with the topic you are researching. There are two facets to the issue of currency.

- Is the information the most recent version?
- Is the information the original research, description, or account?

The question of most recent version of information versus an original or primary version can be a critical one. For example: If you were doing a project on the survival of passengers in car crashes, you would need the most recent information on automobile crash tests, structural strength of materials, car wreck mortality statistics, etc. If, on the other hand, you were doing a project on the feelings of college students about the Vietnam War during the 1960s, you would need information written in the 1960s by college students (primary sources) as well as materials written since then about college students in the 1960s (secondary sources). Key indicators of the currency of the information are:

- date of copyright
- date of publication
- date of revision or edition
- dates of sources cited
- date of patent or trademark

Relevance: The importance of the information for your needs

Key Question: How does this source contribute to my research paper?

The discussion of suitability above is essentially the same thing as relevance. When you read through your source, consider how the source will effectively support your argument and how you can utilize the source in your paper. You should also consider whether the source provides sufficient coverage of the topic. Information sources with broad, shallow coverage mean that you need to find other sources of information to obtain adequate details about your topic. Information sources with a very narrow focus or a

distinct bias mean that you need to find additional sources to obtain the information on other aspects of your topic. Some questions to consider are:

- Does the information relate to my topic or answer my question?
- Who is the intended audience?
- Is the information at an appropriate level (i.e. not too simple or advanced) for my needs?
- Did I look at a variety of sources before deciding to use this one?
- Would I be comfortable using this source for my college research paper?

? ? Try It

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Authority: The source of the information

Key Question: Is the person, organization, or institution responsible for the intellectual content of the information knowledgeable in that subject?

Determining the knowledge and expertise of the author of information is an important aspect of evaluating the reliability of information. Anyone can make an assertion or a statement about some thing, event, or idea, but only someone who knows or understands what that thing, event, or idea is can make a reasonably reliable statement or assertion about it. Some external indications of knowledge of or expertise are:

- a formal academic degree in a subject area
- professional or work-related experience–businessmen, government agency personnel, sports figures, etc. have expertise on their area of work
- active involvement in a subject or organization by serious amateurs who spend substantial amounts of personal time researching and studying that subject area.
- organizations, agencies, institutions, corporations with active involvement or work in a particular subject area.

HINT: Be careful of opinions stated by professionals outside of their area of work expertise.

? ? Try It

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

Key Question: How free from error is this piece of information?

Establishing the accuracy, or relative accuracy, of information is an important part of evaluating the reliability of information. It is easier to establish the accuracy of facts than it is opinions, interpretations, or ideas. The more an idea, opinion, or other piece of information varies from the accepted point of view on a particular topic the harder it is to establish its accuracy. It may be completely accurate but corroborating it is both more necessary and more difficult. An important aspect of accuracy is the intellectual integrity of the item.

- Are the sources appropriately cited in the text and listed in the references?
- Are quotations cited correctly and in context? Out of context quotations can be misleading and sometimes completely erroneous.
- Are there exaggerations, omissions, or errors? These are difficulty to identify if you use only one source of information. Always use several different sources of information on your topic. Analyzing what different sources say about a topic is one way to understand that topic.

In addition to errors of fact and integrity, you need to watch for errors of logic. Errors of logic occur primarily in the presentation of conclusions, opinions, interpretations, editorials, ideas, etc. Some indications that information is accurate are:

- the same information can be found in other reliable sources
- the experiment can be replicated and returns the same results
- the documentation provided in support of the information is substantive

- the sources used for documentation are known to be generally reliable
- the author of the information is known to have expertise on that subject
- the presentation is free from logical fallacies or errors
- quotations are “in context”-the meaning of the original work is kept in the work which quotes the original
- quotations are correctly cited
- acronyms are clearly defined at the beginning

Some indications that information may **not** be accurate are:

- facts cannot be verified or are contradicted in other sources
- sources used are known to be unreliable or highly biased
- bibliography of sources used is inadequate or non-existent
- quotations are taken out of context and given a different meaning
- acronyms are not defined and the intended audience is a general one
- presence of one or more logical fallacies
- authority cited is another part of the same organization

? ? Try It

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Purpose: The reason the information exists

Key Question: Who is this information written for or this product developed for?

Identifying the intended audience of the information or product is another aspect of evaluating information. The intended audience of an item generally determines the style of presentation, the level of technical detail, and the depth of coverage. You should also consider the author’s objectivity. Are they trying to persuade? Do they present any bias? While it is unlikely that anything humans do is ever absolutely objective, it is important to establish that the information you intend to use is reasonably objective, or if it is not, to establish exactly what the point of view or bias is. There are times when information expressing a particular point of view or bias is useful, but you must use it consciously. You must know what the point of view is and why that point of view is important to your project. **For example**, books on food sanitation written for children, for restaurant workers, or for research microbiologists will be very different even though they all cover the same topic.

Determining the intended audience of a particular piece of information will help you decide whether or not the information will be too basic, too technical, too general, or just right for your needs. The intended audience can also indicate the potential reliability of the item because some audiences require more documentation than others.

For example, items produced for scholarly or professional audiences are generally produced by experts and go through a peer evaluation process. Items produced for the mass market frequently are not produced by experts and generally do not go through an evaluation process. Some indications of the intended audience are:

- highly technical language, complex analysis, very sophisticated/technical tools can indicate a technical, professional, or scholarly audience
- how-to information or current practices in “X” are frequently written by experts for practitioners in that field
- substantive and serious presentations of a topic with not too much technical language are generally written for the educated lay audience
- popular language, fairly simple presentations of a topic, little or no analysis, inexpensive tools can indicate a general or popular audience
- bibliographies, especially long bibliographies, are generally compiled by and for those doing research on that topic

? Link to Learning

Review the steps of the CRAAP method and practice evaluating sources in this tutorial from Eastern Michigan University. Be sure to complete the practice exercises at the end of the tutorial.

✔ ✔ Watch It

Watch this video for a recap of each of the components of the CRAAP method.

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

You can view the transcript for “How Library Stuff Works: How to Evaluate Resources (the CRAAP test) here (opens in new window).

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14.16: Evaluating Websites Using the Four Moves

Learning Objectives

- Explain how the four moves are used to evaluate information
- Evaluate websites using the four moves

When looking at any source, you should ask yourself: 1. who is writing this, and 2. why? Because anyone can publish something online, you need to be particularly careful and critical when evaluating sources you find on the Internet.

Watch It

This funny clip shows that you can't always believe everything you read online.

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

You can view the transcript for "Can't Lie On The Internet" here (opens in new window).

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. While CRAAP method is one helpful tool for assessing the credibility and reliability of sources, you don't necessarily need to go through a complicated checklist every time you encounter new information. Instead, you can evaluate information more organically by focusing on some basic guidelines and principles, as explained by the four moves.

The Four Moves

When you read something online and you aren't sure whether or not it's true, then you can employ the four moves to help you uncover the truth of a claim. Here are the moves:



Figure 1. The Four Moves for investigating online sources.

- **STOP.** Think critically. Avoid being too emotionally charged or looking for information that confirms your own biases. Have an open mind to consider new or controversial topics, and seek to understand.
- **INVESTIGATE.** Find out who the author is, why they wrote it, etc.
- **FIND BETTER COVERAGE.** Read laterally. Once you get to the source of a claim, read what other people say about the source.
- **TRACE CLAIMS.** Trace claims, quotes, and media to the original source.

Stop

The first move is the simplest. **STOP** reminds you of two things.

First, when you first hit a page and start to read it — STOP. Ask yourself whether you know and trust the website or source of the information. If you don't, use the other moves to get a sense of what you're looking at. Don't use it in your paper (and don't share it on social media!) until you know what it is.

Second, after you begin the process and use the moves it can be too easy to go down a rabbit hole, chasing after more and more obscure facts or getting lost in a "click cycle." If you feel yourself getting overwhelmed in your fact-checking efforts, STOP and take a second to remind yourself what your goal is. Adjust your strategy if it isn't working. Make sure you approach the problem at the right amount of depth for your purpose.

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

You can view the transcript for “Online Verification Skills- Video 1: Introductory Video” here (opens in new window).

Investigate the Source

The key idea of investigating is to know what you’re reading *before* you read it. This doesn’t mean you have to do a Pulitzer prize-winning investigation into a source before you engage with it. But if you’re reading a piece on economics by a Nobel prize-winning economist, you should know that before you read it. Conversely, if you’re watching a video on the many benefits of milk consumption that was put out by the dairy industry, you probably want to know that as well.

This doesn’t mean the Nobel economist will always be right and that the dairy industry can’t ever be trusted. But knowing the expertise and agenda of the source is crucial to your interpretation of what they say. Taking sixty seconds to figure out where it is from *before* reading will help you decide if it is worth your time, and if it is, help you to better understand its significance and trustworthiness.

✓ ✓ ✓ Watch It

This video shows some really simple ways to do a quick investigation of a source.

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

You can view the transcript for “Online Verification Skills-Video 2: Investigate the Source” here (opens in new window).

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Find trusted coverage

Sometimes you don’t care about the particular article that reaches you. You care about the claim the article is making. You want to know if it is true or false. You want to know if it represents a consensus viewpoint, or if it is the subject of much disagreement.

In this case your best strategy is to ignore the source that reached you and look for other trusted reporting or analysis on the claim. In other words, if you receive an article that says koalas have just been declared extinct from the Save the Koalas Foundation, the winning strategy may be to open up a new tab and find the *best* source you can that covers this, or, just as importantly, scan multiple sources to see what the consensus seems to be. In these cases we encourage you to “find trusted coverage” that better suits your needs — more trusted, more in-depth, or maybe just more varied. You can also use fact-checking websites such as snopes.com or factcheck.org to confirm the truthfulness of claims you find online.

Trace claims, quotes, and media back to the original context

A lot of things you find on the internet have been stripped of context. Maybe there’s a video of a fight between two people. But what happened before that? Who started it? What was clipped out of the video and what stayed in? Maybe there’s a picture that seems real but the caption is dubious at best. Maybe a claim is made about a new medical treatment supposedly based on a research paper — but you’re not certain if the paper supports it.

In these cases we’ll have you trace the claim, quote, or media back to the source, so you can see it in its original context and get a sense if the version you saw was accurately presented.

✓ ✓ ✓ Watch It

This video gives advice on tracking a claim back to the original source.

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

You can view the transcript for “Online Verification Skills- Video 3: Find the Original Source” here (opens in new window).

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14.17: Annotated Bibliographies and Literature Reviews

Learning Objectives

- Describe the structure and value of an annotated bibliography

Annotated Bibliographies

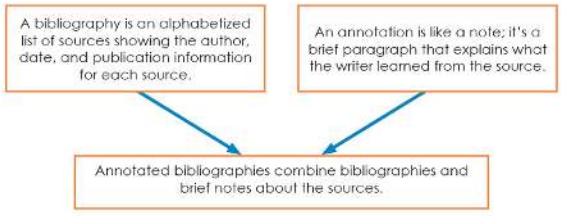


Figure 1. Annotated bibliographies are helpful when finding sources and determining how that source might be helpful for your paper.

An **annotated bibliography** is a list of all your sources, including full citation information and notes on how you will use the sources. Writers often create annotated bibliographies as a part of a research project, as a means of recording their thoughts and deciding which sources to actually use to support the purpose of their research. Some writers include annotated bibliographies at the end of a research paper as a way of offering their insights about the sources' usability to their readers.

College instructors often assign annotated bibliographies as a way to help students think through their sources' quality and appropriateness to their research question or topic.

Although it may take a while to complete the annotated bibliography, the annotations themselves are relatively brief.

Link to Learning

Click here to see a sample annotated bibliography from a student.

The Purpose of the Annotated Bibliography

Annotated bibliographies are useful for several reasons. If you keep one while you research, the annotated bibliography will function as a useful guide. It will be easier for you to revisit sources later because you will already have notes explaining how you want to use each source. If you find an annotated bibliography attached to one of the sources you are using, you can look at it to find other possible resources.

Constructing Your Citations

The first part of each entry in an annotated bibliography is the source's full citation. We examine citations in another section of this course, and detailed instructions for creating the citation can be found in the style manual for whatever format (APA, MLA, etc.) your professor wants you to use.

What to Include in Each Annotation

A good annotation has three parts, in addition to the complete bibliographic information for the source:

1. a brief summary of the source,
2. a critique and evaluation of credibility, and
3. an explanation of how you will use the source in your essay.

Start by stating the main idea of the source. If you have space, note the specific information that you want to use from the source, such as quotations, chapters, or page numbers. Then explain if the source is credible, and note any potential bias you observe. Finally, explain how that information is useful to your own work.

You may also consider including:

- An explanation about the authority and/or qualifications of the author
- The scope or main purpose of the work
- Any detectable bias or interpretive stance
- The intended audience and level of reading

? ? Writing the Annotated bibliography

Keep these suggestions in mind as you construct an annotated bibliography:

1. You need a **relatively narrow focus** (a relatively narrow research question or a working thesis sentence with a clear angle) in order to gain value from doing an annotated bibliography.
2. As you research, **select the sources that seem most related** to your narrow focus. **Skim the sources first**; then more carefully read those that seem useful to your research focus.
3. In your annotation for each entry in your annotated bibliography, **summarize the source.** Reproduce the author's main ideas in your own words. Be careful to change the wording and the structure as you put the information from the source into your own words.
4. After you summarize, **analyze the source.** Ask yourself questions such as the following: Is there enough relevant information to address my narrow focus? Does the author delve deeply into the subject as opposed to offering a general overview? What type of evidence does the author use? Does the author use statistical information accurately, to the best of my knowledge?
5. Finally, **evaluate the source's usefulness** to the narrow focus of your research. Make connections between the source and your focus for your project.
6. Be sure to **use the assigned bibliographic style** (usually MLA or APA style) to create the bibliography entry that begins each annotated source on your list.

In most annotated bibliographies, the summary, analysis, and evaluation for each source becomes the body of the annotation for that source. Some annotated bibliographies may not require all three of these elements, but most will. Be sure to consult your instructor, and ask questions if you're unsure about the required elements within each entry of your annotated bibliography.

Example Annotation

Source: Farley, John. "The Spontaneous-Generation Controversy (1700–1860): The Origin of Parasitic Worms." *Journal of the History of Biology*, 5 (Spring 1972), 95–125.

- Notes: This essay discusses the conversation about spontaneous generation that was taking place around the time that *Frankenstein* was written. In addition, it introduces a distinction between abiogenesis and heterogenesis. The author argues that the accounts of spontaneous generation from this time period were often based on incorrect assumptions: that the discussion was focused primarily on micro-organisms, and that spontaneous-generation theories were disproved by experiments. The author takes a scientific approach to evaluating theories of spontaneous generation, and the presentation of his argument is supported with sources. It is a reliable and credible source. The essay will be helpful in forming a picture of the early 19th-century conversation about how life is formed, as well as explaining the critical perception of spontaneous-generation theories during the 19th century.

? ? ? Try It

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Literature Review

The literature of a literature review is not made up of novels and short stories and poetry—but is the collection of writing and research that has been produced on a particular topic.

The purpose of the literature review is to give you an overview of a particular topic. Your job is to discover the research that has already been done, the major perspectives, and the significant thinkers and writers (experts) who have published on the topic you're interested in. In other words, it's a survey of what has been written and argued about your topic.

By the time you complete your literature review you should have written an essay that demonstrates that you:

- Understand the history of what's been written and researched on your topic.
- Know the significance of the current academic thinking on your topic, including what the controversies are.
- Have a perspective about what work remains to be done on your topic.

Thus, a literature review synthesizes your research into an explanation of what is known and what is not known on your topic. If the topic is one from which you want to embark on a major research project, doing a literature review will save you time and help you figure out where you might focus your attention so you don't duplicate research that has already been done.

Just to be clear: a literature review differs from a research paper in that a **literature review** is a summary and synthesis of the major arguments and thinking of experts on the topic you're investigating, whereas a research paper supports a position or an opinion you have developed yourself as a result of your own analysis of a topic.

Another advantage of doing a literature review is that it summarizes the intellectual discussion that has been going on over the decades—or centuries—on a specific topic and allows you to join in that conversation (what academics call academic discourse) from a knowledgeable position.

The following presentation will provide you with the basic steps to follow as you work to complete a literature review.

? ? Literature Reviews

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Learning Objectives

annotated bibliography: a list of your sources for your research, including full citation information and notes on how you will use the sources

literature review: a summary and synthesis of the major arguments and thinking of experts on the topic you're investigating

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14.18: Putting It Together- Finding and Evaluating Sources

Many of us have used research writing projects as a way to “prove” what we already believe. An essay assignment may ask us to take a position on an issue, and then support that position with evidence found in research.

Because you begin a project like this with a thesis in mind (you already know what you believe!), it is very tempting to use only those sources that agree with you and to discard the others. Perhaps you find enough such sources and construct a paper. Ask yourself the following question, though: what have you discovered during your research? Have you learned new theories, opinions, or aspects of your subject? Did anything surprise you, intrigue you, or make you look further? If you answered no to these questions, you did not fulfill the purpose of true research, which is to explore, to discover, and to investigate.



The purpose of research is not to look for proof of the author’s pre-existing theories, but to learn about the subject of the investigation as much as possible and then form theories, opinions, and arguments on the basis of this new knowledge and understanding. And what if there is no data that prove your theory? What if, after hours and days of searching, you realize that there is nothing out there that would allow you to make the claim that you wanted to make? Most likely, this will lead to frustration, a change of the paper’s topic, and having to start all over again.

So, should you begin every research project as a disinterested individual without opinions, ideas, and beliefs? Of course not! There is nothing wrong about having opinions, ideas, and beliefs about your subject before beginning the research process. Good researchers and writers are passionate about their work and want to share their passion with the world. Moreover, pre-existing knowledge can be a powerful research-starter. But what separates a true researcher from someone who simply looks for “proof” for a pre-fabricated thesis is that a true researcher is willing to question those pre-existing beliefs and to take his or her understanding of the research topic well beyond what he or she knew at the outset. A good researcher and writer is willing to create new meaning, a new understanding of his or her subject through research and writing.

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14.19: Discussion- Narrowing the Research Topic

This discussion will help you practice narrowing a topic, a skill you will need in the research process.

STEP 1: Imagine that you have been assigned a research paper on technology. As you know, this topic is far too broad for a successful research paper. It needs to be narrowed so that you can go deep on a specific topic. Ask yourself the question, "What aspects of technology am I interested in?" and **make a list of at least five topics**.

STEP 2: Choose one of your listed topics (ideally the one you find most interesting), and perform some preliminary research (Wikipedia, Google search, etc.). **List at least three of the ideas** that arise from this research. For example, if your initial topic was "technology's impact on health," you might find articles linking social media usage to anxiety and depression, articles discussing how 3D printing can create affordable prosthetics, and articles on eye problems caused by excessive screen time.

STEP 3: Choose one of these areas and **narrow your topic again**. For example, if you chose the link between social media and anxiety/depression, you might want to research this phenomenon in teenagers, or you might narrow "social media" to more specific platforms like Instagram or Snapchat. Once you think you have a sufficiently narrow and focused idea, write it out in a question format. For example: What is the relationship between depression/anxiety in teenagers and their use of social media platforms like Instagram and Snapchat?

STEP 4: Explain and discuss your steps in a discussion post, providing information about how you narrowed your topic and including your finalized research question.

STEP 5: Respond in two separate posts to two classmates (in at least 75 words). Write about how you might take another approach to the same topic. Explicitly address their examples and try to extend, complicate, or redirect their points in a substantive, knowledge-demonstrating way.

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14.20: Discussion- Research Scavenger Hunt

In this assignment, you will create a scavenger hunt for your classmates in your chosen field of study using library databases (such as JSTOR, ProQuest, EBSCOHost, WilsonWeb, ERIC, and DOAJ). For example, if you are majoring in Psychology, use Psychology-related databases and articles. If you are not yet sure of your major, pick a subject area that interests you. The scavenger hunt should assist participants in familiarizing themselves with:

- Academic Journals
- Browsing the databases by Subject, Title, and Author/Publisher
- Advanced Search functions
    - Boolean phrases
    - Using fields to narrow searches
        - Publication Dates
        - Item Type

The hunt must require students to visit **at least three unique academic journals and articles** and answer **at least three questions** about each, for a minimum of nine total questions. You should include the steps of the scavenger hunt. For example, one part of the scavenger hunt could say:

1. Go to the JSTOR database.
2. Browse by Subject.
3. Select Education.
4. Select the Research in Higher Education journal.
5. Questions:
    1. What is please type in the name of one of the article titles from February 2014 55(1) Research in Higher Education.
    2. What is the main idea of that article?
    3. <Inswer your own question here>

STEP 1: Create a scavenger hunt by typing out a list of activities that send a fellow classmate to at least 3 academic articles within your library database. Make sure the hunt includes at least nine questions for them to answer. Post your scavenger hunt to the discussion forum.

STEP 2: Return to the forum and complete the scavenger hunt from a classmate (one that has not been completed already). Copy and paste their questions and your responses in your response. Add a paragraph reflecting on what you learned about research from this activity and what aspects of the scavenger hunt you found most helpful or challenging.

Rubric

Assignment Rubric

Criteria	Not Yet Proficient	Proficient	Exemplary	Points
Scavenger Hunt Search Methods	Scavenger hunt does not utilize a search method or only uses a single search method.	Scavenger hunt does not thoroughly explain the search methods	Scavenger hunt demonstrates the use of at least two appropriate search methods and demonstrates how to go find the needed information	__/2

Academic Databases and Articles	0-1 databases are used in the scavenger hunt	2 databases are used in the scavenger hunt, or articles are not scholarly	Scavenger hunt walks students through the process of finding information from at least 3 academic databases and 3 corresponding articles	__/3
Questions	Not enough questions, or scavenger hunt questions are unclear	Scavenger hunt includes some, but not all questions, or does not ask questions about the different articles.	Scavenger hunt asks at least nine relevant and questions (three for each article).	__/9
Scavenger Hunt Activity	Does not complete the scavenger hunt posted by a classmate.	Partially completes the scavenger hunt or inaccurately answers the questions.	Successfully completes a scavenger hunt posted by a classmate, including the answers to the questions and a summary statement. Answers are accurate and demonstrate the completion of the activity.	__/6

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14.21: Assignment- Evaluate a Source

In this assignment, you will practice using the Four Moves to evaluate a source.

Continue to imagine that you have been assigned a research essay on technology, and you have decided to write about how technology companies use knowledge of human psychology to design their products.

STEP 1: Watch Tristan Harris's 2017 TED Talk, "How a handful of tech companies control billions of minds every day." You can stop watching at minute thirteen, where his talk ends and a Q & A begins.

STEP 2: Next, evaluate this source using the "SIFT" acronym from the four moves:

1. **STOP**: Consider what biases you might bring to this topic, and in 3-6 sentences, reflect on how you can avoid acting on your biases when approaching this source.
2. **INVESTIGATE**: Find information about the author, publication, publication date, and genre of the source. Write about these findings in 3-6 sentences.
3. **FIND BETTER COVERAGE**: Find other comparable sources that are discussing this topic (1-3 sources). Post a link to each source, along with a 3-6 sentence discussion (per source) of how it compares with your original source.
4. **TRACE CLAIMS**: If possible, find the original source of any claims, quotes, or media. Paste links, and discuss any significant findings from this step.

After writing your answers, go find another source on this same topic, and evaluate this source in the same way you did the TED Talk (again with a minimum of three sentences per point). Keep in mind that you are not looking for a "perfect" source for this assignment. You are just showing that you understand each of the components of the Four Moves and can apply this method to any source.

Finally, reflect on your findings. In 3-5 sentences, discuss what the four moves showed you about the credibility, reliability, and relevance of your sources. Would it be appropriate to use in a research essay?

Rubric

Rubric				
Criteria	Proficient	Developing	Not Evident	Points
Explains SIFT components in the TED Talk source	Thoroughly and insightfully explains how the source meets/does not meet all four SIFT components.	Cursorily explains how the source meets/does not meet all five SIFT components.	Does not sufficiently explain how the source meets/does not meet all five SIFT components.	__/7
Explains SIFT components in the individually chosen source	Thoroughly and insightfully explains how the source meets/does not meet all five SIFT components.	Cursorily explains how the source meets/does not meet all SIFT components.	Does not sufficiently explain how the source meets/does not meet all five SIFT Method components.	__/7
Meets length requirement and includes reflection	Meets the three-sentence minimum requirement for every component.	Meets the three-sentence minimum requirement for some, but not all components.	Does not meet the three-sentence minimum requirement for any components.	__/4
Writes clearly and accurately	Writes in clear, descriptive sentences with no or few grammatical errors.	Writes in occasionally unclear sentences with some grammatical errors.	Writes in unclear, incorrect, or fragmented sentences with numerous grammatical errors.	__/2
Total:				__/20

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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15.2: Introduction to Integrating Source Material
15.3: Bringing Sources into the Conversation
15.4: Quoting
15.5: Paraphrasing
15.6: Summarizing
15.7: Synthesizing Sources
15.8: Introduction to Writing Ethically
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15.10: Defining Plagiarism
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15.12: What Needs Citing?
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15.15: MLA Document Formatting
15.16: MLA In-Text Citations
15.17: MLA Works Cited Entries
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15.25: Assignment- Incorporating and Documenting Sources
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15.1: Why It Matters- The Research Process—Using and Citing Sources

Do you know how to use and cite sources?



In this module, you will learn how to use the words and ideas of others in your own writing.

Your authority as a thinker and writer is enhanced when you demonstrate your ability to engage in a conversation with the words and ideas of others. By using and integrating outside sources in a fair and attentive manner, you demonstrate that you have carefully researched and considered your topic. Your reader sees not only your ideas alone but also your points contextualized by the conversations of others. In this way, you establish yourself as one member of an intellectual community. A key component of properly integrating outside sources is also citing them appropriately. In this module, we'll also examine documentation styles and learn about how to use both in-text and end-of-paper citations.

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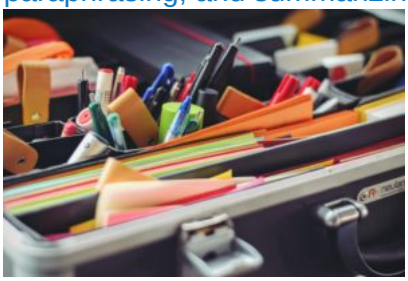
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15.2: Introduction to Integrating Source Material

What you'll learn to do: synthesize outside sources with your own writing through effective quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing



Well-integrated source material can build the strength of your argument, but integrating sources is a difficult task. Incorporating someone else's ideas and words into your own writing can be confusing. Fortunately, certain strategies can help—this section will help you learn to integrate sources smoothly using a strategy known as the "source sandwich." You'll learn the best ways to include a quote from another source as well as how to integrate paraphrased and summarized passages alongside your own words.

You are the ultimate author of your text, so your words and ideas should make up the bulk of your writing. Using other sources effectively, however, allows you to place your writing into a broader conversation and thus to strengthen and enhance the credibility of your work.

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15.3: Bringing Sources into the Conversation

Learning Objective

- Use the “source sandwich” and signal phrases to integrate sources into your writing

Integrating Material from Sources



Figure 1. Correctly utilizing and synthesizing your sources is much like fitting together the pieces of a puzzle.

Integrating others’ ideas and words materials into your own text can be tricky. Consider the metaphor that writing a paper and including sources is a kind of conversation about a topic. When you’re discussing a topic in person with one or more people, you will find yourself referencing others’ ideas (outside sources):

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

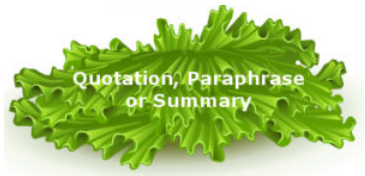
Notice how we automatically shape our sentences to work references to others’ ideas into the flow of conversation. Think about this next time you try to work a source into a piece of writing: if you were speaking this aloud in conversation, how would you introduce the material to your listeners? What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

And when you reference someone else’s ideas, whether you use a direct quotation, a summary, or a paraphrase, it is important to distinguish source material from your own ideas, to explain how the cited source fits into your argument, and to properly cite that material.

You’ll want to 1) transition into and introduce the source, 2) use a signal phrase to actually move into the material from the source, 3) provide a citation that can be easily connected to the full citation material in your bibliography or works cited list, and 4) explain how this material fits into your argument. This method of source integration is sometimes called a “**source sandwich**.” An illustration of the “source sandwich” appears below.

The Source sandwich

	**Remember that this is your writing, so your use of a source is based on your argument or claim. So begin your quote sandwich with a sentence that focuses on your idea, ideally with a clear transition linking to your overall thesis or to the argument in the previous section.**
	**A signal phrase is an action verb phrase that connects the source’s author with its content.**

	**The source's content comes after the signal phrase. This content can be summary, paraphrase, or direct quotation.**
	**The in-text citation identifies the source and connects the body of your paper with the references or works cited page.**
	**The explanation of the source content's relevance is your synthesis or analysis of the content and an illustration that shows how it relates to your own work.**

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

? ? Try It

Read the following passage and answer the questions below.

Reflective practice has also started to replace detention in schools across the country. Robert W. Coleman Elementary School is one of the first to adopt this method. As of 2014, this school has had no suspensions. When students fight or misbehave, they are sent to a "mindful me" room instead of the principal's office, and they learn to peacefully solve these conflicts themselves (Khorsandi). Administrators at the school claim to have seen a marked improvement in student behavior.

Coleman Principal Carillian Thompson explains, "The mindfulness practices have actually taught the students how to redirect that negative energy into something positive" (Khorsandi). The changes have resulted in more focus on academics and extracurricular activities at Coleman, which has made parents in the district happy. In fact, many parents have switched their thinking from once believing punitive measures are necessary to modify children's behaviors to now seeing reflective practices as meaningful alternatives to detention. The experience at Coleman Elementary School is not unqiue; many parents across the country have switched their thinking from once believing punitive measures are necessary to modify children's behaviors to now seeing reflective practices as meaningful alternatives to detention.

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Signal Phrases

When you incorporate a quotation, at least the first time you use a source, you should provide some kind of signal phrase (set-up for your quote) that guides your reader into understanding that you are going to be presenting ideas from another person. Typically, we address the credibility of the source's author and the relevance of the quotation. Often this means including the author's credentials the first time they are introduced. For example, consider these examples of how Grace Chapman could be introduced for the first time:

- Chapmen explains – **no credibility**
- Grace Chapmen, Curator of Human Health & Evolutionary Medicine at the Springfield Natural History Museum, explains – **credibility based on position as curator**

- Grace Chapman, as Curator of Human Health & Evolutionary Medicine at the Springfield Natural History Museum, offers a different perspective on this subject and argues – **credibility and relevance based on a different perspective**

The signal phrase works as a signpost to alert the reader of your paper to the incorporation of another's ideas. Signal phrases are used to clearly differentiate between your thoughts and those of the authors who you quote, paraphrase or summarize. For example, in introducing a quote, paraphrase, or summary, you could use the following signal phrases:

- *Jones states that…*
- *Miller argues that…*
- *According to the Pew Research Center, …*

Other commonly used verbs in signal phrases are:

acknowledges	comments	describes	maintains	reports
adds	compares	disputes	notes	responds
admits	concedes	emphasizes	observes	shows
agrees	confirms	endorses	points out	states
argues	contends	illustrates	reasons	suggests
asserts	declares	implies	refutes	summarizes
claims	denies	insists	rejects	writes

The important thing is to make sure you don't leave your audience wondering why a quotation has been used and/or if the source for the quotation is trustworthy.

Providing Context

Quotations should always be introduced and incorporated into your argument rather than dropped into your paper without context. Consider this first BAD example:

There are many instances of people being taken in by fake news stories. "One voter from Mississippi said that he read about millions of illegal aliens voting in the 2016 primaries and thought it was true" (Myers).

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 in which an effective signal phrase is used to better introduce the quote into the essay:

There are many instances of people being taken in by fake news stories. In her *Los Angeles Times* article on how fake stories impact voters in America, Geena Myers identifies how one particular voter in the South "read about millions of illegal aliens voting in the 2016 primaries and thought it was true" (Myers).

In this revision, the writer uses the signal phrase to gracefully introduce the source and the quotation into the argument. As a result, the reader can more easily understand both the point the writer is trying to make and how this source serves as evidence for that point.

Finally, try to use variety in how you introduce quotations. For example, instead of writing:

In the opening line of his short story, "The Open Boat," Stephen Crane writes, "None of them knew the color of the sky" (339). This implies the idea that "all sense of certainty" in the lives of these men is gone (Wolford 18).

There is nothing wrong with the signal phrasing in the first sentence above. But you don't always have to use the same formula for introducing a quotation. Try writing instead:

"None of them knew the color of the sky" (Crane 339), the opening line of Stephen Crane's "The Open Boat," implies that "all sense of certainty" (Wolford 18) in the lives of these men is gone.

The combination of these two sentences into one is a more sophisticated approach to integrating a quotation. Every quotation does not need to be introduced with the same exact formula.

Adding Credibility through Source Integration

We know that using effective signal phrases when introducing sources adds credibility and relevance to your argument. You can also enhance your credibility by choosing effective sources, including complete citations, and providing supporting evidence for your claims. The table below will help you see the application of different markers of credibility. Think about your strategy for maintaining credibility and authority in your own writing: you will most likely rely on all four markers in some combination.

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

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15.4: Quoting

Learning Objective

- Effectively integrate and introduce quotes into text

Now that you've thought about source integration broadly, it's time to explore the three main tools for integrating source content into your own writing: quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing. You've probably used direct quotations in your papers before, but did you know that you should only use quotations in your paper under certain conditions? Summary and paraphrase of source material can also be effective, often instead of direct quotations. First, however, let's take a closer look at when and how to use a direct quote.

What Does Quotation Look Like?

Direct quotations are words and phrases that are taken directly from another source and then used word-for-word in your paper. **Quoting is using the EXACT wording of the source material.** 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 should you use a direct quotation?

When writing papers that require the use of outside source material, it is often tempting to cite only direct quotations from your sources. The danger, however, is that your paper will become nothing more than a series of quotations linked together by a few connecting words. Your paper may seem to be a collection of others' thoughts, with little thinking on your part. To avoid falling into this trap, follow a few simple pointers:

- **Avoid using long quotations merely as space-fillers**. While this is an attractive option when faced with a ten-page paper, the overuse of long quotations gives the reader the impression you are not thinking for yourself.
- **Don't use quotations to make your point for you**. Readers should be able to skip the quotations in your paper and still understand all your main points.
- **Use only as much of the quotation as you need.** Excerpt from the source material and leave out any unnecessary words.
- When introducing direct quotations, try to **use a variety of verbs in your signal phrases**. Don't always rely on stock verbs such as "states" or "says." Think for a little while about the purpose of your quotation and then choose a context-appropriate verb.
- **Finally, don't use only direct quotations**. Try using paraphrases in addition to direct quotations. To the reader, the effective use of paraphrases indicates that you took the time to think about the meaning behind the quotation's words.



Figure 1. Quotes that you use in an academic research essay will be very different than quotes that decorate a coffee mug you might buy your sister for her birthday. Ask yourself: is this quote relevant to my argument?

Direct quotations should be used sparingly and only with good reason! Some valid reasons for quoting include:

- When not using the author's exact wording would change the original meaning
- When the language of the quote is particularly significant
- To lend authority to the point you are trying to make

Quoting Words and Parts of Sentences

Although you generally want to avoid using too many short quotes when you write, there are times when you need to quote just a word or a phrase as a part of your own sentence. Short phrases and single words should work smoothly with the structure of your own sentence. Look, for example, at the way the brief passages from Thoreau's Walden aid in the flow and credibility of this sentence:

- The demands of a market economy, in fact, would penalize a man who chose to give precedence to relationships and "true integrity" over labor: an over-emphasis on work leaves a man dehumanized and with "no time to be anything but a machine" (Thoreau 21).

Block Quotations and Ellipses

Long quotations should be kept to a minimum in your essay. Additionally, you should only use those parts of the long quotation that you really need. If a passage has a middle section that doesn't relate to the point you are making, drop it out and replace it with an **ellipsis** (…) to indicate that you have left out part of the original text (see below).

Set up long quotations in blocks; these are generally called block quotations. Block quotations are most often used if the passage takes up more than four typed lines in your paper. Indentation and spacing guidelines vary depending on the formatting style you are using (APA, MLA, Chicago, or other).

Leave the quotation marks off of a block quotation. The indentation itself is the visual indicator to the reader that the text is a quote. Block quotations usually are introduced with a full sentence that summarizes the main point of the quotation. This introductory sentence should be followed by a colon, as in the example below.

> Henry David Thoreau argued in Walden that men who are over-occupied with labor run the risk of becoming dehumanized. They must be granted the time to learn about, and address, their own shortcomings in order to fully mature as humans:
>
> He has not time to be anything but a machine. How can he remember well his ignorance–which his growth requires–who has so often to use his knowledge? We should feed and clothe him gratuitously sometimes, and recruit him with our cordials, before we judge of him. The finest qualities of our nature, like the bloom on fruits, can be preserved only by the most delicate handling. (23)

Here's the same block quote with an ellipsis to indicate the removal of a bit of unnecessary text from the source material. The use of an ellipsis is particularly effective if the original quotation includes unnecessary or potentially confusing language.

> He has not time to be anything but a machine. How can he remember well his ignorance . . . who has so often to use his knowledge? We should feed and clothe him gratuitously sometimes, and recruit him with our cordials, before we judge of him. The finest qualities of our nature, like the bloom on fruits, can be preserved only by the most delicate handling. (23)

It's important to remember that longer quotes should be set up and followed by commentary and analysis, just like shorter quotes. Be sure to provide some analysis after that quote to let your audience know why the quote is there and why it's important. Otherwise, long quotes can look and feel like "filler" to your audience.

Brackets

If you need to add information to make a quote more clear, you add brackets to show your reader which words you have added. Let's take a look at an example.

Suppose you are including a quotation from an essay about the importance of finding a mentor in college. The particular sentence you are interested in reads as follows: "There is nothing more important to your success during and after college" (Purple 23). If you were to quote this sentence, the reader would have no idea what exactly is being recommended here. We could address this lack of clarity with information added outside the quotation, but we could also use brackets to add clarifying information inside the quotation.

- "There is nothing more important to your success during and after college" (Purple 23) than finding a mentor.
- "There is nothing more important [than finding a mentor] to your success during and after college" (Purple 23).

The brackets here make clear that "than finding a mentor" are words we have added to the quotation. The added words need to reflect and clarify the meaning of the original quotation but they can also help make our use of the quotation more graceful.

Here are a few other common uses for brackets:

> "[N]othing," according to Purple, is "more important to your success during and after college" (23) than finding a mentor. *Here the brackets make clear that the capital N to start the sentence is our own, not Purple's.*
>
> "There is nothing more important to your [academic and career] success during and after college" (Purple 23) than finding a mentor. *Here we use the brackets to clarify what Purple means by success, again using our own words in brackets.*

Be careful: [Brackets] are different from (parentheses). Don't get them mixed up! We use brackets when we are adding additional text but parentheses for parenthetical citations of sources (which we'll be discussing later).

? ? Try It

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15.5: Paraphrasing

Learning Objective

- Describe when and how to paraphrase

There are two ways of integrating source material into your writing other than directly quoting from it: paraphrase and summary.

Paraphrasing and summarizing are similar. When we paraphrase, we process information or ideas from another person's text and put it in our own words. **The main difference between paraphrase and summary is scope**: if summarizing means rewording and condensing, then paraphrasing means rewording without drastically altering length. However, paraphrasing is also generally more faithful to the spirit of the original; whereas a summary requires you to process and invites your own perspective, a paraphrase ought to mirror back the original idea using your own language.

What is Paraphrasing?

In a paraphrase, you use your own words to explain the specific points another writer has made. If the original text refers to an idea or term discussed earlier in the text, your paraphrase may also need to explain or define that idea. You may also need to interpret specific terms made by the writer in the original text.

Be careful not to add information or commentary that isn't part of the original passage in the midst of your paraphrase. You don't want to add to or take away from the meaning of the passage you are paraphrasing. Save your comments and analysis until after you have finished your paraphrase.

And be careful to remember that your paraphrase still requires a citation. Even when you use someone else's ideas but put those ideas into your own words, you still need to acknowledge the source of those ideas!

What Does Good Paraphrasing Look Like?

In our first example, the writer is using MLA style to write a research essay for a literature class. Let's compare two examples.

- Example 1: While Gatsby is deeply in love with Daisy in *The Great Gatsby*, his love for her is indistinguishable from his love of his possessions (Callahan).
- Example 2: John F. Callahan suggests in his article "F. Scott Fitzgerald's Evolving American Dream" that while Gatsby is deeply in love with Daisy in *The Great Gatsby*, his love for her is indistinguishable from his love of his possessions (381).

In example 1, it's hard to tell what exactly is being paraphrased. Is the entire source about the comparison between Gatsby's love for Daisy and his love for his possessions? And, if this is the first or only reference to this particular piece of evidence in the research essay, the writer should include more information and signal phrasing about the source of this paraphrase in order to properly introduce it.

In example 2, the writer incorporates the names of the author and the title of the source material, so the credibility of the source material is now clear to the reader. Furthermore, because there is a page number at the end of this sentence, the reader understands that this passage is a paraphrase of a particular part of Callahan's essay and not a summary of the entire essay.

Here's another example, from an essay in APA style for a criminal justice class.

- Example 1: Computer criminals have lots of ways to get away with credit card fraud (Cameron, 2002).
- Example 2: Cameron (2002) points out that computer criminals intent on committing credit card fraud are able to take advantage of the fact that there aren't enough officials working to enforce computer crimes. Criminals are also able to use technology to their advantage by communicating via email and chat rooms with other criminals.

In example 1, the main problem with this paraphrase is that it's so vague and general that is doesn't adequately explain to the reader what the point of the evidence really is or why that evidence matters. Remember: your readers have no way of automatically

knowing why you as a research writer think that a particular piece of evidence is useful in supporting your point. This is why it is key that you introduce and explain your evidence.



Figure 1. Paraphrasing sources can sometimes be a tricky skill to develop, and often requires creative thinking. Use the practice examples below to fine-tune your paraphrasing skills.

In example 2, the writer includes additional information that introduces and explains the point of the evidence. In this particular example, the author's name is also incorporated into the explanation of the evidence as well. In APA, it is preferable to weave in the author's name into your essay, usually at the beginning of a sentence. However, it would also have been acceptable to end the paraphrase with just the author's last name and the date of publication in parentheses.

What are the benefits of paraphrasing? It contextualizes the information (who said it, when, and where). It restates all the key points used by the source. Most importantly, it allows the writer to maintain a strong voice while sharing important information from the source.

Paraphrasing is likely the most common way you will integrate your source information. Quoting should be minimal in most research papers.

Just remember, changing a few words here and there doesn't count as a paraphrase. Students sometimes attempt to paraphrase by just changing a few words in the source material. The key is to understand the material put it into your own original words, but without changing the ideas. It's tricky, but practice makes perfect!

? ? Try it

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

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

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A critical component of successful paraphrasing includes citing your original source. The citation may be made as an in-text citation, a footnote, or an endnote, but it must be included. You want to make clear and get credit for engaging with other thinkers in your work, and a correct citation foregrounds that strength. Failure to cite your sources is a violation of intellectual integrity (plagiarism), or taking someone else's words or ideas and presenting them as your own. Sources should be always be cited in the appropriate way. Consider the following examples.

- Example of in-text citation:
  - According to Levy (1997), the tutor-tool framework is useful.
- Example of footnote or endnote:
  - According to Levy, the tutor-tool framework is useful.
- Bottom of page or chapter:
  - Michael Levy, Computer-Assisted Language Learning: Context and Conceptualization (New York: Oxford), 178.

? ? Try It

Take a look at the following paraphrased passages and determine if it is plagiarized or not plagiarized.

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1. Gardner, Howard. Multiple Intelligences: New Horizons in Theory and Practice. BasicBooks, 2006 ↵

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15.6: Summarizing

Learning Objectives

- Describe when and how to summarize

What Does Summary Look Like?

Summarizing involves condensing the main idea of a source into a much shorter overview (anywhere from a single sentence to a page). A summary outlines a source's most important points and general position. When summarizing a source, it's important to give credit to the original author. You should reference the author or source in the appropriate citation method at the end of the summary.

A good summary accomplishes the following:

- It identifies or names the piece and its author(s) and states the main purpose of the text.
  Example: In his essay, "**Consider the Lobster**," writer David Foster Wallace asks readers to consider the ethical implications of feasting on lobsters.
- It captures the text's main points.
- It does *not include* the reader's opinions, feelings, beliefs, counterarguments, etc.
- It is short. The idea of a summary is to "boil down" or condense a text to just a few sentences.

How to Construct a Summary

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

? ? CAUTION!

Don't cut and paste summaries from other articles and use them as your own. Many of the periodical indexes that are available as part of your library's computer system include abstracts of articles. Do not cut this abstract material and then paste it into your own annotated bibliography. For one thing, this is plagiarism. Second, cutting and pasting from the abstract defeats one of the purposes of writing summaries and creating an annotated bibliography in the first place, which is to help you understand and explain your research.

When you summarize, you reword and condense another author's writing. Be aware, though, that summary also requires individual thought: when you reword, it should be a result of you processing the idea yourself, and when you condense, you must think critically about which parts of the text are most important.



Figure 1. Just as a variety of color makes a tulip field more interesting, adding direct quotes within your summary will mix things up and hold the interest and attention of your reader.

How to Mix Quotation with Summary

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

- “Colomb and Williams emphasize that drafting is `an act of discovery’ that can fuel a writer’s creative thinking. They acknowledge that some writers have to draft carefully and stick closely to their outlines, but they advise writers to draft as freely and as openly as they can…they show writers how to make the best of a plan while hoping that you will `discover what your storyboard has missed.’”[1]

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

? ? Summary Examples

Look at some more examples of appropriate summaries in the exercise below.

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Quote, Paraphrase, or Summarize?

The best way to start to understand the different rhetorical affordances of paraphrase, summary, and quotation is to see how they work together in actual writing. In this practice activity, you will read a passage from a student research paper and identify where you see paraphrase, summary, and quotation at work.

? ? Try It

Use the following paragraphs to answer the questions that follow.

> The history of the Mississippi Delta centers around one thing: farming. During the transition from segregated to integrated schools, small towns in the Delta were home to illustrious plantations and booming manufacturing plants. The economy was not spectacular, but it was habitable. Now, most of the manufacturing plants have closed their doors and farm jobs are becoming more and more sparse (Elliott). NPR’s Debbie Elliott notes that “the decline of manual labor and exodus of manufacturing jobs have made difficult conditions worse in one of the nation’s poorest regions.” Six Deltan counties have seen a population decline greater than 20% since 1970.
>
> The declining economy is another contributing factor to the decline of Deltan schools. In a *Washington Post* article about schools in the Delta, writer Peter Whoriskey explains how rural schools that are primarily comprised of at-risk youth and offer substantially lower salaries than nearby schools have a difficult time finding and preserving qualified teachers. One section of Whoriskey’s article includes a story of an untrained teacher hired through an “emergency license” who was “found hiding” when his third-grade students tossed papers in his direction.

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...sessments/5184

There are no hard and fast rules for when to use direct quotations, when to paraphrase, and when to summarize. Like so many other parts of the writing process, this rhetorical decision will become easier with practice. Keep in mind that the goal of including sources in your writing is to build your credibility (you’ll learn more about this later) and to make your purpose more clear and concise to your audience. These factors should influence the source integration decisions you make.

As you are writing your own paper, use this checklist to help you decide when to paraphrase, summarize, or directly quote from sources.

? ? using sources checklist

- Use direct quotations . . .
  - sparingly and when the original language has a strong impact
  - with set-up (signal phase), context, and proper citation
  - followed by commentary, analysis, or explanation
- Use paraphrase . . .
  - to contextualize the information (who said it, when, and where)
  - to restate all the supporting points to develop the main idea of the original text
  - to share important information from the source while maintaining your own voice

- Use summary . . .
  - to contextualize the information (who said it, when, and where)
  - by condensing the source to its main ideas and without using quotations or citing specific supporting points of the passage
  - to support your claims

1. Kate L. Turabian. A Manual for Writers of Research Papers, Theses, and Dissertations, Seventh Edition: Chicago Style for Students and Researchers. Revised by Wayne C. Booth, Gregory G. Colomb, Joseph M. Williams, and University of Chicago Press Editorial Staff. (University of Chicago Press, 2007), 83-7. ↵

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15.7: Synthesizing Sources

Learning Objectives

- Evaluate how good source synthesis and integration builds credibility

What is Synthesis?

Synthesis is the combining of two or more things to produce something new. When you read and write, you will be asked to synthesize by taking ideas from what you read and combining them to form new ideas.

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 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*.

You analyze and synthesize even before you compose your first draft. In an article called, "Teaching Conventions of Academic Discourse," Teresa Thonney outlines six standard features of academic writing. Use the list to help frame your purpose and to ensure that you are adopting the characteristics of a strong academic writer as you synthesize from various sources:

1. Writers state the value of their work and announce their plan for their papers.
2. Writers adopt a voice of authority.
3. Writers respond to what others have said about their topic.
4. Writers acknowledge that others might disagree with the position they have taken.
5. Writers use academic and discipline-specific vocabulary.
6. Writers emphasize evidence, often in tables, graphs, and images.

? ? Cooking With Your Sources

*Let's return to the example of Marvin, who is working on his research assignment. Marvin already learned from the online professor that he should spend time **walking** with his sources (knowing where to find them) and **talking** to his sources (knowing who is conversing about them and what they are saying). Now Marvin will learn the importance of **cooking** with his sources, or creating the right recipe for an excellent paper.*

O-Prof: Let's take a look at the third metaphor: *cooking*. When you *cook* with sources, you process them in new ways. Cooking, like writing, involves a lot of decisions. For instance, you might decide to combine ingredients in a way that keeps the full flavor and character of each ingredient.

Marvin: Kind of like chili cheese fries? I can taste the flavor of the chili, the cheese, and the fries separately.

O-Prof: Yes. But other food preparation processes can change the character of the various ingredients. You probably wouldn't enjoy gobbling down a stick of butter, two raw eggs, a cup of flour, or a cup of sugar (well, maybe the sugar!). But if you mix these ingredients and expose them to a 375-degree temperature, chemical reactions transform them into something good to eat, like a cake.

Marvin: You're making me hungry. But what do chili cheese fries and cakes have to do with writing?

O-Prof: Sometimes, you might use direct quotes from your sources, as if you were throwing walnuts whole into a salad. The reader will definitely "taste" your original source. Other times, you might paraphrase ideas and combine them into an intricate argument. The flavor of the original source might be more subtle in the latter case, with only your source documentation indicating where your ideas came from. In some ways, the writing assignments your professors give you are like recipes. As an apprentice writing *cook*, you should analyze your assignments to determine what "ingredients" (sources) to use, what "cooking processes" to follow, and what the final "dish" (paper) should look like. Let's try a few sample assignments. Here's one:

> **Assignment 1: Critique** (given in a human development course)
>
> We've read and studied Freud's theory of how the human psyche develops; now it's time to evaluate the theory. Read at least two articles that critique Freud's theory, chosen from the list I provided in class. Then, write an essay discussing the strengths and weaknesses of Freud's theory.

Assume you're a student in this course. Given this assignment, how would you describe the required ingredients, processes, and product?

Marvin thinks for a minute, while chewing and swallowing a mouthful of apple.

Marvin: Let's see if I can break it down:

Ingredients

- everything we've read about Freud's theory
- our class discussions about the theory
- two articles of my choice taken from the list provided by the instructor

Processes: I have to read those two articles to see their criticisms of Freud's theory. I can also review my notes from class, since we discussed various critiques. I have to think about what aspects of Freud's theory explain human development well, and where the theory falls short—like in class, we discussed how Freud's theory reduces human development to sexuality alone.

Product: The final essay needs to include both strengths and weaknesses of Freud's theory. The professor didn't specifically say this, but it's also clear I need to incorporate some ideas from the two articles I read—otherwise why would she have assigned those articles?

O-Prof: Good. How about this one?

Assignment 3: Research Paper (given in a health and environment course)

Write a 6–8-page paper in which you explain a health problem related to water pollution (e.g., arsenic poisoning, gastrointestinal illness, skin disease, etc.). Recommend a potential way or ways this health problem might be addressed. Be sure to cite and document the sources you use for your paper.

Marvin:

Ingredients: No specific guidance here, except that sources have to relate to water pollution and health. I've already decided I'm interested in how bottled water might help with health where there's water pollution. I'll have to pick a health problem and find sources about how water pollution can cause that problem. Gastrointestinal illness sounds promising. I'll ask the reference librarian where I'd be likely to find good articles about water pollution, bottled water, and gastrointestinal illness.

Process: There's not very specific information here about what process to use, but our conversation's given me some ideas. I'll use scholarly articles to find the connection between water pollution and gastrointestinal problems, and whether bottled water could prevent those problems.

Product: Obviously, my paper will explain the connection between water and gastrointestinal health. It'll evaluate whether bottled water provides a good option in places where the water's polluted, then give a recommendation about what people should do. The professor did say I should address any objections readers might raise—for instance, bottled water may turn out to be a good option, but it's a lot more expensive than tap water. Finally, I'll need to provide in-text citations and document my sources in a reference list.

O-Prof: You're on your way. Think for a minute about these assignments. Did you notice that the "recipes" varied in their specificity?

Marvin: Yeah. The first assignment gave me very specific information about exactly what source "ingredients" to use. But in the second assignment, I had to figure it out on my own. And the processes varied, too. In the second assignment—my own assignment—I'll have to use content from my sources to support my recommendation.

O-Prof: Different professors provide different levels of specificity in their writing assignments. If you have trouble figuring out the "recipe," ask the professor for more information. Keep in mind that when it comes to "cooking with sources," no one expects you to be an executive chef the first day you get to college. Over time, you'll become more expert at writing with sources, more able to choose and use sources on your own.

✔ ✔ Watch It

Watch this video to learn more about the synthesis process.

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

You can view the transcript for “Synthesis: Definition & Examples” here (opens in new window).

Building Credibility through Source Integration

Writers are delighted when they find good sources because they know they can use those sources to make their writing stronger. Skillful integration of those sources adds to an argument’s persuasiveness but also builds the credibility of the argument and the writer.

Well-integrated sources build credibility in several ways. First, the source material adds evidence and support to your argument, making it more persuasive. Second, the signal phrase highlights the reputation and qualifications of the source, thereby adding to the source material’s credibility. Third, effective citation makes it easy for your reader to find and investigate the original source, building your credibility as a trustworthy writer. Finally, your thorough explanation of the source’s relevance to your argument demonstrates **your critical thinking and reasoning**, another avenue to increased credibility.

Notice in the example below how the student is able to synthesize multiple sources on the minimum wage in the United States in order to demonstrate familiarity with and respond to other voices on the topic. The writer is also able to state with authority their own perspective on the minimum wage and economic inequality based on the effective discussion and synthesis of sources.

? ? Student Example

The U.S. minimum wage is out of line with other industrialized nations. As the United States is one of the richest countries in the world, it should not have citizens that live at such a low standard of life compared to the rest of its population. University of Connecticut Professor of Law and author of *Economism: Bad Economics and the Rise of Inequality* James Kwak notes in an article in *The Atlantic*, "The United States currently has the lowest minimum wage, as proportion of its average wage, of any advanced economy." European countries that the U.S. helped rebuild after World War II have seen wages much higher than the rest of the globe. A graph in the May 20, 2015 issue of *The Economist* shows that for the United States to be on par with other economies in the OECD (Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development), the minimum wage should be approximately $12 an hour ("Pay"). The United States risks falling behind not only in global economic growth but also in prestige as it neglects to raise the minimum wage and allows the divide between the rich and the poor to continue growing.

Comment [KFF1]: Signal phrase builds credibility. This signal phrase highlights the source's reputation and qualifications, adding to the source material's credibility.

Effective Citation Builds Credibility. The writer incorporates the author's last name which matches the entry on the reference page. A reader could easily track down the source, even without an in-text citation, thereby adding to the writer's trustworthiness.

Comment [KFF2]: Evidence builds credibility. This evidence from a highly-respected source provides good support for the writer's point. Rather than relying solely on his opinion, the writer integrates solid evidence from a credible source.

Comment [KFF3]: Evidence builds credibility. This evidence bolsters the writer's point with solid information from a reputable and much-consulted publication on economic policy.

Comment [KFF4]: Effective citation builds credibility. Here the writer uses a key word from the title of the article, which matches the entry on the reference page. A reader could easily track down the source, even with no source author, adding to the writer's trustworthiness.

Comment [KFF5]: Explanation of source's relevance builds credibility. Here the writer ties the evidence to the thesis of his paper, demonstrating his critical thinking and reasoning, thereby adding to his credibility.

Download the PDF

In the activity below, you’ll practice building your synthesis based on your analysis and thinking about other source material.

? ? Try It

Examine the use of signal phrases, direct quotations from an outside source, citation, and explanation of relevance to consider how well the writer’s source integration builds credibility.

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1291006520432442118/embed

Synthesis, then, is the final step in the process of using sources. Good writers strive to include other voices in conversation, and they do so using direct quotes, paraphrase, and summary. The most important step, however, in integrating source material, is synthesis where we compare, contrast, and combine those other voices in order to fairly and accurately represent the existing conversation on the topic and thus to demonstrate how our ideas fit into or respond to that existing conversation.

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15.8: Introduction to Writing Ethically

What you'll learn to do: evaluate concerns about plagiarism and how to demonstrate academic integrity



Figure 1. Melania Trump

Parts of Melania Trump's speech at the Republican National Convention in July 2016 were strikingly similar to Michelle Obama's speech from eight years ago. How does this happen? Plagiarism at this level is typically the result of sloppiness, not outright theft, but it's still just as egregious a result no matter the underlying cause. If you don't want this to happen to you, then you need to be aware of plagiarism and how to avoid it.

In 2008, here's what Michelle Obama said, in part (most of the highlights in these passages, which show the similar parts, are from a Wall Street Journal article about the plagiarism).

Like my family, they scrimped and saved so that he could have opportunities they never had themselves. And Barack and I were raised with so many of the same values: that **you work hard for what you want in life**; **that your word is your bond and you do what you say you're going to do; that you treat people with dignity and respect**, even if you don't know them, and even if you don't agree with them. And Barack and I set out to build lives guided by these values, and pass them on to the next generation. Because **we want our children—and all children in this nation—to know that the only limit to the height of your achievements is the reach of your dreams and your willingness to work for them**.

And here's the similar passage from Melania Trump's speech:

From a young age, my parents impressed on me the values that **you work hard for what you want in life**, that **your word is your bond and you do what you say and keep your promise, that you treat people with respect**. They taught and showed me values and morals in their daily lives. That is a lesson that I continue to pass along to our son. And we need to pass those lessons on to the many generations to follow. Because **we want our children in this nation to know that the only limit to your achievements is the strength of your dreams and your willingness to work for them.**

You can watch a video of the similar snippets from their speeches here.

How plagiarism really happens

According to author Josh Bernoff, Melania's Trump plagiarism is probably not the obvious kind of cut-and-paste theft you might associate with cheating on a research paper, but it's still clearly plagiarism. He imagines that Melania Trump and her speechwriters talked about what she wanted to communicate and what's important to her. They probably discussed ideas, developed a theme, and researched it. They also researched past, successful speeches from prospective first ladies. The result of that research was a bunch of fragments from all over the place. One of those fragments was the piece of Michelle Obama's speech. As the fragments coalesced into a speech, that one got included, because the writers lost track of its provenance, or Melania Trump did.

You may want to believe a more nefarious explanation, but carelessness is far more likely. For example, the famous primatologist Jane Goodall blamed "chaotic note taking" for plagiarized passages in her book, *Seeds of Hope*. Unfortunately, this stuff happens all the time.

Not much happened to Melania Trump after her "mistake." The consequences for students who make these kinds of mistakes, however, can be severe.

How you can avoid this mistake

How do you gather your notes? Do you bookmark Web passages, use Evernote or Zotero, or create index cards or sticky notes? No matter your method, you should have a consistent and clear method to keep track of your sources. You wouldn't walk around without clothes on; notes shouldn't get around unless they're clothed in source attributions. And you should make those attributions

habitually and consistently, using the same format every time. Your mind can run free, your text can flow, but your attributions must be as fastidious as an accountant's.

While this is a pain, it's not nearly as painful as the repercussions of getting caught for plagiarizing. You *will* get caught. Do you really want to explain whether you were dishonest or just sloppy?

In this section, we'll examine what exactly constitutes plagiarism, ways to avoid it, and best practices for demonstrating academic integrity.

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15.9: Academic Integrity

Learning Objectives

- Evaluate the definition of academic dishonesty

What is 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

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Figure 1. Having a strong sense of academic integrity is essential to your credibility as a writer and your future success as a student.

Academic Dishonesty

In all academic work, students are expected to submit materials that are their own and are to include attribution for any ideas or language that are not their own. Examples of dishonest conduct include, but are not limited to:

- Cheating, including giving and receiving information in examinations.
- Falsification of data, results or sources.
- Collusion, such as working with another person when independent work is assigned.
- Plagiarism.
- Submitting the same paper or report for assignments in more than one course without permission (self-plagiarism).

Self-plagiarism

Students are often shocked to learn that there is even such a thing as self-plagiarism. If I wrote a research paper, doesn't it belong to me? How can it be plagiarism for me to use my own words and ideas? Keep in mind, however, that the professor who assigns you a research paper may or may not be okay with you re-using a paper that you wrote for another class. And does it really seem fair to be able to do so? Instead, think about approaching the professor, discussing your previous research, and asking about whether it would be okay to continue with that research or whether it would be possible to take that research in a new direction.

Cheating

Cheating is the most well-known academically dishonest behavior. Cheating includes more than just copying a neighbor's answers on an exam or peeking at a cheat sheet or storing answers on your phone. Giving or offering information in examinations is also dishonest. Turning in someone else's work as your own is also considered cheating.

Collusion

Collusion, such as working with another person or persons when independent work is assigned, is considered academic dishonesty. While it is fine to work in a team if your professor specifically requires or allows it, be sure to communicate about guidelines on

permissible collaboration if you are unsure (including how to attribute the contributions of others).

? ? Collaboration

It's important to talk with your professors about the kinds of collaboration that may or may not be acceptable in your class. Some faculty encourage group work on homework and problem sets. Others want every piece of work to be completed independently. Especially in writing classes, faculty often (but not always) encourage collaboration as part of the writing process. Often, peer review of rough drafts, for example, is an integral part of the writing process. However, there's no single approach to collaboration in college. Don't assume – ask!

True Story: In 2012, 125 Harvard students were investigated for working together on a take-home final exam. The only rule on the exam was not to work together. Almost half of those students were determined to have cheated, and forced to withdraw from school for a year.

Falsifying Results and Misrepresentation

Falsifying results in studies or experiments is a serious breach of academic honesty. Students are sometimes tempted to make up results if their study or experiment does not produce the results they hoped for. But getting caught has major consequences.

Misrepresenting yourself or your research is, by definition, dishonest. Misrepresentation might include inflating credentials, claiming that a study proves something that it does not, or leaving out inconvenient and/or contradictory results.

True Story: An undergraduate at the University of Kansas claimed to be a researcher and promoted his (unfortunately incorrect) research on how much a Big Mac would cost if the U.S. raised minimum wage. His study was picked up by the Huffington Post, NY Times, and other major news outlets, who then had to publish retractions.

Plagiarism

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 the ideas that you use in your own work.

How Can You Avoid Academic Dishonesty?

- Start your assignments early and stay on track with due dates.
- Ask for help from your professor.
- Join a study group.
- Take careful notes as you do your research and organize your sources.
- Work with a Librarian or the Writing Center to integrate and cite your sources and avoid plagiarism.
- Prioritize your integrity!

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15.10: Defining Plagiarism

Learning Objectives

- Describe and give examples of what constitutes plagiarism

What Counts as Plagiarism?

We typically think of plagiarism as cheating. Plagiarism, however, 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 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 acknowledgment

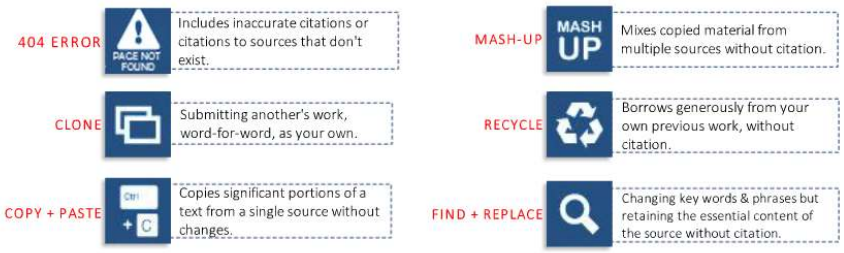


Figure 1. The plagiarism spectrum. There are many different ways to plagiarize. It is your responsibility to know what constitutes plagiarism so you can avoid it in your assignments.

Obvious Plagiarism	Less Obvious Plagiarism
• Turning in someone else's paper as one's own. • Turning in a paper that was bought from a service on the Internet. • Reusing a paper previously turned in for one class and then submitting the same paper or portions of it for subsequent classes without permission of the instructor (self-plagiarism). • Cutting and pasting entire sections from other authors' works into one's own paper. • Using another author's exact words but not putting quotation marks around the quote and citing the work.	• Failing to differentiate between common knowledge and something that needs to be cited. • Failing to include complete and correct citations. • Sticking too closely to another author's words by only changing a few words around when paraphrasing. • Using another author's exact words but not putting quotation marks around the quote even if one cites the work.

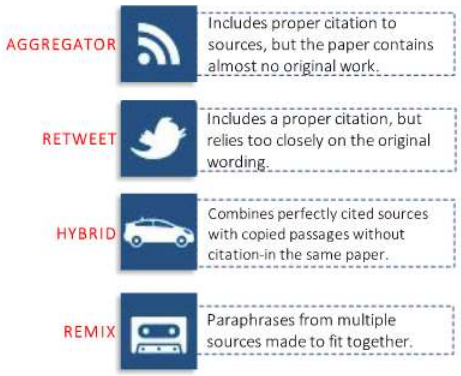


Figure 2. More ways to plagiarize.

? ? Intentional versus unintentional Plagiarism

It can be useful to think about the difference between unintentional and intentional plagiarism. If you get stumped on an assignment, download a paper from a website, and submit it as your own work, you have committed plagiarism. This is an obvious example of **intentional plagiarism**. You know you didn't write the paper! You deliberately copied the work from a website and tried to pass it off as your own. Not good! But **unintentional plagiarism** is much more common and in many ways equally problematic. If you got stumped on an assignment, downloaded a paper from a website, and then tried to rewrite that paper in your own words, without giving proper credit to the website, you still have committed plagiarism, even your intent was to write your own paper. In this second example, the plagiarism may be unintentional. There's nothing wrong with research or using websites to advance your thinking. You must, however, give proper credit to any sources you consult, including using quotations for any words that are not your own and crediting any ideas that come from elsewhere.

Why Should You 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.

✓ ✓ WaTch It

The following video demonstrates the practical importance of always giving credit where credit is due.

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

You can view the transcript for "Just Because You Put It In Your Own Words…" here (opens in new window).

Citing Common Knowledge and Facts

If you cite information that is common knowledge or a fact, you do not need to cite that information. Everyone would agree that the Civil War started in 1861. You don't need a citation for that information, even if you didn't know when the Civil War started until you looked it up! Be careful, however—if there is any controversy or complexity to the information you get from elsewhere, you want to include a source. So, for example, if you are discussing the causes of the Civil War, you probably want to cite your sources, since historians might disagree about the various causes.

Think about it this way. A reader might challenge you about something in your paper, and in that case, you want a source. No reader is going to challenge you about when the Civil War began. That's a fact—so you don't need a source. But if you claim that the Civil War was a conflict over federalism versus states' rights, a reader might disagree and cite instead the centrality of slavery

as a cause for the war. In this case, you would want to be able to offer your source—the expert whose opinion about the cause of the Civil War you have cited. Your reader's argument, then, is with that source and not with you.

? ? Try It

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https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20321

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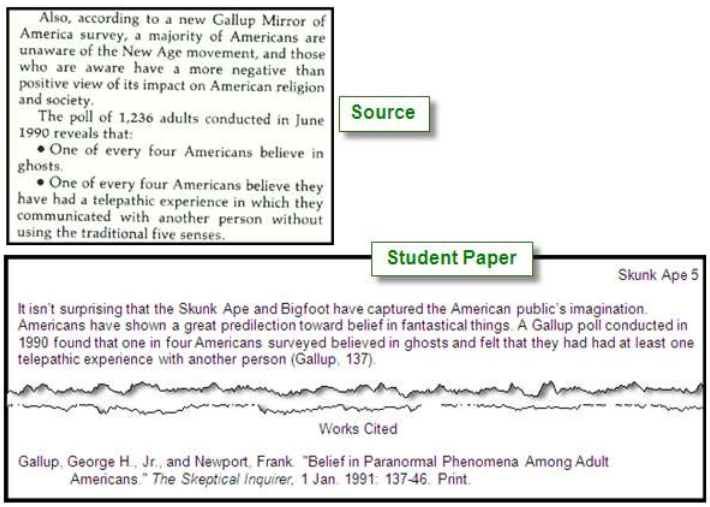
Is this use of information from a website plagiarism?



a. Yes, it is plagiarism. The writer of the paper just rearranged some of the words from the website and does not acknowledge the source.
b. No, it is not plagiarism. The paragraph written in the research paper is different than the website so the author didn't need to cite the original.

[reveal-answer q="173701"]Show Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="173701"]a. This is an example of plagiarism. The original content has not been changed very much, and there is no citation of the source material.[/hidden-answer]

Is this plagiarism?



a. Yes, it is plagiarism. The student did not use quotation marks.
b. No, it is not plagiarism. The student gave credit to the source in the text of the paper and in the list of references

[reveal-answer q="90716"]Show Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="90716"]b. The student did not need to use quotation marks, because the original material was paraphrased. And the student provided proper citation of the source, both in-text and in the list of works cited.[/hidden-answer]

? ? Try It

Look at a few more examples of plagiarism in the following activity.

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15.11: Avoiding Plagiarism

Learning Objectives

- Describe proactive strategies to avoid plagiarism

You can take steps to avoid plagiarism in your writing by carefully managing your time, by keeping a good record of your sources, and by knowing when and how to appropriately cite your sources.

Manage Your Time

Plagiarism is often the result of procrastination. Doing research, writing your paper, and incorporating sources correctly takes time. Cobbling your paper together the night before it is due leaves you susceptible to unintentional plagiarism. In your rush, you may use your sources improperly or forget to cite.

Waiting until the last minute to do your paper also increases the appeal of buying a paper online or trying to turn in a paper you wrote previously for a different class. Of course, you would never do that! But other students have, and they have faced serious consequences.

Develop a Note-Taking System

When you do research, make sure that you use a note-taking system that clearly differentiates the following things: your own personal thoughts on the sources, quotes taken directly from the sources (with a page number), and summaries or paraphrases of the source.

One strategy you could apply during your note-taking is the use of different colors to differentiate what text was copied directly from the source, from what you wrote using your own words. Here's an example:



Figure 1. In this color-coded note-taking system, you can identify what was written in your own words and what was taken from somewhere else.

Reference management websites and applications are excellent tools to help you keep track of your sources. 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.

? ? Is it cheating to use a website to create your References page?

Of course not! Once upon a time, students weren't allowed to use erasers for fear that they would be sloppy in their writing. We have come a long way since then. Tools like spell check and citation generators were made to help all of us be more correct in our writing. Just be careful – these tools are far from perfect, so double check your work!

? ? Taking Good Notes

Taking the time to be careful while you gather sources and begin your paper has important consequences for when you actually start writing.

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Citing Your Sources

The most essential way to avoid plagiarism is to properly cite your sources. To write a proper citation we recommend following these steps, which will help you maintain accuracy and clarity in acknowledging sources.

Step 1: Choose Your Citation Style

Find out the name of the citation style you must use from your instructor, the directions for an assignment, or what you know your audience or publisher expects. This will often be either APA or MLA format, and instructions for those citations are found in this course or are easily available online—the Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) or your style's stylebook/handbook can give you detailed instructions.

Step 2: Create In-Text Citations

Find and read your style's rules about in-text citations, which are usually very thorough. Luckily, there are usually examples provided that make it a lot easier to learn the rules.

Step 3: Determine the Kind of Source

After creating your in-text citation, now begin creating the full bibliographic citation that will appear on the References or Bibliography page by deciding what kind of source you have to cite (book, film, journal article, webpage, etc.).

Step 4: Study Your Style's Rules for Bibliographic Citations

Next, you'll need a full bibliographic citation for the same source. This citation will appear on the References page or Bibliography page or Works Cited page. (APA style, which we're using here, requires a page called References.) Bibliographic citations usually contain more publication facts than you used for your in-text citation, and the formatting for all of them is very specific.

- Rules vary for sources, depending, for instance, on whether they are books, journal articles, or online sources.
- Sometimes lines of the citation must be indented.
- Authors' names usually appear last name first.
- Authors' first names may be initials instead.
- Names of sources may or may not have to be in full.
- Names of some kinds of sources may have to be italicized.
- Names of some sources may have to be in quotes.
- Dates of publication appear in different places, depending on the style.
- Some styles require Digital Object Identifiers (DOIs) in the citations for online sources.

Step 5: Create End Citations for Each of Your Sources

Next, you'll figure out which bibliographic citation rules apply to the source you've just created an in-text citation for. Then apply them to create your first bibliographic citation.

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15.12: What Needs Citing?

Learning Objectives

- Explain best practices for using and citing copyrighted and openly licensed materials

Know What Needs a Citation

The key to avoiding plagiarism is to make sure you give credit where credit is due. This may be credit for something somebody said, wrote, emailed, drew, or implied. You need to give credit to the creator of any of the following:



Figure 1. Checklist for integrating sources into your research paper.

- Any words or ideas presented in a magazine, book, newspaper, song, TV program, movie, web page, computer program, letter, advertisement, or any other medium
- Information you gain through interviewing or conversing with another person face-to-face, over the phone, or in writing
- Any media, including diagrams, illustrations, images, charts, pictures, audio, or video that you reprint, reuse, or report

Ultimately, you must cite any source of information you use in your paper that doesn't originate with you. You do **NOT** need to cite:

- your own words, ideas, and opinions
- common knowledge and facts

Examples of common knowledge or facts include:

- Basic facts: there are 365 days in a year, the earth orbits the sun, the molecular structure of water (H_2O), etc.
- Very well-known quotes: "A rose by any other name would smell as sweet" or "ask not what your country can do for you, ask what you can do for your country." You still have to use quotation marks and indicate who said the quote (Romeo in Shakespeare's Romeo and Juliet, and John F. Kennedy, respectively), but you do not need to include the source in your bibliography.

Try It

Decide what counts as common knowledge in the following activity.

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290979691040930878/embed

What of these following facts needs a citation?

1. 86% of internet users have taken steps online to remove or mask their digital footprints.
2. The Supreme Court ruling for Brown v. the Board of Education states, "Racial discrimination in public education is unconstitutional."
3. Paris is the Capital of France.
4. Abraham Lincoln was the 16th president of the United States of America.
5. Water freezes at 32 degrees Fahrenheit.
6. 52,950 unaccompanied homeless youth were supported through school-based programs in 2008-09.

[reveal-answer q="921068"]Show Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="921068"]a, b, and f need citations. The others can be considered common knowledge or facts.[/hidden-answer]

Citation Versus Copyright

Issues of citation go beyond just plagiarism. Anytime you pull in outside resources into your writing (or into a presentation or project of any sort), you should properly cite outside materials. Sometimes citing outside works is not sufficient, and there are materials you are not permitted to use at all—materials that are copyrighted.

Copyright is a form of legal protection automatically provided to the authors of "original works of authorship," including literary, dramatic, musical, and artistic works.

U.S. copyright law generally gives the author/creator or owner of an original creative work an exclusive right to:

- Reproduce (copy) or distribute the original work to the public (e.g., create and sell copies of a film)
- Create new works based upon the original work (e.g., make a movie based on a book)
- Perform or display the work publicly (e.g., perform a play)

Plagiarism and Copyright

Plagiarism and copyright each address the legitimacy of copying, but plagiarism and copyright differ in important ways.

Plagiarism is the act of misrepresenting the ownership of an idea. In school, it usually means passing off someone else's ideas as your own in a research paper or other academic work. Plagiarism is wrong, dishonest, and can lead to serious negative consequences in any school or professional setting. One way to avoid plagiarism is to properly cite your sources – a key academic skill.

By contrast, copyright is a legal concept extensively embodied by U.S. laws and policies. Copyright law permits individuals to make copies under certain conditions, but violating certain copyright rules is copyright infringement. You can't avoid a copyright infringement claim just by citing your sources (though it may still be the right thing to do). If you violate one or more of the exclusive rights of a copyright owner, the copyright owner can bring a claim against you for copyright infringement. They could potentially prosecute, issue a cease-and-desist letter or takedown notice, or sue.

While working with other people's copyrighted works, remember that their works are under copyright protection from the moment of creation. Typically, copyright protection extends for 50-100 years after the creator of the work dies.

Additionally, U.S. Copyright Law applies to works found on the Internet. Many of the works you find online are protected by copyright, even if there is no copyright notice. Your ability to access copyrighted materials on the Internet does not necessarily mean that you have the right to use, reuse, and/or distribute the works in any manner you wish. It is important to respect copyright, whether the works are in a physical or digital format.

There are several limits on copyrights; we'll look at a few—fair use, public domain works, and openly licensed materials.

Fair Use

Fair Use allows the public to use portions of copyrighted work without permission from the copyright owner.

Are you incorporating any materials in your research final product that were created by someone else, such as images or text from other works? These materials could be protected by copyright. For example, content you find online, text, books, movies, songs, email, images, and videos are most likely copyrighted. **Fortunately, U.S. copyright law includes an exception that allows you to use copyrighted work in your assignments for class.**

However, if you would like to share your research product outside of the classroom (such as on a webpage or blog or in your portfolio), you will need permission from the copyright owner(s) unless your use is covered under another statutory exception. Fair use is one such exception, and it can apply to a wide variety of uses.

To decide whether a use is considered fair use, courts look at four factors:

1. Purpose & character of the use, including whether commercial (i.e. publishing a book) or non-commercial (i.e. using in a classroom assignment)
    - It is generally permitted to use a work under fair use if it has been *transformed* from the original use for which it was created. There are two ways in which a use can be transformative:
        - First, you could actually make changes to the original work in order to use it for a new purpose. An example would be to take short clips of popular movies and remix them to create a video for the purpose of social commentary or presentation.

- The second form of transformative use does not require that you alter the original work in any way. Instead, you simply use the work for a purpose that is significantly different than the use for which it was created. An example of this would be using clips from a blockbuster movie that was originally sold for mass-market entertainment for the purpose of instruction and research.

2. Nature of the original material (i.e., is the work published or unpublished? Fact or fiction? Highly creative?)
3. Amount and substantiality of the original work (are you using the entire work or just a portion?) Under fair use, using a small portion of a work is often permissible.
4. Effect on the marketplace or on the work's value (will your use have a financial impact on the creator?) For example, would people buy this work instead of the original?

When considering whether a proposed use of a copyrighted work may qualify as fair use, you must weigh all four factors together. Each factor is equally important.

? ? Link to learning

YouTube and other hosting sites will usually flag and remove copyrighted content. This video from vidIQ explains if and when it's okay to use copyrighted music in a YouTube video. In short, the answer is that it's not a good idea. Instead, find public domain or openly sourced music. YouTube offers a library of free music, or you can search the Internet for public domain or openly licensed music.

Public Domain

Public Domain works can be freely used by anyone, for commercial or non-commercial purposes, and without permission from an original copyright owner/author. Public domain status allows the user unrestricted access and unlimited creativity! These works may be designated for free and unlimited public access, or they may be no longer covered by copyright law because the copyright status has expired or been forfeited by the owner.

What Is Licensing?

Licensing is when a copyright owner gives permission for someone else to do something normally restricted by copyright law. For example, the creator of a song may license a song to an advertising agency, allowing the ad company to use parts of her song in a television commercial in exchange for compensation.

Sometimes a creator may want to give *everybody* the permission to make copies of his or her work. For example, some musicians want fans to make copies and share their songs, so they license their songs in a way that gives others explicit permission to copy and share them. One increasingly common set of licenses that exist for this purpose are Creative Commons licenses.

Creative Commons Licensing

Not everyone wants to lock up their creativity behind the protection of copyright; many people want their work to be freely shared and even built upon. When these works are released for educational purposes, they are called Open Educational Resources, or OER. This text you are reading now is an example of OER.

Creative Commons (CC) was developed out of the desire to make it easier to share and use copyrighted works. Creative Commons allows a creator to grant licenses to their work that could include the ability to share, adapt, and/or use material for commercial purposes without having to ask for permission. The creators still own the copyright, but they proactively decide to let others use their works under certain conditions.

? ? Link to Learning

Many websites include CC-licensed works. You can search them to find materials that you can freely use in creating your own work provided that you comply with the terms of the license. You can also upload your own CC-licensed works to share with others.

Examples include:

- Flickr
- YouTube
- The Noun Project

- Wikipedia's Wikimedia Commons

Citing openly licensed materials, whether they're images or videos or textbooks, is often referred to as "attribution" in the OER world. To "attribute" something, you are giving credit. It's the same idea as "citing"—just a different term for it. Citing OER is done by following the licensing requirements and including as much information you an about the source.

The basic attribution format is:

Title — Author — License

You may want to use the Open Attribution Builder form from Open Washington to help you build consistent and concise attributions for citing open material you find and use, or to attribute yourself when you create something and want to share. The builder includes both CC licenses and public domain designations.

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15.13: Introduction to MLA Documentation

What you'll learn to do: examine MLA documentation formatting and practices





If you drive a car in America, you (and most every preschooler in the nation) know that green means "go" and red means "stop." Why is that? Could a city suddenly decide to switch up the colors—blue means "go" and orange means "stop"? The answer is "no," because changing the colors would cause mass confusion and pose a serious risk to drivers and pedestrians. In order to prevent such mishaps, there is a standardized protocol for traffic signals and lights.

Similarly, there are professional organizations that create and disseminate standard protocols for academic writing in different disciplines. In this section and the next, we are going to focus on two commonly-used formats: MLA (created by the Modern Language Association and used for writing about language and literature) and APA (created by the American Psychological Association and used for writing in the fields of behavioral and social sciences). (Your instructor may be focusing on MLA or may have you learn about both MLA and APA.) When you follow these guidelines and format your writing according to the specific procedures for appropriately citing sources, other people can easily navigate your research trail. Your paper will not only look nice, but it will include proper in-text citations and a References (APA) or Works Cited page (MLA) that appropriately gives credit to the authors who inspired your work.

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15.14: MLA Style

Learning Objectives

- Evaluate reasons for the use of MLA formatting and documentation

Why Cite?

You will recall from the previous reading that citing is important because:

- citations help others find the information you used in your research paper
- citing your sources accurately helps establish the credibility of your research
- citations connect your work to the work of other scholars
- citations are one way that scholars enter into a dialogue with one another
- citations are a way to honor and acknowledge the work of others who have made your own research possible

MLA Style

MLA style is one of the most common citation and formatting styles you will encounter in your academic career. The MLA, which stands for Modern Language Association, is an organization of language scholars and experts. MLA format is typically used for writing in the humanities and is widely used 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.

Citation Resources

There are many fantastic resources out there that can make the formatting and citation process easier. Some common style guides include the following:

- 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 include the following:

- Zotero
- RefME
- BibMe

Understanding Citations

Online tools that generate citations for you can be wonderful—they save time and allow you to focus on the knowledge work of writing a paper. No one expects you to memorize exactly how each different type of text is formatted in MLA style. All of us turn to citation generators, the MLA Handbook, or online resources to remind ourselves of the minutiae of citations. But you do need to have some overall familiarity with the format so that you know what information you need to include and so that you can quickly and easily recognize the mistakes that citation generators (computers!) make. Understanding why citations are built the way they are can help you be more critical in your proofreading of generated works cited pages and internal citations.

Let’s think about this example citation from a student paper:

- Damiani, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/jesse-..._11004780.html

What is wrong with this citation? The student provides a URL but does not use MLA format on their works cited page. By using just a URL, the student not only diverges from normal discourse conventions but omits the critical information the reader expects to see such as the date of publication (the author and title of the article are awkwardly embedded in the URL).

An incorrect citation is bad form – think about it as the equivalent of being rude to your reader. Good form (good use of MLA format) makes life easier for your reader and makes you look more accomplished, professional, and credible as a writer.

? ? Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20324

? ? Documenting Sources

Let's return to our example of Marvin. He's already learned from the online professor about walking, talking, andcookingwith his sources. Now the professor reminds Marvin about one more important step for utilizing sources in his research.

O-Prof: In college writing, if you use a source in a paper, you're expected to let the reader know exactly how to find that source as well. Providing this "source address" information for your sources is known as *documenting your sources*.

Marvin: What do you mean by a "source address"?

O-Prof: It's directions for finding the source. A mailing address tells you how to find a person: the house number, street, city, state, and zip code. To help your readers find your sources, it's customary to give them the name of the author; the title of the book or article or website; and other information such as date, location of publication, publisher, even the database in which a source is located. Or, if it's a website, you might give the name of the site and/or the date on which you accessed it. Source documentation can be complicated because the necessary source address information differs for different types of sources (e.g., books vs. journal articles, electronic vs. print). Additionally, different disciplines (e.g., history, philosophy, psychology, literature, etc.) use different "address" formats. Eventually, you'll become familiar with the documentation conventions for your own academic major, but source documentation takes a lot of practice. In the meantime, your teachers and various writing handbooks can provide instructions on what information you'll need.

Marvin: Do I really need to include all that information? A lot of times, the sources I use are readings my teachers have assigned, so they already know where to find them.

O-Prof: Your teachers don't always know where all your sources are from, and they also want you to get into the habit of source documentation. And what about your other readers? If they're deeply interested in your topic, they may want to find more information than you've included in your paper. Your source documentation allows them to find the original source. And there are other reasons for documenting sources. It can help readers understand your own position on a topic because they can see which authors you agree with and which you don't. It also shows readers you've taken time to investigate your topic and aren't just writing off the top of your head. If readers see that your ideas are based on trustworthy sources, they're more likely to trust what you say.

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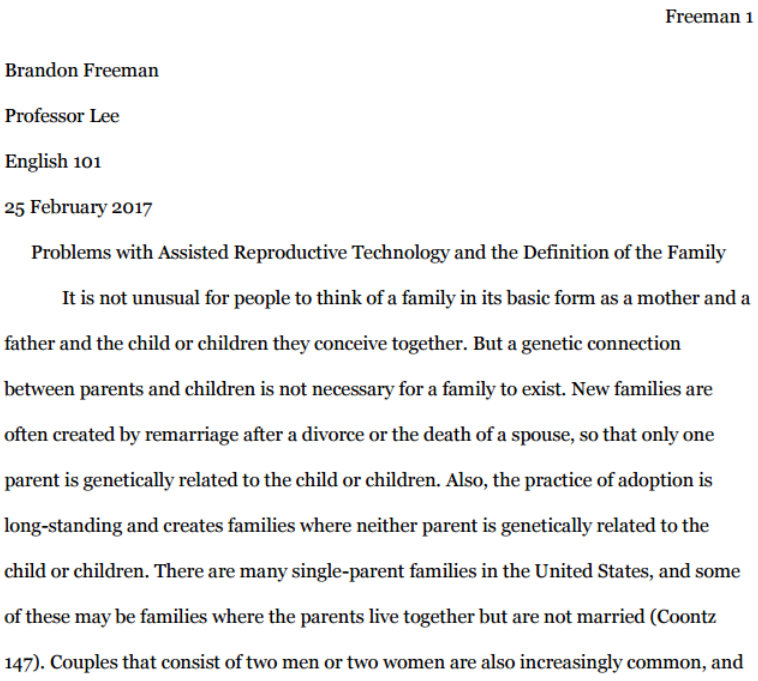
15.15: MLA Document Formatting

Learning Objectives

- Describe overall MLA document formatting, including page layout

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 the material. For this reason, there are specific guidelines you'll need to follow when formatting your paper. The general idea is to use a 12-point font, have 1-inch margins, double-space the paper, include page numbers, and to include your personal information in the upper-left-hand corner. Your paper should look like this:



Freeman 1

Brandon Freeman

Professor Lee

English 101

25 February 2017

Problems with Assisted Reproductive Technology and the Definition of the Family

It is not unusual for people to think of a family in its basic form as a mother and a father and the child or children they conceive together. But a genetic connection between parents and children is not necessary for a family to exist. New families are often created by remarriage after a divorce or the death of a spouse, so that only one parent is genetically related to the child or children. Also, the practice of adoption is long-standing and creates families where neither parent is genetically related to the child or children. There are many single-parent families in the United States, and some of these may be families where the parents live together but are not married (Coontz 147). Couples that consist of two men or two women are also increasingly common, and

Figure 1. This sample paper shows how the first page of a paper written in MLA is formatted. Note the header information in the upper-left corner, the last name and page numbers in the upper-right corner, the double spaced text, and indentations that begin each paragraph.

Document Formatting

You can use this MLA formatted template to help you get started.

Remember, the heading appears only on page 1 and includes your name, the professor's name, the name of the class, and the date in military-style format: day month year. Don't misspell your professor's name—you would be surprised at how many students make this mistake!

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!
- **Subheadings:** If you include subheadings, they should be bolded and left-justified (not indented or centered).

✔ ✔ Watch It

Watch this video to get an overall feel for the style and format of a paper written in MLA style.

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290981866459998288/embed

You can view the transcript for "MLA Overview" here (opens in new window).

? ? Link to Learning

If you want help setting up your paper in proper MLA formatting watch this video to set it up in Google docs or this video to set it up in Microsoft Word. Look at this student essay to see an example of appropriate formatting.

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15.16: MLA In-Text Citations

Learning Objectives

- Successfully identify the components of MLA in-text citations

MLA Citations in the Body of Your Paper

MLA citations follow specific conventions that distinguish them from other styles. In-text citations are also sometimes known as "parenthetical citations" because they are enclosed in parentheses. The author's last name and the page number(s) from which the quotation or paraphrase is taken must appear in parentheses at the end of the sentence.

- At the end of the day, Wilbur made "in excess of half a million dollars" (Marx 43).

If you use the name of the author to set up your quote or paraphrase, you mention the author's name in the sentence and then put the page number only in the parentheses at the end of the sentence.

- According to Marx, Wilbur made "in excess of half a million dollars" (43).

If you need to cite more than one source in your in-text citation, you should use a semicolon to separate the sources.

- (Jones 101; Williams 23).

It's important to remember, in MLA style, each citation in your text must have a complete bibliographic entry in your Works Cited page, so, if readers want to go to the original source, they can!

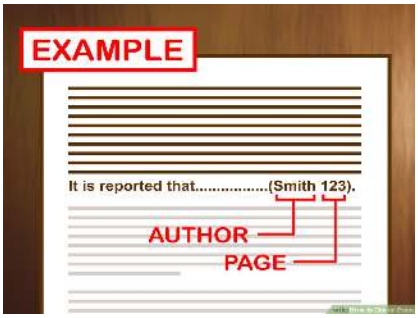


Figure 1. Include the right information in the in-text citation. Every time you reference material in your paper, you must tell the reader the name of the author whose information you are citing. You must include a page number that tells the reader where, in the source, they can find this information. The most basic structure for an in-text citation looks like this: (Smith 123).

The examples above are just a few of the most common examples of in-text citations in MLA style. The following sections provide more detailed information about in-text citing in MLA.

Single Author

When you quote or paraphrase a source, list the last name of the author, followed by the page number.

- According to some experts, Marx used "class" in "two different ways" (Calvert 11).

Two Authors

Separate their last names with the word "and." The authors' names should be listed in the order they appear in the published work.

- Marx used "class" in "two different ways" (Calvert and Sennett 11).

Three or More Authors

If your source has three or more authors, you should include the first author's name followed by et al.

- Marx used "class" in "two different ways" (Calvert et al. 11).

Multiple Works by the Same Author

If more than one work by an author is cited, include shortened titles for the works to distinguish them from each other.

Example if the author's name is mentioned:

- Obama has argued that the invasion was a bad idea ("Too Soon" 42), though he has acknowledged elsewhere that it led to much good ("A Stronger Country" 13).

Example if the author's name is not mentioned in the sentence and you are citing more than one work by an author:

- Photography, because it is both science and art, seems to be "a bridge discipline" (Barthes, "Of Loss and Cameras" 45).

Multiple Sources

If multiple sources are cited within the same in-text citation, separate each citation with a semicolon. The sources do not need to be alphabetized.

- The importance of family bonds and connections is immeasurable (Pickens 21; Bulmore 68).

No Page Numbers

If a work, such as a website, does not include page numbers, then omit this portion of the in-text citation.

- Marx used "class" in "two different ways" (Calvert).

Anonymous or Unknown Author

Use an abbreviated version of the work's title if the author is unknown. For example:

- An anonymous source claimed that the Iraq invasion was a bad idea from the beginning ("Bush Cannot Win" 104).

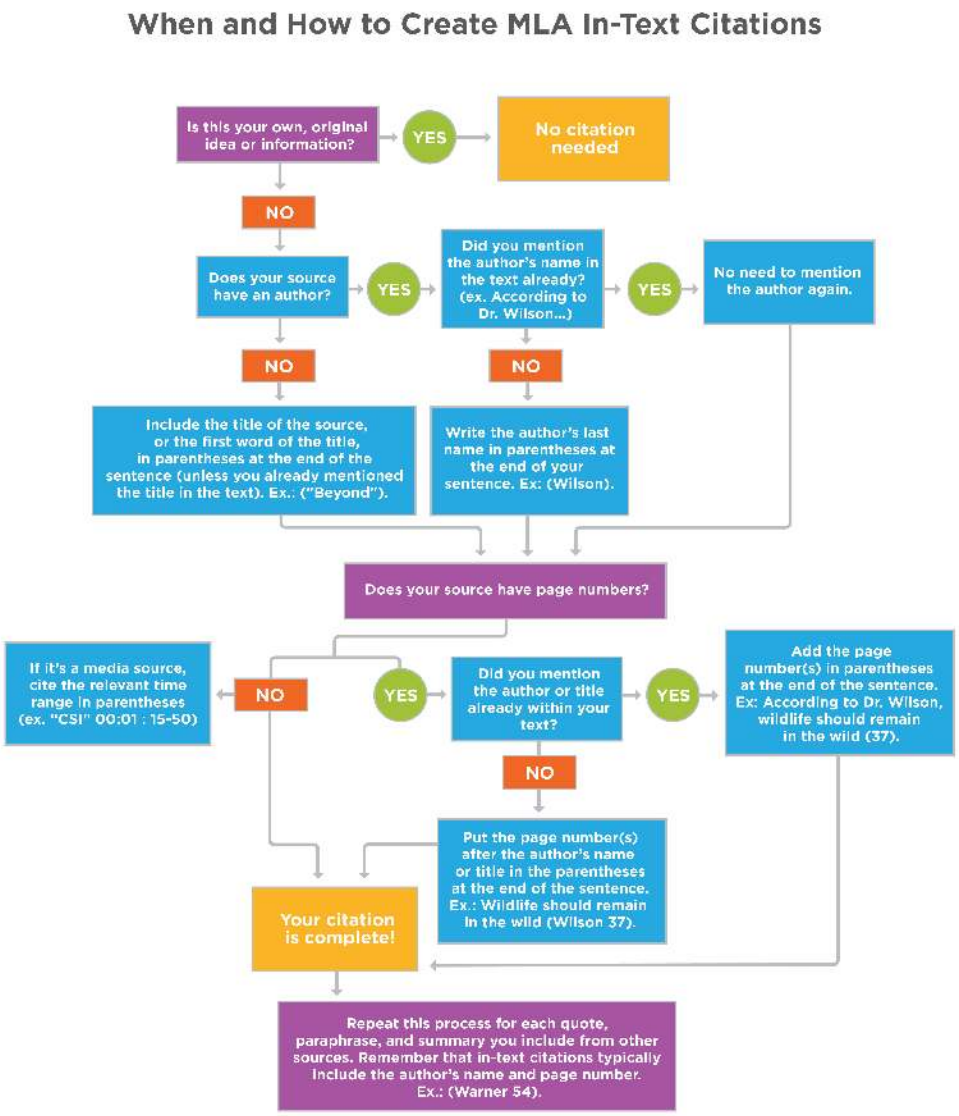


Figure 2. Follow the trail on the infographic to determine what needs to be included in your in-text citation.

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

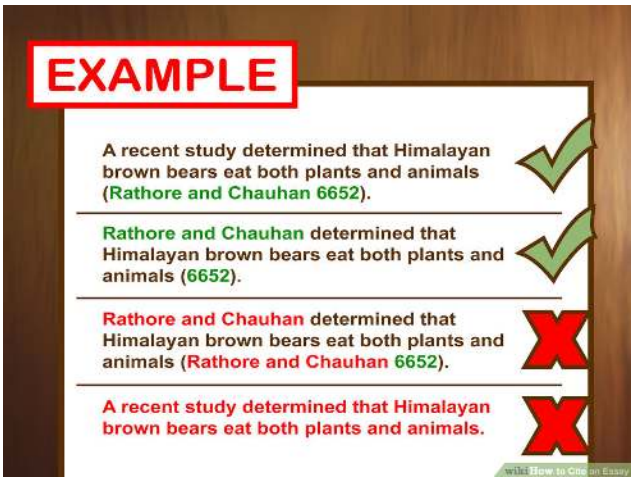


Figure 3. In-text citations are often parenthetical, meaning you add information to the end of a sentence in parentheses. But if you include that necessary information in the language of the sentence itself, you should not include the parenthetical citation. This example shows you proper uses of in-text citations.

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 poetry) 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.

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.

The entire block quotation should be indented one inch from the left margin (double the normal paragraph indentation). 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.

? ? Block Quotations

Watch this video from Imagine Easy Solutions for more information on formatting block quotations.

? ? Try It

Check your understanding of appropriate in-text citations in the activity below.

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290982264091770218/embed

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15.17: MLA Works Cited Entries

Learning Objectives

- Successfully create and identify appropriate MLA Works Cited entries

Instead of offering a specific way to format each and every source time, the new MLA offers a streamlined approach using something called “containers.”



Figure 1. MLA formatting requires you to think about your source on the whole and pick out all of the appropriate pieces to include in the container.

These containers, pictured here, provide you with the required elements, order, and punctuation for each of your Works Cited entries.

As you work to format your Works Cited entries, you will notice that some sources require only one container, as shown on the right. These are sources that you access directly from their original publication, such as books, an online magazine article, and general websites. You should follow the order of items listed in the container, following the simplified punctuation rules you see in the container as well. You will place a period after the author and the title of the source. Then, you should place commas after each item until the end of the entry.

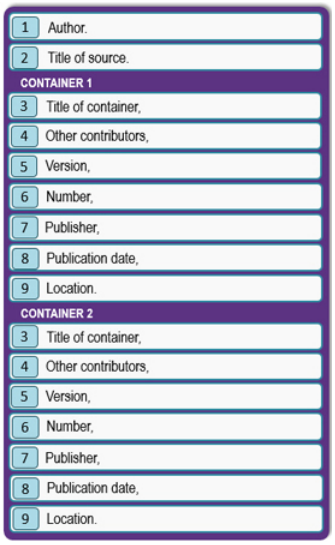


Figure 2. You use two containers if the source you are using is part of a larger source, such as a poem within an anthology, a series within a T.V. show, or a journal within a database.

Two containers are required for sources that you access through places like library databases. An example of MLA’s “two container” structure is depicted at the left. Here, you will notice there is a place for the first container, with the original publication information.

Below the first container, the second container provides publication information for where you retrieved that information. For example, a journal article you access through your library’s databases will have its original publication information (container 1) and access information from the online database (container 2).

Focus on the Core Elements

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 will likely use some kind of citation generator to do this work for you, but you will need a general familiarity so that you can know what information to plug into that citation generator and so that you can understand how to double-check the citation generator's inevitable mistakes.) 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.

✔ ✔ Watch It

Watch this video to see examples of how to identify the core elements needed in a citation:

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

You can view the transcript for "MLA Style, 8th Edition: An Introduction" here (opens in new window).

The basic guidelines for many types of citations are listed below. To see more, visit MLA Citations on the Excelsior OWL website, Purdue OWL website, or in this citation guide from Santa Fe College.

Print Books with a Single Author

If you are accessing a print book, then you will need just one container for publication information.

Minot, Stephen. *Three Genres.* Pearson, 2003.

Books with Multiple Authors

If you are accessing a print book, then you will need just one container for publication information.

Two Authors

Sennett, Richard, and Jonathan Cobb. *The Hidden Injuries of Class*. Vintage Books, 1973.

More Than Two Authors

For more than two authors: list only the first author followed by the phrase "et al." (Latin abbreviation for "and others"; no period after "et") in place of the other authors' names.

Smith, John, et al. *Writing and Erasing: New Theories for Pencils*. Utah State UP, 2001.

Article In a Reference Book

If you are accessing a print book, then you will need just one container for publication information. If an article in a reference work has no author, you should begin with the title of the article.

"Discourse." *The Dictionary of Literary Theory*. 2nd ed., Penguin, 1991.

Ebooks

Because ebooks may have been originally published in print, you may need two containers to present publication information. The first container includes the print information, and the second container includes the access information.

Gikandi, Simon. *Ngugi wa Thiong'o*. Cambridge UP, 2000. *ACLS Humanities E-book*, hdl.handle.net/2027/heb.07588.0001.0001.

Print Magazine Articles

If you are accessing a print magazine article, then you will need just one container for publication information.

Gallivan, Joseph. "Against the Odds." *Oregon Humanities*, Summer 2008, pp. 16-24.

Online Magazine Articles

If you are accessing a magazine article directly from the web, you will most likely need just one container to present publication information.

Bilger, Burkhard. "The Height Gap." *The New Yorker*, 5 Apr. 2004, www.newyorker.com/magazine/2004/04/05/the-height-gap.

Print Journal Articles

If you are accessing a print journal article, then you will need just one container for publication information. If the journal does not use volume numbers, cite the issue numbers only.

Pasquaretta, Paul. “On the Indianness’ of Bingo: Gambling and the Native American Community.” *Critical Inquiry*, vol. 20, no.4, 1994, pp. 151-187.

Online Journal Articles

If you are accessing a journal article directly from the journal’s website, you will most likely need just one container to present publication information. Note that MLA now requires full URLs for online material. However, if your article includes a DOI (digital object identifier), that information should be provided instead of the URL.

Collins, Ross. “Writing and Desire: Synthesizing Rhetorical Theories of Genre and Lacanian Theories of the Unconscious.” *Composition Forum*, vol. 33, Spring 2016, compositionforum.com/issue/33/writing-desire.php.

Cho, Helen, Sam D. Stout, and Thomas A. Bishop. 2006 Cortical Bone Remodeling Rates in a Sample of African American and European American Descent Groups from the American Midwest: Comparisons of Age and Sex in Ribs. American Journal of Physical Anthropology 130(2):214-226. doi: 10.1002/ajpa.20312.

Article from a Database

If you are accessing a journal article from a database, you will need two containers to present the original publication information as well as the access information from the database.

Goldman, Anne. “Questions of Transport: Reading Primo Levi Reading Dante.” *The Georgia Review*, vol. 64, no. 1, 2010, pp. 69-88. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/41403188.

Online Newspaper

If you are accessing a newspaper article directly from the web, you will most likely need just one container to present publication information. Reviews and letters to the editor should be presented in a similar manner.

St. Fleur, Nicholas. “City Bees Stick to a Flower Diet Rather Than Slurp Up Soda.” *The New York Times*, 19 May 2016, www.nytimes.com/2016/05/21/science/urban-bees-diet-flowers-soda.html.

Websites

Websites that contain articles, postings, and almost anything else have been simplified in the 8th edition of the *MLA Handbook*. Just one container is needed for most websites.

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

Images

In the 8th edition of the *MLA Handbook*, images from the web will most likely need just one container. Images from other types of sources should follow guidelines for those particular sources.

Wootten, Bayard. *Woman Resting*. 1937. Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, *North Carolina Collection Photographic Archives*, 12 Feb. 2013, http://library.unc.edu/wilson/.

Videos

In the 8th edition of the *MLA Handbook*, videos accessed via web will most likely need just one container.

Buffy the Vampire Slayer: Unaired Pilot 1996.” *Youtube*, uploaded by Brian Stowe, 28 Jan. 2012, www.youtube.com/watch?v=WR3J-v7QXXw.

? ? Try It

Build the MLA-style citation for each source. Note that these exercises do not use hanging indents.

https://h5p.cwr.olemiss.edu/h5p/embed/41

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290982266811887068/embed

? ? MLA Overview

If you'd like to see even more examples or review what was presented above, click through the following slides.

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

You can also download the presentation here.

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15.18: Formatting the MLA Works Cited Page

Learning Objectives

- Evaluate the components of a properly formatted MLA Works Cited page

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.

Formatting the Works Cited Section

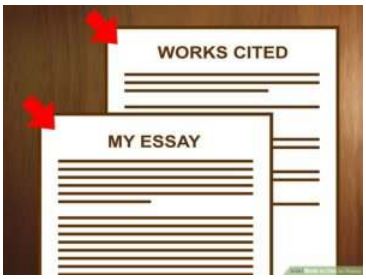


Figure 1. When citing an essay, you include information in two places: in the body of your paper and in the Works Cited that comes after it. The Works Cited is just a bibliography: you list all the sources you used to write the paper. The citation information you include in the body of the paper itself is called the "in-text citation."

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. If your reference has no author, use the title to alphabetize, leaving out any articles (for example, alphabetize "The Awakening" under A).
- **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. In Google Docs, highlight the area you want to indent then choose Format > Align & Indent > Indentation options > Select "Special," then "Hanging" > Apply.)

Works Cited

Buchanan, Wyatt. "More Same-Sex Couples Want Kids: Survey Looks at Trends among Homosexuals." *SF Gate*, Hearst Communications, 25 Apr. 2006, www.sfgate.com/bayarea/article/NATION-More-same-sex-couples-want-kids-Survey-2499131.php.

Coontz, Stephanie. "Not Much Sense in Those Census Numbers." *Uncommon Threads: Reading and Writing about Contemporary America*, edited by Robert D. Newman et al., Longman, 2003, pp. 146-48.

"Developments in the Law: The Law of Marriage and Family." *Harvard Law Review*, vol. 116, no. 7, 2003, pp. 1996-2122. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/1342754.

Hymowitz, Kay S. "The Incredible Shrinking Father." *City Journal*, Spring 2007, www.city-journal.org/html/17_2_artificial_insemination.html.

Marcotty, Josephine, and Chen May Yee. "New World of Fertility Medicine Is a Big-Money Marketplace." *Seacoastonline.com*, Local Media Group, 30 Oct. 2007, www.seacoastonline.com/article/20071030/PARENTS/71029007.

Figure 2. A correctly formatted Works Cited page, according to the MLA handbook.

Watch It

Watch this video to review the process for creating a Works Cited page.

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290981892674151068/embed

You can view the transcript for "MLA Works Cited" here (opens in new window).

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20326

Now that you've learned the basic formatting guidelines and techniques for citing sources using MLA style, use the following checklist to ensure your own works are formatting and cited correctly.

MLA Checklist

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290982270263967238/embed

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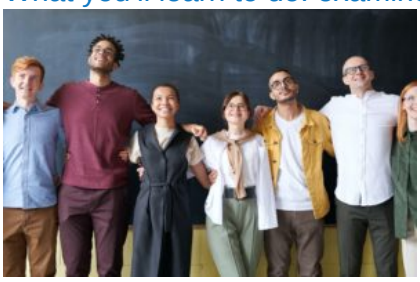
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15.19: Introduction to APA Documentation

What you'll learn to do: examine APA documentation formatting and practices



As you use sources for academic writing, it's important to know how to responsibly cite and integrate those sources into your own writing. APA format provides guidelines and structures for citing those sources in a way that helps you avoid plagiarism and give proper credit to your sources.

APA stands for the American Psychological Association. Scholars working in the social sciences (psychology, history, political science, economics, geography, and sociology) typically use APA formatting and citation style.

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15.20: APA Style

Learning Objectives

- Describe general APA document formatting and guidelines

The APA Style is spelled out in the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 7th edition, but the APA also maintains its own website with multiple examples of how to format your paper and cite your sources. If you're unable to find the answer to your question here, check the APA Manual 7th edition or the APA website.

WAtch It

This video will introduce you to the key components of citing using APA Style.

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

You can view the transcript for "Introduction to Citation Styles: APA 7th ed." here (opens in new window).

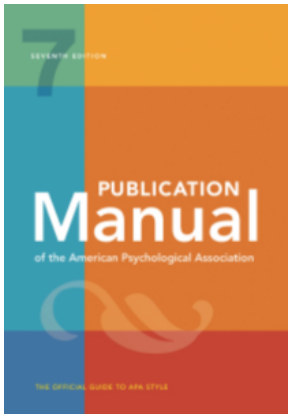


Figure 1. The APA 7th Edition Publication Manual cover.

Papers constructed according to APA guidelines generally include the following elements:

- Title Page
- Abstract
- Body
- Subsections within the body, with headings
- Tables and Figures
- References

In most cases, each of these elements will begin on a separate page, and it is important to note that not all academic papers will include all of these elements.

For specific types of reports, your subsections may need to be named with headings that reflect the type of report you are writing. For example, in reports on experiments or studies, you'll often need to follow the IMRAD structure with Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion sections. **IMRAD** stands for Introduction, Methods, Results, and Discussion. In this format, you present your research and discuss your methods for gathering research. Each section of the IMRAD structure can take several paragraphs to develop. Be sure to check with your instructor to determine what the expectations are for your paper.

IMRAD Outline

1. Introduction
    1. provide research question
    2. explain the significance
    3. review of background or known information on your topic
2. Methods

1. describe your methods for gathering information
2. explain your sources of information, both primary and secondary

3. Results
    1. describe what you found out from your research.
    2. develop each point thoroughly, as this is the main section of your research paper
4. Discussion
    1. explain the significance of your findings
    2. describe how they support your thesis
    3. discuss limitations of your research

The APA style demos in this section will provide you with more information regarding APA basic formatting, in-text citations, and the references list.

✔ ✔ WatCh It

Watch this video to get a basic feel for what is expected in APA style.

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

You can view the transcript for "APA Overview Seventh Edition" here (opens in new window).

? ? Try It

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15.21: APA In-Text Citations

Learning Objectives

- Successfully identify the components of APA in-text citations

APA citations follow specific conventions that distinguish them from other styles. In most cases, APA citations in your text will follow the guidelines illustrated below. If you have questions or need further instruction, visit the APA Style Guide, the Excelsior Online Writing Lab, the Purdue Online Writing Lab, or the APA Guide from Santa Fe College.

Watch IT

This video will show you what in-text citations should look like and explain why you must use them.

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

You can view the transcript for "APA In-Text Citations Seventh Edition" here (opens in new window).

Single Author

When listing the source of information you are using in your paper, list the last name of the author (without their initials), followed by a comma, and then the year of publication. When referring to the author(s) directly in the text (also called a narrative citation), then list only the year (and page number, if needed for a direct quote). For example:

- One scholar argued that it is impossible to measure social class (Calvert, 1982).
- Calvert (1982) argued that it is impossible to measure social class.

Two Authors

Authors should be presented in the order that they appear in the published article. If they are cited within closed brackets, use the ampersand (&) between them. If they are not enclosed in brackets, then use the spelled out "and." For example:

- A well-known study argued that social class is rapidly becoming obsolete (Calvert & Liu, 1987).
- Calvert and Liu (1987) argued that social class is rapidly becoming obsolete.

Three or More Authors

Starting with the first author mentioned in the text, the correct format is (Author et al., year). This includes even the first citation. All authors, up to 20, should be listed in the corresponding reference.

- Calvert et al. (1987) argued that the concept of social class is rapidly becoming obsolete.
- The concept of social class is rapidly becoming obsolete (Calvert et al., 1987).

Group Authors

With Abbreviations

For group authors with abbreviations, use the full name and the abbreviation in the first citation. Then, use only the abbreviation in subsequent citations.

- According to the National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH, 2019), women between the ages of 40 and 59 have the highest rates of depression in the United States.
- Women between the ages of 40 and 50 have the highest rates of depression in the United States (National Institute of Mental Health [NIMH], 2019).

Without Abbreviations

For group authors without abbreviations, simply list the group author with the usual citation format.

- According to Stanford University (2018), first-generation college students face many obstacles as they work to complete their degrees.
- First-generation college students face many obstacles as they work to complete their degrees (Stanford University, 2018).

Multiple Publications, Same Author

If an author has multiple publications you need to cite, use a comma to separate the years of publication in chronological order (oldest to most recent). If the publications occur in the same year, the American Psychological Association Publication Manual recommends using suffixes a, b, c, etc. **NOTE:** The corresponding letters should be used in the reference list, and these references should be ordered alphabetically by title.

- A recent study argued for the abolition of social class (Calvert, 2004, 2005a, 2005b).

Multiple Publications, Different Authors

When citing multiple authors for the same information, use semicolons to separate the different citations. The authors should be cited in alphabetical order, and, if there is a need to cite more than one source by the same author within a citation for multiple publications, place the years of publication in chronological order (oldest to most recent).

- A recent study argued for the abolition of social class (Calvert, 1987; Liu, 2004, 2005; Smith, 2003).

Direct Quotes

When citing a direct quotation, follow the corresponding rules for the in-text citation type and add a page number to the end of the citation.

When using the author or authors' names within the text (also called a narrative citation), the year citation comes after the author's name, and the page number citation should be placed after the direct quotation. Be sure to put quoted material inside quotation marks. Place the period after the citation for all quotes shorter than 40 words.

- According to Smith (2018), "the number of birds in North America has declined by 2.9 billion since 1970" (p. 31).
- "The number of birds in North America has declined by 2.9 billion since 1970" (Smith, 2018. p. 31).

NOTE: For multiple pages, use pp. instead of the single p.

No Page Numbers

To cite quotations of material without page numbers, the American Psychological Publication Manual recommends providing section names, heading names, or paragraph numbers—essentially providing readers with the necessary information to locate the quotation.

- According to Williams (2019), "gravity is actually the bending of space" (para. 5).

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15.22: APA References Page

Learning Objectives

- Successfully create and identify appropriate entries for an APA References page

Every cited source from your essay, with the exception of personal communications, should appear in your References page, which comes at the end of the essay.

The References page must conform to the following rules:

- Begin on a separate page at the end of your essay, using the same format as your essay (i.e., one-inch margins and page number).
- Entries in your list of references should be alphabetized by the authors' last names. Use the title if a work does not have an author. (Don't use any article in alphabetizing – *The new America* gets alphabetized under "n.")
- Center and bold the word **References** at the top of the page.
- Double-space all references, even within individual references.
- Use a hanging indent of 0.5 inches for each reference. This means the first line of each entry will be flush against the left margin, and subsequent lines are indented 0.5 inches.
  - 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. In Google Docs, highlight the area you want to indent then choose Format > Align & Indent > Indentation options > Select "Special," then "Hanging" > Apply.
- All book and articles titles in APA appear in sentence case, meaning that the capitalization rules here are different than what you are accustomed to seeing:
  - only the first word and proper nouns are capitalized (*The great Gatsby*). The first word of a subtitle that comes after a colon is also capitalized.
  - books are italicized and articles have neither italics nor quotation marks (A study of symbolism in American movies).
  - Journal titles are capitalized and italicized (*New Jersey English Journal*).

Click on the following pages to view information on how to create a specific reference entry for your source type.

WAtcH It

In this video on APA format, you'll see a sample references list with some tips on creating a references list of your own.

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

You can view the transcript for "APA References Seventh Edition" here (opens in new window).

Print Books

Single Author

Elements: Author's Last name, Author's First and Middle initials. (Year of publication). *Title italicized*. Publisher.

Larson, M. S. (1977). *The rise of professionalism*. University of California Press.

Multiple Authors (two to 20)

List up to 20 authors by their last names followed by initials. Use an ampersand (&) before the last author.

Rivano, N. S., Hoson, A., & Stallings, B. (2001). *Regional integration and economic development*. Palgrave.

Online Books

Elements: Author's Last name, Author's First and Middle initials, & Last names and initials of other authors, if any. (Year of publication). *Title of the book italicized*. URL to the full text ebook or to the distributor's homepage

Austen, J. (1813). *Pride and prejudice*. http://www.gutenberg.org/ebooks/1342

Online Book with a DOI

Smith, J. (2018). *Women's support groups*. Routledge. doi.org/10/1022/0000091-00

Edited Ebook from a Library Database

NOTE: Use (Ed.) if there is a single editor.

Randall, S. & Ford, H. (Eds.) (2011). *Long term conditions: A guide for nurses and health care professionals*. www.ebrary.com

Print Journal Article

Elements: Author's Last name, Author's First and Middle initials, & Last names and initials of other authors, if any. (Year of publication). Title of article. *Title of Journal italicized*, *Volume number italicized*(Issue Number), Page numbers.

Winans, A. D. (1992). The Mafioso and American political culture. *Journal of Popular Culture*, *22*(1), 21-47.

Online Journal Article

Journal Article with a DOI (Digital Object Identifier)

Elements: Author's Last name, Author's First and Middle initials, & Last names and initials of other authors, if any. (Year). Title of article. *Title of Journal italicized*, *Volume number italicized*(Issue number), Page numbers. DOI

Herbst-Damm, K. L., & Kulik, J. A. (2005). Volunteer support, marital status, and the survival times of terminally ill patients. *Health Psychology*, *24*(2), 225-229. doi.org/10.1037/027806133.24.2.225

Journal Article without a DOI, with a Nondatabase URL

Elements: Author's Last name, Author's First and Middle initials, & Last names and initials of other authors, if any. (Year). Title of article. *Title of Journal italicized*, *volume number italicized*(Issue number), Page numbers. URL

Kelley, H., & Betsalel, K. (2004). Mind's fire: Language, power, and representations of stroke. *Anthropology & Humanism*, *29*(2), 104-116. www.onlinelibrary.wiley.com/j...SN%291548-1409

Journal Article without a DOI from Academic Research Database

NOTE: Do not include the database name or URL.

Anderson, H. (2019). Teaching during times of trauma. *Education Today*, *36*(1), 35-43.

Magazine Articles

Print Magazine Article

NOTE: Magazine citations are similar to journal citations, but they include additional information about the publication date. For monthly magazines, the month is included. For weekly magazines, both the month and day are included.

Elements: Author's Last name, Author's First and Middle initials, & Last names and initials of other authors, if any. (Year, Month and Day of publication). Title of article. *Title of Magazine italicized*, *Volume number italicized*(Issue number, if available), Page numbers.

Cooper, H. (1998, May). The trouble with debt. *Kiplinger's Personal Finance Magazine*, *43*, 100-103.

Online Magazine Article

Elements: Author's Last name, Author's First and Middle initials, & Last names and initials of other authors, if any. (Year, Month and Day of publication, if available). Title of article. *Title of Magazine italicized*, *Volume number italicized*(Issue number, if available). URL or DOI link

Vogel, C. (2008, June). A honeymoon cut short: How one couple survived the sinking of the Lusitania. *American Heritage*. www.americanheritage.com/honeymoon-cut-short

Article from a Database

NOTE: If an article from a database includes a DOI, provide the DOI link as you would for any online journal article. If the article does not include a DOI, the reference will look like a print version of the article. The 7th edition of American Psychological

Association Publication Manual states, “Do not include the database name or URL.”

Elements: Author’s Last name, Author’s First and Middle initials, & Last names and initials of other authors, if any. (Date). Title of article. *Title of Journal italicized*, *Volume number italicized*(Issue number), Page numbers.

Mershon, D. H. (1998, November). Star trek on the brain: Alien minds, human minds. *American Scientist*, *86*(6), 585.

Online Newspaper Article

Elements: Author’s Last name, Author’s First and Middle initials, & Last names and initials of other authors, if any. (Year, Month and Day of publication). Title of article. *Title of Newspaper italicized*. URL for article

Hunter, J.D. (2019, April 14). Pressure cooker: A Tiger Woods recipe. *The Oregonian*. https://www.oregonlive.com/sports/20...ommentary.html

Webpage on a News Website

Elements: Author’s Last name, Author’s First and Middle initials, & Last names and initials of other authors, if any. (Date published or updated). *Title of webpage italicized*. Site Name. URL

Street, F. (2020, January 9). *How the village that inspired ‘Frozen’ is dealing with overtourism*. CNN. https://www.cnn.com/travel/article/o...ria/index.html

Webpage

Elements: Author (person or organization). (Date published or updated). *Title of webpage italicized*. Site Name. URL

Boyd, V. (2012, January 15). *About Zora Neale Hurston*. Zora Neale Hurston. http://zoranealehurston.com/about/

NOTE: If the above example had no author or date, the title of the webpage would be moved to the front, and (n.d.) should be used to reflect that no date is available.

About Zora Neale Hurston. (n.d.). Zora Neale Hurston. http://zoranealehurston.com/about

Television Broadcast

Elements: Last name, First and Middle initials, & Last names and initials of other primary contributors, if any. (Function). (Year, Month and Day, if available). Title of episode. In First and middle initials followed by Last name (Executive Producer or Producers), *Title of series italicized*. Production company.

Levy, S. (Director). (2017, October 27). Chapter three: The pollywog. In M. Duffer, R. Duffer, S. Levy, D. Cohen, & I. Paterson (Executive Producers), *Stranger Things*. 21 Laps Entertainment; Netflix.

YouTube or Other Streaming Video

Elements: Last name, First and Middle initials, & Last names and initials of other primary contributors, if any. (Year released, Month and Day). *Title of the video italicized* [Video]. Streaming Service. URL

Ezekiel, S. (2012, March 21). *MIT understanding laser and fiberoptics: Fiberoptics fundamentals* [Video]. YouTube. http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0DCrIAxEv_Y

Podcast

NOTE: Provide the podcast episode number after the title of the episode in parentheses, but this can be omitted if the series does not number episodes. In the brackets after the episode title and number, specify if the podcast is audio or video. If the URL of the podcast is not known (if accessed via an app), simply omit the URL.

Elements: Last name, First and Middle initials, & Last names and initials of other primary contributors, if any. (Function). (Year, Month and Day, if available). Title of episode (No. episode number) [Audio or video podcast episode]. In *Title of the series in italics*. URL

Garber, J. (Host). (2019, November 22). The grazing revolution: A radical plan to save the Earth (No. 638) [Audio podcast episode]. In *The farming podcast*. https://www.thefarmingpodcast.com/2019/11/

Tweet

Elements: Last name, First and Middle initials or Name of Group. [@username]. (Year, Month and Day). *Content of the post up to the first 20 words italicized* [Description of audiovisuals] [Source type]. Site Name. URL

NASA. [@NASA]. (2020, January 5). *A team of astronomers have found EGS77—the farthest galaxy group known to date!* [Video attached] [Tweet]. Twitter. twitter.com/NASAUniverse/sta...25744352661504

? ? Try It

Now that you've learned all of the essentials, see if you can identify the correct citations in the following activity.

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

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15.23: APA Document Formatting

Learning Objectives

- Describe APA document formatting guidelines for the title page and headers

APA Formatting

APA papers should have 1-inch margins at the top, bottom, left, and right of the page. The font should be easy to read and in a standard size, such as 12-point Times New Roman, 11-point Calibri, or 11-point Arial. The paper should be double-spaced with the text aligned on the left margin, with the first lines of paragraphs indented. Page numbers should be listed in the top-right corner of the page.

APA Title Page

APA papers should begin with a title page that includes:

- A page number at the top right corner (title page is page 1)
- The title in bold font centered in the upper half of the page
- Your name centered two double spaces below the title
- Your affiliation (name of your school) centered below your name
- Your course name
- Your instructor's name
- The due date

Watch It

This video shows you how to set up your APA Style paper inside of Google Docs.

//plugin.3playmedia.com/show?mf=4743677&p3sdk_version=1.10.1&p=20361&pt=375&video_id=jGUOagKJ6a4&video_target=tpm-plugin-2uk51jfl-jGUOagKJ6a4

You can view the transcript for "Formatting a student version of an APA-Style Paper in Google Docs (APA 7th Edition)" here (opens in new window).

Using Headings in APA

Many APA papers require the use of headings. Headings in your paper are separate from your paragraphs. They work to let readers know what content is coming and to help organize your information in a hierarchical structure.

For most college writers, most of the time, APA first-level headings are all we need (such as the title, abstract, or conclusion) but in some cases, we have to take it to the second level. But, if you have to create a larger project in APA, chances are you really are going to need to know how to use third and fourth-level headings.

The following provides summaries and examples of all of the headings in APA, from your title, which is a first-level heading, to fifth-level headings.

Your title should be presented as a first-level heading. It is centered, in **bold** font, and all major words should be capitalized. When all major words are capitalized, this is called Title Case. It is important to note that you should not use the heading "**Introduction**." Your paper title acts as your first-level heading, and the first paragraphs of a paper after the title are understood as introductory paragraphs.

Your Title Is a First-Level Heading

First-level headings can appear throughout your paper as well. They should be centered, in **bold** font, and in Title Case. A first-level heading should look like this on your page:

First Level of Headings

Second-level headings are for sections within first-level headings, so you would use second-level headings to break up a bigger section that you have established with a first-level heading. Second-level headings are placed flush against the left margin, in **bold** font, and in Title Case. A second-level heading looks like this on your page:

Second Level of Headings

Third-level headings are necessary when you need to break down your second-level headings into smaller sections. A third-level heading exists inside a second-level heading section. Third-level headings are flush against the left margin, in **bold** and *italic* font, and in Title Case for capitalization. A third-level heading looks like this on your page:

Third Level of Headings

Fourth-level headings are sections inside third-level headings. Fourth-level headings are indented or tabbed once from the left margin, in **bold** font, in Title Case for capitalization, and end with a period. Your text should also appear on the same line as a fourth-level heading. On your page, fourth-level headings will look like this:

Fourth Level of Headings. Your paragraph begins right here on the same line.

The final level of headings APA describes is the fifth-level heading. This fifth level would be necessary if you need to break up your fourth-level section into additional sections. Fifth-level headings are tabbed once from the left margin, in **bold** and *italic* font, in Title Case for capitalization, and end with a period. Just like fourth-level headings, your text begins after the period. On your page, fifth-level headings will look like this:

Fifth Level of Headings. Your paragraph begins right here on the same line.

? ? APA Formatting Checklist

Step through this presentation to review the critical components of authoring a paper in APA style.

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

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15.24: Putting It Together- Using Sources



Integrating and citing sources isn't easy, but now that you've had some practice, you should be more prepared for this type of work when writing your own papers. One key takeaway from this section is that your job as a writer isn't just to "drop" quotations into your papers. Your readers are not looking to verify that you used sources; they want to see that you have evaluated and understood sources and that those sources are valuable contributions to your writing.

As you apply the knowledge learned from this section, be sure to keep the following principles in mind:

1. Determine whether paraphrase, summary, or direct quotation works best for your purposes.
2. Use signal phrases to clearly introduce source material.
3. Make sure source material is integrated smoothly into your work and that your voice remains in control.
4. Understand the context of your source material, and be confident that it adds value (don't use a quotation simply to add a source).
5. Pay attention to detail with in-text citations and works cited or references pages.

Remember, your readers see not only your ideas alone but also your points contextualized within the conversations of others. In this way, you establish yourself as one member of a community of scholars.

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15.25: Assignment- Incorporating and Documenting Sources

STEP 1: Using the passage below, **construct a paraphrase of a portion of the text**, naming the source and incorporating the paraphrase within your own logic. Follow the "quote sandwich" method explained in this section: begin with an introduction, then a signal phrase (like "according to…" or "[the author] states that…" or "In the passage from . . ."), then the paraphrased sentences, and an explanation of the paraphrase in your own words.

Passage for Step 1

Here is a passage from a world history textbook. Use this for Step 1.

Like so many things desired by Europeans and supplied by Asians—at first luxury items for the elite such as silk or porcelain, but increasingly products like tea from China for the mass market—cotton textiles were produced well and cheaply in India. The British textile manufacturers focused on the "cheap" part and complained that with relatively higher wages, British manufacturers could not compete. India had a competitive advantage in the eighteenth century, being able to undersell in the world market virtually any other producer of textiles. Some thought the reason for cheap Indian textiles was because of a low living standard, or a large population earning depressed wages, but all of those have been shown to not be true: Indian textile workers in the eighteenth century had just as high a standard of living as British workers. So, if it was not a low standard of living that gave India its competitive advance, what did?

In a word: agriculture. Indian agriculture was so productive that the amount of food produced, and hence its cost, was significantly lower than in Europe. In the preindustrial age, when working families spent 60-80 percent of their earnings on food, the cost of food was the primary determinant of their real wages (i.e. how much a pound, dollar, a real, or a pagoda could buy). In India (and China and Japan as well), the amount of grain harvested from a given amount of seed was in the ration of 20:1 (e.g., twenty bushels of rice harvested for every one planted), whereas in England it was at best 8:1. Asian agriculture thus was more than twice as efficient as British (and by extension European) agriculture, and food—the major component in the cost of living—cost less in Asia.

STEP 2: Next, repeat the process in step one, but this time **construct a successful paraphrase sandwich of a passage from an article you are using in your research**. If you are not currently working on a research project, then choose any topic that interests you and find an article in your library database that you can use for this activity.

This time, include correct MLA or APA in-text citations (also known as parenthetical citations) to the end of the paraphrased passage.

Create a MLA Works Cited or APA References page that includes an entry for this source.

STEP 3: Next, repeat the process in above, but this time **construct a successful summary sandwich of a passage from an article you are using in your research**. If you are not currently working on a research project, then choose any topic that interests you and find an article in your library database that you can use for this activity.

Include correct MLA or APA in-text citations (also known as parenthetical citations) to the end of the summarized passage.

Create a MLA Works Cited or APA References page that includes an entry for this source.

Sample Grading Rubric

Criteria	Proficient	Developing	Not Evident	Points
Paraphrased passage	Uses the quote sandwich to paraphrase some of the sample text. The sandwich includes an introduction, a signal phrase, paraphrased sentences, and an explanation of the paraphrase in your own words.	Paraphrases the passage but does not fully introduce or explain the paraphrase within a quote sandwich.	Incomplete paraphrase	__/8

Paraphrased passage from research	Uses the quote sandwich to paraphrase a portion from another text. The sandwich includes an introduction, a signal phrase, paraphrased sentences, and an explanation of the paraphrase in your own words. This includes an in-text and end-of-text citation.	Paraphrases the passage but does not fully introduce or explain the paraphrase within a quote sandwich. Citation may not be formatted correctly or is missing.	Incomplete paraphrase	__/8
Summarized passage from research	Uses the quote sandwich to summarize some of the sample text. The sandwich includes an introduction, a signal phrase, paraphrased sentences, and an explanation of the paraphrase in your own words. This includes an in-text and end-of-text citation.	Summarizes the passage but does not fully introduce or explain the paraphrase within a quote sandwich. Citation may not be formatted correctly or is missing.	Incomplete summary	__/4
Total:				__/20

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15.26: Discussion- Academic Honesty

STEP 1: Click on the link and read all of the corresponding background information about it from *The New York Times*, including the questions at the bottom of the page. Note that this article is now quite dated. Do you think it's still relevant? In your opinion, has cheating gotten worse or better since 2012? In what ways?

1. Is Cheating Getting Worse?

STEP 2: Post your reply to the question above (in at least 250 words) in the discussion forum. Also address similar questions, such as: What do you think should be done about cheating or academic honesty? Do you think your peers understand what plagiarism means? Do you think your instructors are aware of the cheating that takes place on your campus?

Your response should include a clear stance on the issue with supporting evidence as to why you feel the way you do. Show that you can think critically on the topic by integrating your own thoughts, analysis, or experiences.

STEP 3: Respond in two separate posts to two classmates (in at least 75 words). Explicitly address their responses and try to extend, complicate, or redirect their points in a substantive, knowledge-demonstrating way.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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16.1: Why It Matters- Grammar Basics

Why learn to examine proper English grammar?

There are several different types of English. While there are some obvious examples of different varieties (e.g., American and British English), there are other differing types, such as formal vs. informal English or verbal vs. written English. There are also different varieties of English that are unique to cultural, societal, or professional groups.

While all of these types of English are equally dynamic and complex, each variety is appropriate in different situations. When you're talking to your friends, you might use slang and cultural references—if you speak in formal language, you can easily come off as stiff. If you're sending a quick casual message—via social media or texting—you don't need to worry much about capitalization or strict punctuation. Sure, use five exclamation points standing alone, if that gets your point across.



However, there's this thing called Standard American English. This English is used in professional and academic settings, so that people can communicate with and understand one another. While this online jargon is great for quick communication, it isn't formal: it isn't a part of the commonly accepted conventions that make up Standard American English.

Grammar is a set of rules and conventions that dictate how Standard American English works. These rules are simply tools that speakers of a language can use. When you learn how to use the language, you can craft your message to communicate exactly what you want to convey.

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16.2: Introduction to Nouns and Pronouns

What you'll learn to do: understand the use of nouns and pronouns



Nouns and pronouns are the "things" in our sentences—the things that complete actions (or have things done to them). They are the most common words used in English. Nouns are words that refer to specific things or people: for example, phones, umbrellas, or Nicki Minaj. Pronouns, on the other hand, stand in for a previous noun: the same word can refer to several different things. They include words like *those*, *them*, and *he*. Without the right context, it's impossible to tell just what (or whom) a pronoun is referring to, but when we use pronouns correctly, they can help us save time and space in our communication.

In this section, we'll learn about the different types of nouns and pronouns in English and how to use them correctly.

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16.3: Nouns

Learning Objectives

- Identify and use various types of nouns

Nouns are a diverse group of words, and they are very common in English. Nouns refer to **things**—the names of people (Dr. Sanders, lawyers), places (Kansas, factory, home), things (scissors, sheet music, book), or ideas (love, truth, beauty, intelligence). There are many to categorize nouns. Let's take a look at each of these classifications and see exactly what they each mean.

Common vs. Proper Nouns

A **proper noun** refers to a specific person, place, organization, etc. Proper nouns are capitalized because they are specific nouns. Some examples of proper nouns are Steven, Apple (the company), New York, and the Seattle Seahawks.

A **common noun** refers to a general group or class of people, places, objects, etc. Common nouns are generic words, like *tissue* or *watch*. They are always lowercase (unless they begin a sentence).

- common noun: girl
- proper noun: Esther

Note: This rule also applies to adjectives that are based on proper nouns:

- It can be difficult to understand Shakespearian language.
- After her encounter with Lukas, Elisa vowed to hate all Swiss men.

However, if you're talking about *swiss cheese*, *pasteurized milk*, and *french fries*, these adjectives are lowercase. They have a nonliteral meaning: the cheese isn't really from Switzerland, Louie Pasteur didn't treat the milk himself, and the fries aren't really from France.

Concrete vs. Abstract Nouns

Concrete nouns are things you can touch, see, hear, or otherwise sense, like *book*, *light*, or *warmth*.

Abstract nouns, on the other hand, are (as you might expect) abstract concepts that can't be perceived through the senses, such as *time* and *love*.

- concrete noun: rock
- abstract noun: justice

Collective Nouns

Nouns can get a little tricky when it comes to a discussion of collective nouns. Collective nouns are nouns such as *family*, *team*, and *majority*. The tricky part comes when we have to make a decision about whether these nouns are singular or plural because we have to choose verbs that will agree with these nouns.

And, now, here's the really tricky part: There are no hard and fast rules. The verb you choose to agree with the collective noun actually depends upon how you want your readers to perceive the noun. Is it a single unit or a group of individuals? Even then, it depends upon context. Take the collective noun **family**, for example.

- The **family have** all gone their separate ways since Grandma died.

Here, because each member went his or her separate way, you would see the collective noun **family** as a group of individuals; therefore, you would use a plural verb instead of a singular verb. But let's look at another example.

- The whole **family is** coming to my house for Thanksgiving this year. I had better learn to cook a turkey.

Here, the family is seen as a single unit, so you would need a singular verb to agree with the collective noun.

In her book, ***Rhetorical Grammar***, Martha Kolln (1991) says "[collective nouns] can be treated as either singular or plural, depending on context and meaning" (p. 47). So, it really does depend on the situation.

You may be wondering how this information is helpful. The key is to think about how you might perceive the collective noun and then, of course, to consider how it's used in the sentence. And, after all, there are only about 200 collective nouns in the English language, so you really only have to worry about 200 of these. Okay, that's a lot. But this is a great example of how, very often, there are no hard and fast rules for grammar.

Verbal Nouns

A verbal noun is a type of noun that is derived from a verb. It looks like a verb but actually functions in a sentence like a noun. Here are some examples:

> *Running* from zombies is hard work.
>
> *Jogging* is a good exercise that will help you prepare, but you have to do it every day.
>
> We had a *meeting* to compare our zombie action plans.

Verbal nouns and something called **gerunds** (a form of a verb or verb phrase that functions as a noun phrase and subject in a sentence) are very similar. In fact, the first two examples above are examples of verbal nouns that are also gerunds. But, a verbal noun can be more than a gerund. In the last example, the word meeting is functioning like a noun but isn't a noun phrase that's the subject of a sentence.

It can certainly get a little confusing, and even the grammar experts disagree sometimes about the differences between verbal nouns and gerunds.

The key thing for you to remember is that, when we are talking about nouns, verbs can sometimes function in your sentences like nouns.

Compound Nouns

A compound noun is a noun that is the result of joining together two other words (such as tooth and paste making toothpaste).



Figure 1. Let's look at the legend of Bigfoot as an example. The famous cryptid Bigfoot on the left is a humanoid figure that apparently lives in Pacific Northwest forests, and is an example of a compound noun. On the right, you would have to have a big foot to wear that shoe.

A compound noun acts like one word, despite being a combination of two. Compound nouns can be classified as closed, hyphenated, or open. A closed compound takes the form of two words put together with no space, such as daydream. A hyphenated compound includes two or more words joined by a hyphen, such as dry-cleaning. An open compound is two words separated by a space but acting as one unit, such as vacuum cleaner.

One common misconception is that compounds are hyphenated or open when one of the root words is longer than one syllable. However, it is important to remember that there are many open or hyphenated compound nouns that have of two single-syllable root words, such as six-pack.

Some compound nouns differ in writing style depending on who you ask, while others are recently developed, such as e-mail being shortened further to email.

Types of Compound Nouns

- **Solid or Closed form**: These compound nouns are defined as being a complete conjoining between the two words that form its makeup. Examples of closed compound nouns include: watermelon, underground, catfish and skydiving.
- **Hyphenated form**: Compound nouns that often appear in a hyphenated form are nouns that have suffixes (such as fund-rais(er) and wire-fasten(er)) and nouns that contain articles, conjunctions, or prepositions (such as mother-in-law).

- **Open or Spaced form**: These are compound nouns that are considered to be compound even though they are separated by a space just like any two words. Despite looking like two independent words, they act together as one. Examples of open compound nouns are science fiction, peanut butter, and address book.

Hyphens are often considered a squishy part on language (we'll discuss this further in 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.

? ? Try It

Review the types of nouns in the following exercise.

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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*.

? ? Try It

Remember that compounds may be written in three different ways: the **solid** or **closed form**, the **hyphenated form**, and the **open** or **spaced form**.

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https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20329

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20330

Pluralization



Figure 2. When reviewing your writing, double check your grammar by identifying if a plural word is considered "regular" or "irregular".

English has both regular and irregular plural nouns. Regular plurals follow a rule (and other similar rules) so you generally know how to pluralize them, 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 that there is more than one of a thing. As was mentioned earlier, we add the plural suffix *–s* or *–es* to most words (*cats*, *zebras*, *classes*, *foxes*, *heroes*). Remember that when words have a foreign origin (e.g., Latin, Greek, Spanish), we just add the plural suffix *–s* (*tacos*, *avocados*, *maestros*).

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*. However, if the *y* follows another vowel, you simply add an *–s*. (*donkeys*, *alloys*). When a word ends in *–f* or *–fe*, we change the *f* to *v* and add *–es* (*calves*, *leaves*). However, if there are two terminal *f*s, or if you still pronounce the *f* in the plural, you simply add an *–s* (*cliffs*, *chiefs*).

Irregular Plurals

Irregular plurals, unlike regular plurals, don't necessarily follow any particular pattern—instead, they follow a lot of *different* patterns. For this reason, irregular plurals require a lot of memorization. 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**. This includes words like *tooth*, *man*, and *mouse*, which become *teeth*, *men*, and *mice*.

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.

We also have the **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 encounter or use; however, since these are the only four words in English that use this plural, all four have been included above.

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
Singular *–a*; Plural *–ae*	formula → formulae	vertebra → vertebrae	larva → larvae
Singular *–ix*, *–ex*; Plural *–ices*, *–es*	appendix → appendices	matrix → matrices	index → indices
Singular *–on*, *–um*; Plural *–a*	bacterium → bacteria	criterion → criteria	medium → media
Singular *–is*; Plural *–es*	thesis → theses	analysis → analyses	crisis → crises

The rules presented in the table above are almost always followed, but as a borrowed word becomes more popular in its usage, it can be adopted into regular pluralization. For example, *formulas* and *appendixes* are accepted words in formal situations. Also, in informal speech, *cactuses* and *funguses* are acceptable.

Note: Because of the word's history, *octopuses* is preferred to *octopi*, but *octopi* is an accepted word.

? ? Try It

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290622187380800738/embed

[reveal-answer q="245005"]Explanations of the answers[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="245005"]

reefs	*reefs* is the plural of *reef*. *–s* is added. It is an exception to the rule.	boys	*boys* is the plural of *boy*. *–s* is added because the *y* follows a vowel	waltz	*waltz* is the singular of *waltzes*, which is a regular plural noun.
memorandum	*memorandum* is the singular of *memoranda*. The singular ends with *–um*, so the plural ends with *–a*.	hypothesis	*hypothesis* is the singular of *hypotheses*. 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*.

focus	*focus* is the singular of *foci* or *focuses*. The singular ends with *–us*, so the plural typically ends with *–i*, but *–es* is also acceptable	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*.
children	*children* is the plural of *child*. This is an *–en* noun. To form the plural, *–ren* was added.	squid	This is a no-change plural. The singular and plural have the same form, so *squid* could be singular or plural	man	*man* is the singular of *men*. This is a mid-word vowel-change plural. The *a* in *man* was changed to an *e*.

[/hidden-answer]

Count vs. Non-count Nouns

Count nouns are nouns that can be counted. Count nouns can be associated with a numerical value (i.e., *three* whales) in both its singular and plural forms (one fox, two foxes). In some cases, the number can be replaced by the words a, an, or the (a fox, an owl, the squirrel).

If a noun cannot have a numerical value nor a plural form, it is called a **non-count** or **mass noun**. A person can give another person advice, but they cannot give three advices, because advice has no quantity. Other examples of non-count nouns include nouns like weather, happiness, homework, furniture, thunder, etc. You will know that something is a non-count noun if it sounds weird when you try to pluralize it by adding an -s to the end. For example, you can't have "furnitures" or "thunders," but you can have "pieces of furniture" or "claps of thunder."

? ? Less or Fewer? Many or Much?

The adjectives *less* and *fewer* are both used to indicate a smaller amount of the noun they modify. *Many* and *much* are used to indicate a large amount of something. People often use these pairs words interchangeably; however, the words *fewer* and *many* are used with count nouns, while *less* and *much* are 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.
- **Many** poets struggle when they try to determine whether a poem is complete or not.
- There's too **much** goodness in her heart.

You may have noticed that *much* has followed the adverb *too* in this example (*too much*). This is because you rarely find *much* by itself. You don't really hear people say things like "Now please leave me alone; I have *much* research to do." The phrase "a lot of" has taken its place in current English: "I have a lot of research to do." *A lot of* can be used in the place of either *many* or *much*:

- **A lot of** poets struggle when they try to determine whether a poem is finished or not.
- There's **a lot of** goodness in her heart.

? ? Try It

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290627472724984348/embed

[reveal-answer q="842967"]Explain Answers[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="842967"]

1. There was **much** food at the event. There were **fewer** soups than salads and even **fewer** desserts.

- *Food* is non-count, so it takes *much*, not *many*. *Soups* and *desserts* are both count, so they take *fewer* not *less*.
- Even though *much* is technically correct, you may want to use *a lot* instead. It sounds less antiquated.

2. Miguel loved studying **outer space**—especially different **galaxies**.
   - *Outer space* is non-count, so it does not have a plural. *Galaxy* is count, so it does have a plural. Since we are talking about different items, there must be more than one, so *galaxies* is correct.
3. Arturo had too much **water** before his workout.
   - *Much* must be followed by a non-count noun. Of the two options (*water* and *drinks*), *water* is the non-count noun. If *many* were used instead of *much*, the correct sentence would be "Arturo had too *many drinks* before his workout."
4. You can only be in this line if you have fifteen items or **fewer**.
   - Because *items* is a count noun, *fewer* is required here. This may surprise you, since many stores have a "fifteen items or less" line, but using *less* is grammatically incorrect. However, this phrase has become so common that stores sound uppity if they use *fewer* instead of *less*. Some stores get around this issue by saying "around fifteen items" instead.
5. Evelyn was disappointed in the weather forecast; **a lot of** rain was predicted. She preferred dry weather.
   - While *much* would also fit in this blank, the phrase *a lot of* is much more common and more likely to be used.
6. I had a lengthy list containing **many** ideas for the project.
   - The adjective is modifying the count-noun *ideas*, so *many* is needed in this example.

[/hidden-answer]

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16.4: Pronoun Cases and Types

Learning Objectives

- Identify and correctly use 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 makeup every day—with no exceptions.

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*.

So far, we've only looked at personal pronouns, but there are other types, too, including demonstrative and indefinite pronouns. Let's discuss each of these in further depth:

Personal Pronouns



Personal pronouns are what most people think of when they see the word pronoun. Personal pronouns include words like he, she, and they. The following sentences give examples of personal pronouns used with antecedents (remember, an antecedent is the noun that a pronoun refers to!):

- Danny and Sam decided that **they** didn't want to go to the zoo on Saturday. (Danny and Sam is the antecedent of they)
- Ben thought that **he** would rather turn in incomplete homework than pull another all-nighter. (Ben is the antecedent of he)
- When **she** heard that Zak had spent all **his** lunch money again, Mary yelled at **him** and demanded that **he** use **his** funds more wisely. (Mary is the antecedent of she and Zak is the antecedent of he, him, and his)
- The guy who stands on 4th street looks suspicious, but **he** actually just prefers to dress that way. (The guy is the antecedent of he)

Note: Pronouns like *I*, *we*, and *you* 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 kind of pronoun that are used when the subject and the object of the sentence are the same.

- **Jason** hurt **himself**. (*Jason* is the antecedent of *himself*)

This is true even if the subject is only implied, as in the sentence "Don't hurt yourself." *You* is the unstated subject of this sentence.

Reflexive pronouns include *myself*, *ourselves*,*yourself*, *yourselves*, *himself*, *herself*, *itself*, *themselves.* They can only be used as the object of a sentence—not as the subject. You can say, "I jinxed myself," but you can't say, "Myself jinxed me."

Note: When the first- or second-person reflexive pronoun is appropriate, object case and reflexive pronouns can often be used interchangeably:

- The only person I'm worrying about today is **me**.
- The only person I'm worrying about today is **myself**.
- You don't need to make anyone happy except **you**.
- You don't need to make anyone happy except **yourself**.

Why do you think this is? When would you use one or the other?

? ? Try It

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/conten...49753728/embed

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/conten...53148368/embed

Pronoun Classification

Pronouns may be classified by three categories: person, number, and case.

Person

Person (separated into three categories-first, second, and third) defines how the author and the text relate to each other.

- **First person** means that the author is also the subject or actor. People speak in first person, saying "I made," "I thought," "I said."
- **Second person** is when some other, separate entity is being directly addressed, saying, "you made," "you thought," "you said."
- **Third person** refers to an entity separate from both the speaker and the listener. Third person would contain phrases like "it made," "she thought," "he said."

Number

There are two **numbers**: **singular** and **plural**. As we learned with regard to nouns, singular pronouns refer to one thing or person while plural pronouns refer to more than one of a thing or person (*I* stood alone while *they* walked together).

Case

English personal pronouns have two **cases**: **subject** and **object**. 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*).

Possessive pronouns are used to indicate possession (in a broad sense). Some must be accompanied by a noun: e.g., *my* or *your*, as in "I lost **my** wallet." This category of pronouns behaves similarly to adjectives. Others occur as independent phrases: e.g., *mine* or *yours*. For example, "Those clothes are **mine**."

The table below includes all of the personal pronouns in the English language. They are organized by person, number, and case:

	singular		**plural**	
	subject	**object**	**subject**	**object**
first person	I	me	we	us
second person	you	you		
third person, neutral	it	it	they	them
third person, feminine	she	her	they	them
third person, masculine	he	him	they	them

	possessive adjective (singular)	**possessive adjective (plural)**	**possessive pronoun**
first person	my	our	mine

second person	your	your	yours
third person, neutral	its	their	its
third person, feminine	her	their	hers
third person, masculine	his	their	his

? ? Try It

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[reveal-answer q="436221"]Explain Answers[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="436221"]

1. The context of the sentence gives hints that André thinks the box of cereal belongs to the speaker of the sentence. The correct sentence would be "André told me that it was **my** box of cereal, but I couldn't remember having bought **it**."
   - *My* is a possessive, singular, first-person pronoun. It is followed by the noun *box of cereal*, so it appears in its adjective form, rather than as *mine*.
   - *It* is a subject-case, singular, neutral third-person pronoun.
2. There are two sentence that make sense here: "Amelia and Ajani still haven't arrived. I should check to see if **I** texted **them,**" or "Amelia and Ajani still haven't arrived. I should check to see if **they** texted **me**." The correct sentence depends on who did (or didn't do) the texting.
   - *I* is a subject-case, singular, first-person pronoun.
   - *Them* is an object-case, plural, third-person pronoun.
   - *They* is a subject-case, plural, third-person pronoun.
   - *Me* is an object-case, singular, first-person pronoun.
3. You shouldn't be so worried about what other people think. The only person **you** need to please is **you**.
   - *You* is a subject-case, singular, second-person pronoun.
   - *You* is an object-case, singular, second-person pronoun. *Yourself* would also be OK here, since the subject and object of the sentence are the same.
4. George Washington was the first president of the United States. **He** set the standard of serving only two terms of office. However, **it** wasn't illegal to serve more than two terms until 1951.
   - *He* is a subject-case, singular, masculine third-person pronoun.
   - *It* is a subject-case, singular, neutral third-person pronoun.

[/hidden-answer]

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.



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 really have to read all of *this*?
  - By using "this," the speaker is indicating a text that is close to her.
- *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. In such cases they act as a kind of adjective instead of as a pronoun.

- Do I really 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 (and sometimes the pronoun *it*) 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.
- I love Animal Planet's panda cam. **I watched a panda eat bamboo for half an hour.** *It* was amazing.

In the first example, the antecedent for *this* is the entire idea of the puppy cam being taken down. In the second example, the antecedent for *it* is the experience of watching the panda. In both cases, the antecedents aren't explicitly stated and must be inferred by the reader.

? ? Try It

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Indefinite Pronouns



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 several ways:

- They can refer to members of a group separately rather than collectively. (*To* ***each*** *his own.*)
- They can indicate the nonexistence of people or things. (***Nobody*** *thinks that.*)
- They can refer to a person but without specifying first, second, or third person in the way that personal pronouns do. (***One*** *does not clean* ***one's*** *own windows.*)

The table below shows the most common indefinite pronouns:

anybody	anyone	anything	each	either	every
everybody	everyone	everything	neither	no one	nobody
nothing	nobody else	somebody	someone	something	one

Note: Sometimes third-person personal pronouns are used without antecedents, as in the following examples, which use a generic *they* and "dummy" pronoun:

- You know what *they* say. (generic *they*)
- *It's* a nice day today. ("dummy" pronoun)

? ? Try It

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/conten...64062598/embed

[reveal-answer q="565632"]Explain Answers[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="565632"]

1. **Everyone** is the indefinite pronoun. *He or she* is a pronoun with the antecedent *everyone*.
2. The indefinite pronoun **neither** is used in this sentence. It is being used correctly, assuming that the speaker meant to say, "Given this choice, I wouldn't choose!"
3. The indefinite pronoun **something** is used in this sentence.
4. The indefinite pronoun **nobody else** is used in this sentence. If there are already some students enrolled in the class, then *nobody else* is being used correctly. If there aren't any students in the course, then *nobody* should be used instead.
5. **Someone** or **somebody** is the correct indefinite pronoun in this sentence.
6. **Anyone** or **anybody** is correct here. Note that anyone/anybody is singular.
7. "It seems that **no one / nobody** will admit to it" makes the most sense.
8. "Now **everyone / everybody** has a lunch but me" would be correct in context. Note that everyone/everybody is also singular.

[/hidden-answer]

Relative Pronouns

There are five relative pronouns in English: *who*, *whom*, *whose*, *that*, and *which*. These pronouns are used to connect different clauses. For example:

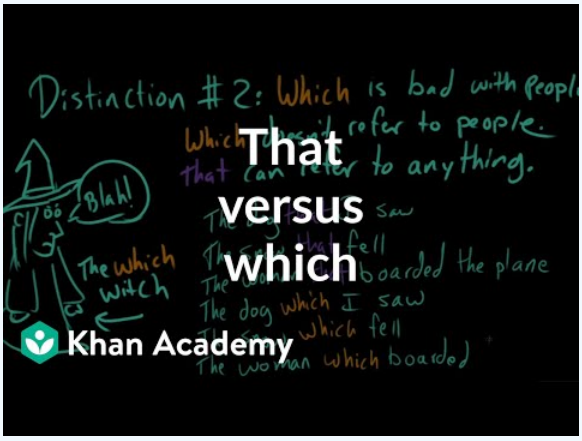
- Belen, **who** had starred in six plays before she turned seventeen, knew that she wanted to act on Broadway someday.
- My daughter wants to adopt the dog **that** doesn't have a tail.

These pronouns behave differently from the other categories we've seen. However, they are pronouns, and it's important to learn how they work.

✓ ✓ Watch It

Two of the biggest confusions with relative pronouns are *that* vs. *which* and *who* vs. *whom*. The two following videos will help you keep them straight:

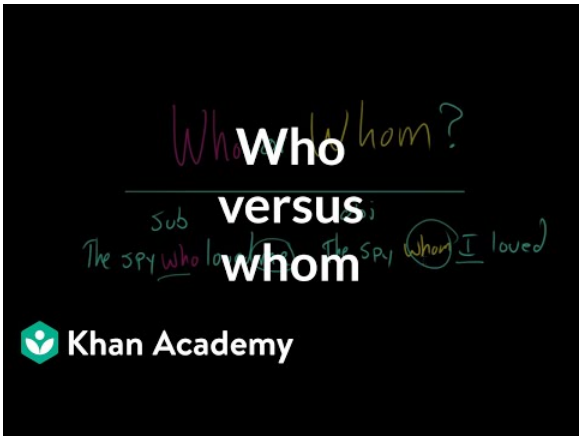
That vs. Which



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: pb.libretexts.org/ec1/?p=572

You can view the transcript for "That versus which" here (opens in new window).

Who vs. Whom



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: pb.libretexts.org/ec1/?p=572

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

? ? Try It

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.

[practice-area rows=”4″][/practice-area]
[reveal-answer q=”35641″]Show Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a=”35641″]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.

[/hidden-answer]

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16.5: Using Pronouns Correctly

Learning Objectives

- Correctly match pronouns and antecedents

Antecedent Clarity

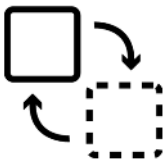


Figure 1. Always ensure that the identity of your antecedent is clear before replacing it with a pronoun.

We've already defined an **antecedent** as the noun (or phrase) that a pronoun is replacing. The phrase "antecedent clarity" simply means that it 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 section we'll examine some common sources of antecedent confusion and ways of addressing them.

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 whether the cereal is 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).

Try It

How would you best revise the sentence above about Rafael and Matt? Type your ideas in the text frame below, and then look at the suggested revisions.

[practice-area rows="4"][/practice-area]
[reveal-answer q="654515"]**Show Possible Revisions**[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="654515"]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.

What if the cereal is Matt's?

- Rafael told Matt to stop eating Matt's cereal.
- Matt was eating his own cereal when Rafael told him to stop.

These aren't the only ways to revise the sentence. However, each of these new sentences has made it clear whose cereal it is.

[/hidden-answer]

Were those revisions what you expected?

Let's take a look at another example:

> Katerina was really excited to try French cuisine during her semester abroad. 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, since the first sentence refers to *French cuisine* (not the French), which means that there isn't actually an antecedent. Since every pronoun needs an antecedent, the example needs to be revised to include one.

? ? Try It

How would you best revise the sentence above? Type your ideas in the text frame below, and then look at the suggested revisions.

[practice-area rows="4"][/practice-area]
[reveal-answer q="654516"]**Show Possible Revisions**[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="654516"]Let's assume that it is the French who make great cuisine:

- Katerina was really excited to try French cuisine during her semester abroad. The French make all sorts of delicious things.
- Katerina was really excited to try the cuisine in France during her semester abroad, because the French make all sorts of delicious things.

[/hidden-answer]

As you write, keep these two things in mind:

- Make sure your pronouns always have antecedents.
- Make sure that it's clear what their antecedents are.

? ? Try It

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

[reveal-answer q="371426"]Explain Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="371426"]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.

[/hidden-answer]

Antecedent Agreement



Figure 2. When editing and reviewing your writing, always double check your antecedent agreement!

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 its 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 choose a pronoun, you also need to make sure that you use the correct case. 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:

- Dogs have always hated **me**.
- My boss wanted to talk to **him**.
- Give **her** the phone and walk away.

? ? Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20333

However, pronouns 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. Because "he or she" is clunky, you'll often see incorrect workarounds like this:

> The way each individual speaks can tell us so much about him or her. It tells us what groups they associate themselves with, both ethnically and socially.

As you can see, in the first sentence, *him or her* agrees with the indefinite pronoun *each*. However, in the second sentence, the writer has shifted to the plural *they*, even though the writer is talking about the same group of people. When you write, make sure your agreement is correct and **consistent**.

? ? Try It

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 in the text frame below, and then look at the suggested revisions.

[practice-area rows="4"][/practice-area]
[reveal-answer q="725756"]Show Possible Revisions[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="725756"]There are a couple of different ways you could revise this paragraph:

- All writers will 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?

[/hidden-answer]

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."

? ? Singular *They*

One attribute of indefinite pronouns is that the person's gender is unspecified—they are by definition *indefinite*. This ambiguity causes no trouble (and may actually be desirable) in statements such as "I hear **someone** coughing." We don't know (or need to know) the gender of the *someone* who is coughing. Consider the following statements, though, in which the indefinite pronoun *someone* in the first sentence is also the antecedent for the pronouns in the second sentence:

- I hear **someone** coughing. I wish **he or she** would stop.

"He or she" is grammatically correct here because it takes into account that the "someone" could be either gender. However, this construction can sound clunky, especially in casual conversation. Historically, the awkwardness has been addressed by using the masculine pronoun as the generic singular pronoun:

- To each **his** own.
- Everyone should get **himself** a new car at least once.

(Alternatively, some opt to use the feminine pronoun, instead, in order to balance out the gender bias. E.g.: "To each *her* own.") With the trend toward more gender-inclusive language, however, today you are probably more likely to hear the plural pronoun *they* used in this way—as a singular pronoun—especially in everyday spoken English. For example: Somebody accidentally left **their** wallet at the cash register. Can you make sure **they** get it back?

While the singular *they* offers the advantage of being gender-neutral—and it may soon become the accepted norm, as it was officially accepted by the APA in 2019—for now there are mixed opinions about it, and you may want to avoid it in your academic writing. When in doubt, consult your instructor's preferred style guide.

Additionally, many individuals neither identify as male nor female, and they have begun to use *they* as a singular pronoun to refer to themselves. In these cases, it *is* grammatically correct to use *they* as a singular pronoun (per the *Chicago Manual of Style*, one of the predominant authorities on grammar and style).[1]

? ? Try It

Review what you've learned about pronoun agreement and check your understanding in the following interactive.

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

1. The University of Chicago Press. "Grammar & Usage: Singular 'they'. *Chicago Manual of Style*, 2017, p. 241. ↵

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16.6: Introduction to Verbs

What you'll learn to do: analyze the use of verbs



Verbs are crucial to the functioning of language. Without verbs, language can't really *do* anything; after all, verbs are action words: *run*, *jump*, *work*, *dance*. Verbs can also connect two ideas together (the dog *is* beautiful) or help other verbs (you *can* stay).

In this section, we'll discuss these three main types of verbs: active verbs (action words), linking verbs (connecting two ideas), and helping verbs. We'll also learn how verbs change form to express action in the far past, the near past, the present, and the future.

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16.7: Verb Types

Learning Objectives

- Effectively identify verb types

Active Verbs



Figure 1. A verb like the verb “to kick” is an example of an action verb.

Active verbs are the simplest type of verb: they simply express some sort of action: e.g., *contain, roars, runs, sleeps.*

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. In contrast, **intransitive verbs** 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 read, “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.
  - *Hates* is also a transitive verb. Without the phrase “filling out forms,” the phrase “She hates” doesn’t make any sense.

Intransitive verbs, on the other hand, 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.

Note: there are some verbs that can act as both transitive and intransitive verbs. Here are a few examples:

Intransitive	Transitive
The fire has **burned** for hundreds of years.	Miranda **burned** all of her old school papers.
The engine is **running** fine.	Karl **ran** the best horse track this side of the river.
The vase **broke**.	She **broke** the toothpick.

Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20334

? ? Multi-Word Verbs

Multi-word verbs are a subclass of active verbs. As you might guess, they are comprised of multiple words. They include things like *stirfry*, *kickstart*, and *turn in*. Multi-word verbs often have a slightly different meaning than their base parts. Take a look at the difference between the next two sentences:

- Ben carried the boxes out of the house.
- Ben carried out the task well.

The first sentence uses a single word verb (*carried*) and the preposition *out*. If you remove the preposition (and its object), you get "Ben carried the boxes," which makes perfect sense. In the second sentence, *carried out* acts as a single entity. If you remove *out*, the sentence becomes "Ben carried the task well," which doesn't make much sense.

Let's look at another example:

- She's been shut up in there for years.
- Dude, shut up.

Can you see how the same principles apply here? Other multi-word verbs include *find out*, *make off with*, *turn in*, and *put up with*.

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 are similar to math equations. The verb acts as an equal sign between the items it links.

While *to be* verbs are the most common linking verbs (*is*, *was*, *were*, etc.), there are other linking verbs, as well. Here are some illustrations of other common linking verbs:

- Since last summer, Charles **has become** a new man.
  - It's easy to reimagine this sentence as "Since last summer, Charles = a new man."
- I **feel** sick to my stomach.
  - The linking verb feel expresses the following relationship: I = sick to my stomach."
- That word-processing program **seems** adequate for our needs.
  - Here, the linking verb is slightly more nuanced than an equals sign, though the overall sentence construction is similar. (This is why we write in words, rather than math symbols, after all!)

Helping Verbs



Figure 2. Helping verbs can help to express tense when the tense of a sentence is otherwise unclear.

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.

As you just saw, helping verbs include words like *is* and *had* (we'll look at a more complete list later). Let's consider 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* conveys information about the time frame in which the action (receiving heart transplants) occurred.

- **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*.

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 and a sense of continuity.	He **is** sleeping.
	Express tense 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 and 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 Complex Verb Tenses.

? ? Try It

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16.8: Verb Tenses

Learning Objectives

- Identify and use the correct verb tense in a sentence

Tenses

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:** work(s)
- **Simple Past:** worked
- **Simple Future:** will work

The present tense for singular third person is slightly different from the other persons. Look at the tables, below, to see the correct tenses for each person:

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

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

Try It

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Irregular Verbs

There are a lot of irregular verbs. Unfortunately, a fair amount of memorization is needed to keep them straight.

Watch It

The following video shows some of the irregular verbs you'll use most often (*to be*, *to have*, *to do*, and *to say*):

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

You can view the transcript for "Introduction to irregular verbs" here (opens in new window).

For quick reference, below are the tables for *to be* and *to have*:

To be

Person	Past	Present	Future
I	was	am	will be
We	were	are	will be
You	were	are	will be
He, She, It	was	is	will be
They	were	are	will be

To have

Person	Past	Present	Future
I	had	have	will have
We	had	have	will have
You	had	have	will have
He, She, It	had	has	will have
They	had	have	will have

Here's a list of several irregular past tense verbs.

? ? Try It

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290622346043861808/embed

[reveal-answer q="474777"]Explain Answers[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="474777"]

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** two hundred sit-ups.
5. Marcela **runs** a car wash down the street from my house.

[/hidden-answer]

Complex Verb Tenses

Verbs don't have to be expressed only in present, past, or future tenses. There are more complex verb tenses that allow us to express actions with a little more variety and difference, which are created by changing the **verb aspect**. The verb aspect tells us whether a verb is stating a fact, a completed action, an ongoing action, or the end of an ongoing action. Here are a few examples of these different aspects, all in the present tense:

- **Simple** Aspect (expressing a fact): I eat.
- **Perfect** Aspect (expressing a completed action): I have eaten.
- **Progressive** or **Continuous** Aspect (expressing an ongoing action): I am eating.
- **Perfect Progressive** Aspect (expressing the end of an ongoing action): I have been eating.

Each of these aspects can be expressed in past, present, and future tenses. For example, the different verb tenses in the perfect aspect would be:

- **Past Perfect:** I had eaten
- **Present Perfect:** I have eaten

- **Future Perfect:** I will have eaten

These different tenses allow for much more flexibility in our language and expression.



Figure 1. Which words/phrases above are examples of continuous tense? Which are examples of perfect tense? Which are examples of perfect continuous tense?

✔ ✔ Watch it

Watch the video below for some more information about verb aspect, and to see all the different types of ways you can organize and use verbs.

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

You can view the transcript for "Introduction to verb aspect" here (opens in new window).

? ? Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20337

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20338

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290622570734869168/embed

Look at the following schedule for a Writer's Workshop. Pretend that it's Tuesday at 12:30 pm—you're halfway through the workshop events. Write a short journal entry about the schedule, using both simple and complex verb tenses.

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday
10:00	Check-In	Genre Speakers	Meet Editors/Agents
11:00	Group Orientation	Genre Speakers	
12:00	Lunch	Lunch	Checkout
1:00	Peer-to-Peer Critique	Professional Critiques	
2:00			
3:00		Keynote Speaker	

[practice-area rows="4"][/practice-area]
[reveal-answer q="642911"]Show Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="642911"]While there are an infinite number of passages you could write, compare the tenses in your passage to ours:

> This Writer's Workshop **has been going** since yesterday. This morning, several genre speakers **talked** about the quirks of their genres. By the time attendees **heard** these talks, they **had completed** their peer-to-peer critiques and **were ready to learn** more specific things about the genre they aspire to write in. After lunch today, each attendee **will meet** with a professional writer for a critique of his or her work. When that **has finished**, the keynote speaker **will give** an address. Tomorrow **there will be** a meet-and-greet with editors and agents. By noon tomorrow, the workshop **will have ended**.

[/hidden-answer]

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16.9: Subject-Verb Agreement

Learning Objectives

- Identify and use verbs to match the subject of a sentence

Tense Agreement



Figure 1. When double checking for tense agreement, ask yourself, “Who (or what) is doing the action of the verb?”.

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. For example:

- **I** really **am** (first-person singular) vs. **We** really **are** (first-person plural)
- The **boy sings** (third-person singular) vs. The **boys sing** (third-person plural)

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 phrases. To make verbs agree with their subjects, follow this example:

> The direction of the three plays **is** the focus of my talk.

The subject of “my talk” is *the direction*, not *plays*, so the verb should be singular.

In the English language, verbs usually come after 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*.

Try It

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

[reveal-answer q=”813087″]Explain Answers[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a=”813087″]

1. Ann **walks** very 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.
   - [/hidden-answer]

Work through these slides to learn a few tips that will help you always get correct subject-verb agreement.

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

Consistency

One of the most common grammatical 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.

? ? Try It

Read through the following paragraphs. Can you spot the errors in tense? Type your corrected passage in the text frame below:



> 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 of 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.

[practice-area rows=”4″][/practice-area]
[reveal-answer q=”792647″]Show Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a=”792647″]As we mentioned earlier, you want to make sure your whole passage is consistent in tense. You may have noticed that 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 are in bold:

> If you want to pick up a new outdoor activity, hiking is a great option to consider. (1) It’s a sport that is suited for a beginner or an expert—it just **depends** on the difficulty of 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

[/hidden-answer]

? ? Try It

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

[reveal-answer q="615298"]Explain Answers[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="615298"]

1. [/hidden-answer]

? ? Try It

Check your understanding of subject-verb agreement in the following interactive.

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

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16.10: Non-Finite Verbs

Learning Objectives

- Identify gerunds, participles, and infinitives

Just when we thought we had verbs figured out, we're brought face-to-face with a new animal: non-finite verbs. These words *look* similar to verbs we've already discussed, but they *act* quite differently. A finite verb is one that has a subject and functions as the main verb in a sentence. By definition, non-finite verbs cannot serve as the main verb in an independent clause. This means that they don't provide the action of a sentence. They also lack a tense. While the sentence around them may be past, present, or future tense, the non-finite verbs themselves are neutral.

For example, look at the following sentences. The **finite** verbs are in bold in the following sentences, and the non-finite verbs are underlined:

Verbs **appear** in almost all sentences.

This sentence **is** illustrating finite and non-finite verbs.

The dog **will** have to be trained well.

Tom **promised** to try to do the work.

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. They can be created using active or helping verbs:

- I like **swimming**.
- **Being loved** can make someone feel safe.
- Do you fancy **going out**?
- **Having read the book once before** makes me more prepared.

Try It

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290622387642917758/embed

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. The two types of participles 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*).

Here are some examples of participles being used to modify other elements of the sentence, acting as an adjective or adverb:

- **Present Participle:** "The *sleeping* girl over there is my sister"; "She ducked into the *running* water"; "*Breathing* heavily, she finished the race in first place."
- **Past Participle:** "She placed the *cooked* chicken on the table"; "He put the *cut* flowers in a vase."

Participles can also be used with helping verbs to form different tenses, as we learned while discussing complex verb tenses. When the present participle is used with the helping verb *to be*, it forms the progressive tense. When the past participle is used with the helping verb *to have*, it forms the perfect tense. For example:

- **Present Participle:** "Marta was *sleeping*"; "Aliyah is *singing*"; "He will be *signing* autographs at 3:00."
- **Past Participle:** "The chicken has *eaten*"; "The public had *voted* him out of office"; "They will have *thrown* a fit by then."

? ? Try It

https://assessments.lumenlearning.co...essments/20339

Infinitives

To be or not to be, that is the question.

—Hamlet

Infinitives describe the verb form that includes the word "to" before the verb is used—for example, "to be," "to try," or "to make." The infinitive is the basic dictionary form of a verb, usually preceded by *to*. In other languages, infinitive verbs are often easy to identify because they are a single word, as in *morir* ("(to) die") in Spanish, *manger* ("(to) eat") in French, or *lieben* ("(to) love") in German, etc.

Here are some examples of uses of the infinitive:

- With other verbs: "I aim *to convince* him of our plan's ingenuity"; "You already know that he'll fail *to complete* the task."
- As a noun phrase: " *To err* is human"; " *To know* me is *to love* me."
- As a modifier (an adjective or adverb): "The man *to save*us"; "Nice *to listen*to"; "In order *to win*."
- In questions: "I don't know where *to go*."

There are some cases in which the infinitive form of a verb is used without the *to* preceding it. This is called a **bare infinitive**. The bare infinitive usually comes when following another verb or certain phrases, such as in these examples: "I will *wait*"; "I heard him *sing* a lovely song"; "She can *speak* five languages"; "I would rather *die*." All of these are bare infinitives without the *to*.

? ? Try It

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290622569784428998/embed

Now that we've learned how to use each of the different non-finite verbs, let's take a look at how they're used together. The following practice will help you identify each of the types of non-finite verbs and see how they are used together.

? ? Try It

Read the following paragraph and see if you can identify the gerunds, participles, and infinitives. Click on the text below to check your answers.

> The Australian magpie is a medium-sized black and white bird native to Australia. Feeding magpies is a common practice among households around the country, and there is generally a peaceful co-existence. However, in the spring a small minority of breeding magpies (almost always males) becomes aggressive and swoop and attack passersby. If someone is on a bike, being unexpectedly swooped can result in loss of control of the bicycle, which may cause injury. Attaching a long pole with a flag to the bike can deter attack. Using cable ties on helmets has become common, as well, and it appears to be an effective deterrent.

[reveal-answer q="306830"]Show Gerunds[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="306830"]Here is the passage with all the gerunds in bold:

> The Australian magpie is a medium-sized black and white bird native to Australia. **Feeding** magpies is a common practice among households around the country, and there is generally a peaceful co-existence. However, in the spring a small minority of breeding magpies (almost always males) becomes aggressive and swoop and attack passersby. If someone is on a bike, **being** unexpectedly swooped can result in loss of control, which may cause injury. **Attaching** a long pole with a flag to a bike can deter attack. **Using** cable ties on helmets has become common as well, and it appears to be an effective deterrent.

1. *Feeding magpies* is the subject of this sentence.
2. *Being unexpectedly swooped* is the subject of this sentence.
3. *Attaching a long pole* is the subject of this sentence.
4. *Using cable ties* is the subject of this sentence.

[/hidden-answer]

[reveal-answer q="306880"]Show Participles[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="306880"]Here is the passage with all the participles bolded. Past particles have also been italicized.

> The Australian magpie is a medium-sized black and white bird native to Australia. Feeding magpies is a common practice among households around the country, and there is generally a peaceful co-existence. However, in the spring a small minority of **breeding** magpies (almost always males) becomes aggressive and swoop and attack passersby. If someone is on a bike, being unexpectedly ***swooped*** can result in loss of control, which may cause injury. Attaching a long pole with a flag to a bike can deter attack. Using cable ties on helmets has become common as well, and it appears to be an effective deterrent.

1. *Breeding* is a present participle serving as an adjective. It modifies the noun *magpies*.
2. *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.

[/hidden-answer]

[reveal-answer q="306835"]Show Infinitives[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="306835"]Here is the passage with all the infinitives bolded:

> The Australian magpie is a medium-size black and white bird native to Australia. Feeding magpies is a common practice among households around the country, and there is generally a peaceful co-existence. However, in the spring a small minority of breeding magpies (almost always males) becomes aggressive and swoop and attack passersby. If someone is on a bike, being unexpectedly swooped can **result** in loss of control, which may **cause** injury. Attaching a long pole with a flag to a bike can **deter** attack. Using cable ties on helmets has become common as well, and it appears **to be** an effective deterrent.

1. *Result* is the bare infinitive. It works with the verb *can*. *Can* indicates a possibility in this sentence.
2. *Cause* is the bare infinitive. It works with the verb *may*. *May* indicates a possibility in this sentence.
3. *Deter* is the bare infinitive. It works with the verb *can*. *Can* indicates a possibility in this sentence.
4. *To be* is the *to*-infinitive. It works with the verb *appears*.

[/hidden-answer]

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16.11: Introduction to Other Parts of Speech

What you'll learn to do: analyze the use of other parts of speech, including adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions, and articles



Now that we've learned about the most common parts of speech—nouns, pronouns, and verbs—we're ready to move on to the other players.

Up first are adjectives and adverbs, which are different types of modifiers (that is, they modify other words). For example, compare the phrase "the bear" to "the harmless bear" or the phrase "run" to "run slowly." In the modified examples, the adjective (*harmless*) or adverb (*slowly*) changes the meaning of the original words.

In this section, we will also discuss the little connecting words of English: conjunctions, prepositions, and articles. These bit players may not seem as important as verbs, nouns, and modifiers, but they are the backbone of English: they are the words that give our language structure.

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16.12: Adjectives

Learning Objectives

- Correctly identify and use adjectives



Figure 1. Another term used for adjectives is a "describing word". Oftentimes they are a good descriptor of the subject of a sentence.

Adjectives

An adjective modifies a noun and, in so doing, provides more information or detail about the noun. It might be anything from color to size to temperature to personality. Adjectives usually occur just before the nouns they modify, but they can also follow a linking verb (in these instances, adjectives can modify pronouns, as well):

- The generator is used to convert **mechanical***energy* into **electrical***energy*.
- The kids' *schoolhouse* was **red**.

In certain cases, numbers can also be adjectives. 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*.

Comparable Adjectives

Some adjectives are **comparable**: they exist on a continuum. 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 that a comparison is being made (a **comparative**), and *most* modifies the adjective to indicate an absolute comparison (a **superlative**).

Table 1. Comparative and Superlative Adjectives

Adjective	Comparative	Superlative
kind	kinder	kindest
strong	stronger	strongest
good	better	best
bad	worse	worst
careful	more careful	most careful
awesome	more awesome	most awesome

There is another way to compare adjectives in English. Many adjectives can take the suffixes *–er* and *–est* to indicate the comparative and superlative forms, respectively (e.g., *great*, *greater*, *greatest*). Some comparable adjectives are *irregular:* for example, *good*, *better*, *best*; *bad*, *worse*, *worst*).

There is no simple rule for knowing which pattern is correct for a particular adjective; however, the general tendency is for shorter adjectives to take the suffixes and for longer adjectives to use *more* and *most*.

- *hotter* (not *more hot*)

- *more beautiful* (not *beautifuller*)
- *more pretentious* (not *pretentiouser*)

? ? A Note about *Fun*

The adjective *fun* is a notable exception to the tendency we just described. You might expect the comparative to be *funner* and the superlative to be *funnest*. However, for a long time, these words were considered nonstandard, so *more fun* and *most fun* became 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 turn, it's safest to stick to *more fun* and *most fun* in formal situations (such as in academic writing or in professional correspondence).

When you use comparative adjectives, the adjective is often accompanied by the word *than* (e.g., "He is taller than I am"). When using *than*, there are two things you should keep in mind:

1. You should use *than*, not the word *then*. *Then* indicates time, rather than comparison.
2. When you're trying to emphasize just how "adjective" a thing is, you shouldn't follow *than* with a second instance of the comparative. "She is shorter than shorter," is incorrect. The emphatic phrase "She is shorter than short" would be correct.

Non-Comparable Adjectives

Non-comparable adjectives, on the other hand, are not measured on a continuum but are binary. Something is either "adjective," or it is not. 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. Other examples include *dead*, *true*, and *unique*.

Native speakers will frequently play with non-comparable adjectives. Although *pregnant* is logically non-comparable (a woman is either pregnant or not), you may hear a statement 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. George Orwell once wrote: "All animals are equal, but some are more equal than others."

? ? Try It

Are the following adjectives comparable or non-comparable? For example:

- *Tall* is a comparable adjective. Height exists on a continuum: there are many different heights. The comparative is *taller*, and the superlative is *tallest*.
- *Dead* is a non-comparable. You are either dead or alive. However, this concept is played with in the movie *The Princess Bride*. Miracle Max says Wesley is "only mostly dead." Max is expressing the fact that Wesley is still alive, despite being very close to death.

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

Adjectives need to be placed in a particular order. What information do you post first? If you're a native English speaker, you can probably figure out the order without any thought—even if it's only because you know what "sounds" right. And, if you're a non-native English speaker, you've probably been taught about the order.

Below, you'll find a table illustrating the royal order of adjectives. Again, native English speakers follow the order—but we don't always know WHY. Think about it. Why would we automatically write **four gorgeous, long-stemmed, red, silk roses** rather than **four silk, long stemmed, gorgeous, red roses**? What drives the order in our description? The first example leads us down a logical path; the second example doesn't let us know which details are most important.

The Royal Order of Adjectives[1]

Determiner	Observation	Physical Description	Origin	Material	Qualifier	Noun

		Size	Shape	Age	Color				
a	beautiful			old		Italian		touring	car
an	expensive			antique			silver		mirror
four	gorgeous		stemmed		red		silk		roses
her			short		black				hair
our		big		old		English			sheepdog
those			square				wooden	hat	boxes
that	dilapidated	little						hunting	cabin
several		giant		young		American		basketball	players
some	delicious					Chinese			food

There are some rules, though. Here is the specific order for English language adjectives—intensifier, quality, size, age, color. Look at the two sentences again.

Four gorgeous provides the intensifier and quality; **long-stemmed** provides the size; **red**, provides the color; and **silk** provides an additional detail. Now look at the order of the adjectives in one of your own sentences and see if it makes sense to you.

? ? Try It

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16.13: Adverbs

Learning Objectives

- Correctly identify and use adverbs

Adverbs

Adverbs are words that modify or describe a **verb**, **adjective**, or another adverb. Just as an adjective changes a noun, an adverb changes a verb, adjective, or adverb. Adverbs are easily identified because they often end in **ly**, but this is certainly not always the case.

Descriptions make our writing rich and specific, so we shouldn't be afraid of using adjectives and adverbs in our sentences.

Look at these three sentences:

1. Jon walked to the store to get canned goods for his zombie stash.
2. Jon walked to the large store to get canned goods for his zombie stash.
3. Jon walked **urgently** to the **massively** large store to get canned goods for his zombie stash.

As you can see, the last sentence is the most descriptive and informative. The use of adverbs and adjectives helps our writing come alive. The following page on adverbs will provide helpful tips on how to correctly use adverbs and give you examples of how adverbs can add descriptive detail to your writing.

Adverbs can perform a wide range of functions: they can modify verbs, adjectives, and other adverbs. They can occur either before or after the word they modify. An adverb may provide information about the manner, place, time, frequency, certainty, or other circumstances of the activity indicated by the verb:

- 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)

Adverbs can also modify noun phrases, prepositional phrases, or entire 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)

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** beautiful (the adverb *exceptionally* modifies the adjective *beautiful*)
- She sang **very** loudly (the adverb *very* modifies another adverb—*loudly*)
- Wow! You ran **really** quickly! (the adverb *really* modifies another adverb—*quickly*)

Adverbs may also undergo comparison, taking comparative and superlative forms. This is usually signified by adding *more* or *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**").

Note: When using intensifiers with the adverb *also*, *also* should always appear first: "He also really loved pie" is correct, while "He really also loved pie" is not.

? ? Very

Some people are of the opinion that the words *very* and *really* indicate weak writing. You've probably seen lists of adjectives to use instead of these adverbs (along with an adjective). While this can be true in some cases (*enormous* or *gigantic* is probably a better choice than "really big"), *very* and *really* aren't terrible words. As in most cases, you just need to be conscious of the words you select. When you use these adverbs, pause and consider whether there's a better way to express what you want to say.

? ? Try It

Read the following passage and identify the adverbs. Are the intensifiers and adverbs of degree being used correctly? Or would you suggest revision? The sentences have been numbered to aid you in your comments.

> (1) Wojtek (usually spelled Voytek in English) was a Syrian brown bear found in Iran and literally adopted by soldiers of the 22nd Artillery Supply Company of the Polish II Corps. (2) Wojtek initially had problems swallowing and was fed condensed milk from an old vodka bottle. (3) Later in life, he was oftenly rewarded with beer, which became his favorite drink. (4) He really also enjoyed smoking (or eating) cigarettes.
>
> (5) To get him onto a British transport ship when the unit sailed from Egypt, Wojtek was officially drafted into the Polish Army as a Private and was listed among the soldiers of the 22nd Artillery Supply Company. (6) As an enlisted soldier of the company, with his own pay book, rank, and serial number, he lived either in tents with the other soldiers or by himself in a special wooden crate, which was transported by truck. (7) According to numerous accounts, Wojtek helped by carrying ammunition during the Battle of Monte Cassino—he never dropped a single crate. (8) In recognition of the bear's immensely popularity, the HQ approved a depiction of a bear carrying an artillery shell as the official emblem of the 22nd Company.

[practice-area rows="4"][/practice-area]
[reveal-answer q="519412"]Show Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="519412"]

1. The adverb *literally* is misused here. The soldiers did not actually adopt the bear (filling out legal papers, etc.); they simply took the bear in. The best solution is to omit the adverb altogether.
2. The adverb *initially* is used correctly.
3. The adverb *later* is correct; *oftenly* is not a word; the correct word is *often*.
4. Should be *also really*, not *really also*. *Also* is modifying the phrase "really enjoyed smoking," so it should come before the phrase, not in the middle of it.
5. The adverb *officially* is used correctly.
6. There are no adverbs in this sentence.
7. The adverb *never* is used correctly.
8. *Immensely* should be the adjective *immense*. *Popularity* is a noun.

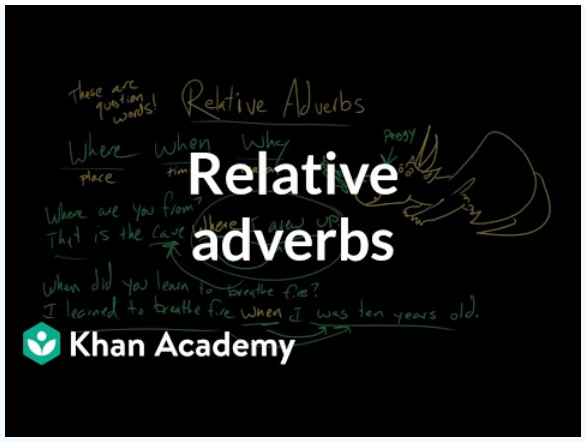
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Relative Adverbs

Relative adverbs are a subclass of adverbs that deal with space, time, and reason.

✓ ✓ Watch It

In this video, you'll learn about the three most common relative adverbs: *when*, *where*, and *why*.



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: pb.libretexts.org/ec1/?p=590

You can view the transcript for "Relative adverbs" here (opens in new window).

As we just learned, we can use these adverbs to connect ideas about where, when, and why things happen.

? ? Try It

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290622572514545678/embed

Common Mistakes

Only

Have you ever noticed the effect the word *only* can have on a sentence, depending on where it's placed? Let's look at a simple sentence:

- She loves horses.

Let's see how *only* can change the meaning of the sentence:

- *Only* she likes horses.
  - No one likes horses but her.
- She *only* likes horses.
  - She likes horses, but she doesn't love them.
- She likes *only* horses.
  - She likes 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 statements 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.

? ? Try It

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And like adjectives, adverbs have a "royal order." While you may already have an innate sense of this order, it can be helpful to review the rules.

The Royal Order of Adverbs[2]

Verb	Manner	Place	Frequency	Time	Purpose
Beth swims	enthusiastically	in the pool	every evening	before dusk	to keep in shape.
Dad walks	impatiently	into town	every morning	before work	to get a newspaper.
Joe naps		in his room	every afternoon	after lunch.	



Figure 1. Can you spot the differences between these two fishing rods? Similarly to adverbs and adjectives, it can be difficult to tell them apart. Learning the common mistakes made with adjectives and adverbs will help you to avoid mixing the two up.

Comparing Adjective 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. *Clever* is an adjective, and *cleverly* is an adverb. The adjective + *ly* construction suggests that the word is an adverb.

While *–ly* is helpful, it's not a universal rule. Not all words that end in *–ly* are adverbs: *lovely*, *costly*, *friendly*, etc. And not all adverbs end in *-ly*: *here*, *there*, *together*, *yesterday*, *aboard*, *very*, *almost*, etc.

Some words can function both as an adjective and as an 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 Adjectives and Adverbs

One common mistake with adjectives and adverbs is using one in the place of the other. For example, in the sentence "I wish I could write as neat as he can," *neat* should be replaced with *neatly*, an adverb, since it's modifying a verb. ("That's real nice of you" is also incorrect, it should be "That's *really* nice of you.") 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* and *well*. There isn't really a good way to remember the distinction besides memorization. *Good* is an adjective. *Well* is an adverb. Let's look at a couple of sentences that demonstrate common misusage:

- 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”—not as a description of how a person is feeling.

? ? Try It

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1. "Literal." *Merriam-Webster.com*. Merriam-Webster, n.d. Web. 20 June 2016. ↵
2. Adapted from Adverbs. (n.d.) Capital Community College Foundation. Retrieved from grammar.ccc.commnet.edu ↵

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16.14: Conjunctions

Learning Objectives

- Correctly identify and use conjunctions in a sentence

Conjunctions are the words that join together sentences, phrases, and other words. Conjunctions are divided into several categories, each of which follows different rules. We will discuss coordinating conjunctions, adverbial conjunctions, correlative conjunctions, and subordinating conjunctions.

Watch It

This SchoolHouse rock video on conjunctions has withstood the test of time—made in 1973, it remains relevant and entertaining today. Watch it for an overview of what conjunctions are and what they do.

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

You can view the transcript for "Schoolhouse Rock: Grammar- Conjunction Junction Music Video" here (opens in new window).

Coordinating Conjunctions



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*. Here are some examples of them used in sentences:

- Nuclear-powered artificial hearts proved to be complicated, bulky, **and** expensive.
- Any external injury **or** internal injury puts patients at risk of uncontrolled bleeding.
- The current from the storage batteries can power lights, **but** the current for appliances must be modified within an inverter.

Try It

Are the correct coordinating conjunctions being used in each of the following sentences? Explain your reasoning:

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?

[reveal-answer q="843777"]Show Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="843777"]

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?"

[/hidden-answer]

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 and a verb). 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 toward resolving many run-on sentence issues in your writing. We'll talk more about run-ons and strategies to avoid them in a later section.

Rule 2: Joining Two Similar Items

What if there is only one complete idea but two subjects or two verbs? Consider the following examples:

1. Any external injury or internal injury puts patients at risk of uncontrolled bleeding.
2. In the 1960s, artificial heart devices did not fit well and tended to obstruct the flow of venous blood into the right atrium.

The first sentence has two subjects: *external injury* and *internal injury*. They are joined with the conjunction *or*. The second sentence has two verbs: *did not fit well* and *tended to obstruct*. They are joined with the conjunction *and*. Neither sentence requires additional punctuation.

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 before the conjunction (*and*). There is a bit of contention about that final comma, but most styles prefer to keep include it (it's called the serial comma). We discuss the serial comma in more depth later as well.

? ? Starting a Sentence

Many students are taught—and some style guides maintain—that English sentences should not begin with a coordinating conjunction. However, there is nothing grammatically incorrect about doing so. The practice is likely discouraged because it is thought to help students avoid creating sentence fragments, but there is nothing wrong with starting a sentence with a coordinating conjunction.

Adverbial Conjunctions



Adverbial conjunctions, or conjunctive adverbs, link two separate thoughts or sentences. When used to interrupt thoughts, as in the first example, below, a comma is required on either side of the conjunction. When used to separate complete ideas (independent clauses, which each contain a subject and a verb), a semicolon is required before the conjunction and a comma after. This is the case in the second example, below:

- The first artificial hearts were made of smooth silicone rubber, which apparently caused excessive clotting and, **therefore**, uncontrolled bleeding.
- 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.

Adverbial conjunctions include the following words; however, it is important to note that this is by no means a complete list.



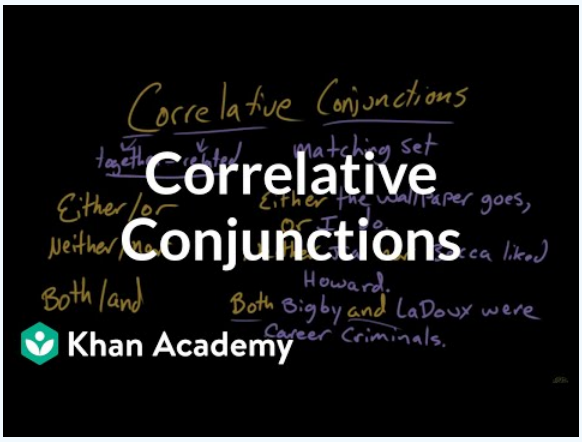
therefore	however	in other words
thus	then	otherwise
nevertheless	on the other hand	in fact

Correlative Conjunctions

Correlative conjunctions are word pairs that work together to join words and groups of words of equal weight in a sentence.

✔ ✔ Watch It

The following video explains this type of conjunction and describes the five most common pairs.



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: pb.libretexts.org/ec1/?p=592

You can view the transcript for "Correlative Conjunctions" here (opens in new window).

The table below shows some examples of correlative conjunctions used in sentences:

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** go. (It's up to you)

Correlative Conjunction	Example
	Whether you stay **or** you go, the film will start at 8 pm. (It's not up to you)
just as . . . so	**Just as** lots of 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)).

Subordinating Conjunctions



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.
- 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 of subordinating conjunctions—they're dependent on the placement of clauses they're in. Let's revisit a couple of examples and see if we can figure out the exact rules:

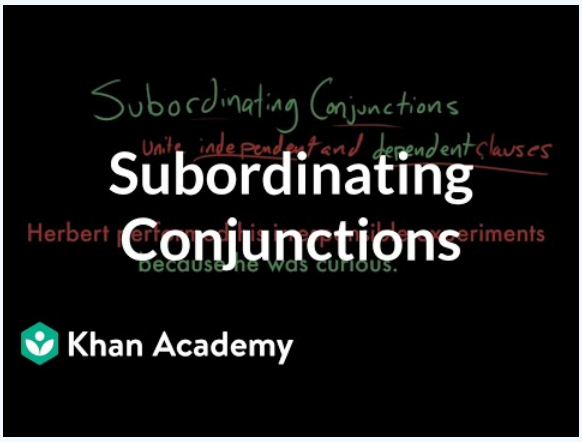
- The heart undergoes two cardiac cycle periods: diastole, **when** blood enters the ventricles, and systole, **when** the ventricles contract and blood is pumped out of the heart.
  - These clauses are both extra information: information that is good to know, but not necessary for the meaning of the 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 a 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

✔ ✔ Watch IT

Watch this video from Khan Academy to learn more about when and how to use subordinating conjunctions.



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You can view the transcript for "Subordinating Conjunctions" here (opens in new window).

? ? Try It

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[reveal-answer q="769106"]Explain Answers[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="769106"]Here are the sentences with suggested conjunctions. These are not the only possible solutions. If you answered something different, compare your reasoning with the explanation provided below.

1. Karni's roommate, Joana, decided to drive to work**; therefore,** Karni rode into the city with her.
   - As the punctuation currently exists (a semicolon followed by a comma), the sentence needs an adverbial conjunction. However, using *therefore* here feels a little stuffy. If you change the semicolon to a comma and remove the second comma, you can then use the coordinating conjunction *so* instead, which feels more natural: ". . . , so Karni rode into the city with her."
2. They needed to turn left on 140th Street, **but** that street was under construction.
   - Since the blank is preceded by a comma, a coordinating conjunction should go here. The conjunction *but* has the most appropriate meaning in this sentence.
3. **Before** Karni could say anything, **however**, Joana had already found an alternate route.
   - Since there is no comma after the first blank, we know we need a subordinating conjunction here. *Before* makes the most sense here.
   - Since this blank appears in the middle of an idea, we know we need an adverbial conjunction here. *However* makes the most sense.
4. **No sooner** did Karni arrive at work **than** her boss told her she would be working with her coworker Ian on her next project.
   - The two blanks in this sentence indicate a correlative conjunction. The sentence indicates the two things happened at the same time, so *no sooner . . . than* is the correct option here.
5. Karni was really impressed by Ian's professional accomplishments, **but** she was anxious about working with him.
   - Since the blank is preceded by a comma, a coordinating conjunction should go here. The conjunction *but* has the most appropriate meaning in this sentence.
6. Karni thought Ian was annoying, unpredictable, **and** reckless.
   - Since the blank is preceded by a comma, a coordinating conjunction should go here. The conjunction *and* has the most appropriate meaning in this sentence.
7. **However**, Karni was willing to put aside her opinions to get the job done.

- Since the blank is followed by a comma, we know we need an adverbial conjunction here. *However* makes the sense here.

8. She knew Ian would put in his best effort **while** they worked together**, so** she felt she could do no less—**even if** he frustrated her.
   - Since there is no comma before or after the first blank, we know we need a subordinating conjunction here. *While* makes the most sense here, but *as long as* or *if* would also work.
   - Since the blank is preceded by a comma, a coordinating conjunction should go here. The conjunction *so* has the most appropriate meaning in this sentence.
   - This blank is a little trickier; it is preceded by a dash, which can stand in for a lot of different punctuation marks. A subordinating conjunction is likely the best solution. We've used *even if* here, but there are a lot of possibilities, including *even though*.
9. Personal relationships are often **as** important **as** professional skills.
   - The two blanks in this sentence indicate a correlative conjunction. The sentence indicates two things of equal importance, so *as . . . as* is the correct option here.

[/hidden-answer]

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16.15: Prepositions

Learning Objectives

- Correctly identify and use prepositions in a sentence

Prepositions are relation words; they can indicate location, time, or other more abstract relationships. A preposition combines with another word (usually a noun or pronoun) called the complement. Below, the prepositions are in bold, and their complements are in



italics:

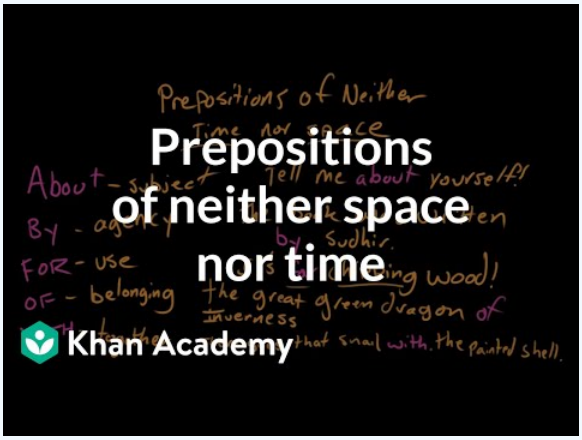
- The woods **behind** *my house* are super creepy **at***night*.
- She sang **until***three in the morning*.
- They were happy **for***him*.
- He counted **to***three*.

Prepositions generally come before their complements (e.g., **in** England, **under** the table, **by** Elena) but occasionally occur after, as in the following example:

- *Financial limitations***notwithstanding**, Phil paid back his debts.

Watch It

Prepositions of location are pretty easily understood (*near*, at, *over*, *under*, etc.), and prepositions concerning time are, too (*before*, *after*, *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:



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: pb.libretexts.org/ec1/?p=594

You can view the transcript for "Prepositions of neither space nor time" here (opens in new window).

Note: The video mentions that prepositions are a "closed group," but it never actually explains what that means. A closed group simply refers to a part of speech that doesn't allow in new words. While it's easy to invent new nouns (e.g., *selfie*, *Google*), you can't invent new words in a closed group.

So far, all of the prepositions we've looked at are single words (and most of them are one syllable). 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 comprised of 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 a boat.)
- except for (Joan invited everyone to her party except for Ben.)
- next to (Go ahead and sit down next to Jean-Claude.)

? ? Try It

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

Using Prepositions

Probably the greatest challenge with prepositions is knowing which one to use. Some verbs require specific prepositions. Here's a table of some of the most commonly misused preposition/verb pairs:

different from	comply with	dependent on	think of or about
need of	profit by	glad of	bestow upon

Some verbs take a different preposition, depending on the object of the sentence:

agree with a person	agree to a proposition	part from (a person)	part with (a thing)
differ from (person or thing)	differ from or with an opinion	confide in (to trust in)	confide to (to intrust to)
reconcile with (a person)	reconcile to (a statement or idea)	confer on (to give)	confer with (to talk with)
compare with (to determine value)	compare to (because of similarity)	convenient to (a place)	convenient for (a purpose)

When multiple objects take the same preposition, you don't need to repeat the preposition. For example, in the sentence "I'll read any book **by** J.K. Rowling or R. L. Stine," both *J. K. Rowling* and *R. L. Stine* are objects of the preposition *by*, so it only needs to appear once in the sentence. However, you can't do this when you have different prepositions. Consider the familiar saying "He fell **out** of the frying pan and **into** the fire." If you leave out one of the prepositions, as in "We fell out of the frying pan and the fire," the statement suggests that we fell out of the frying pan *and* out of the fire—which might be a preferable outcome, but it's a significant change of meaning!

? ? Which Preposition?

- The difference between **beside** and **besides** can be confusing. Beside means next to. Besides means in addition to.
- The difference between **between** and **among** can also be confusing. You should use between when referring to two people or things, and you should use among when referring to more than two people or things.

Prepositions in Sentences

You may have heard about **prepositional phrases**. A prepositional phrase includes a preposition and its complement (e.g., "**behind***the house*" or "**from** *the post office*"). These phrases can appear at the beginning or end of sentences. When they occur at the beginning of a sentence, they typically need a comma afterward:

- You can drop that off behind the house.
- Before a hurricane, it's a good idea to board up your windows.
- As an editor, she does a lot of reading.

? ? Ending a Sentence with a Preposition

It is 100 percent okay to end a sentence with a preposition. The rule against doing so stems from Latin, which belongs to a completely different language family than English. Using a terminal preposition can often make your writing smoother and more concise. Winston Churchill is credited with saying, "This is the sort of English up with which I will not put," when he was criticized for his use of terminal prepositions. (A more natural way to phrase Churchill's glib quote would be "This is the sort of English I will not put up with.")

However, it's still best to avoid using terminal prepositions 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.

? ? Try It

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16.16: Articles

Learning Objectives

- Correctly identify and use indefinite and definite articles

Well, if you thought prepositions were “little” words, wait until we consider the part of speech called articles. Articles are similar to **adjectives** in that they modify **nouns**, but unlike adjectives, they don’t really describe a noun; they just identify a noun.

Articles are the smallest of the small but still serve an important function. We have three articles in the English language: **a**, **an** and **the**.

The is the **definite article**, which means it refers to a **specific** noun in a group.

A or **an** is the **indefinite article**, which means it refers to **any** member of a group. You would use the indefinite article when you aren’t trying to distinguish a particular noun.



Figure 1. The article “a” is unspecific and non-distinguishable.

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 to a specific apple. There are also cases in which no article is required:

- with generic nouns (plural or uncountable): *cars have accelerators*, *happiness is contagious*—which refer to cars and happiness in general (as compared with *the happiness I felt yesterday*, which specifies particular happiness)
- with most proper names: *Sabrina*, *France*, *London*, etc.

Indefinite Article

In English, the indefinite article takes the two forms *a* and *an*. These can be regarded as meaning “one,” usually without emphasis.

Distinction between *a* and *an*

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 few examples with *a*:



Figure 2. Remember,”an” only comes before a vowel sound, not any word that begins with a vowel.

- *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. . . “)

And now 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, when the *h* is clearly pronounced, this usage is now less common, and *a* is preferred.

? ? Try It

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Definite Article



Figure 3. “The” is specific.

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,” we can assume that, in this context, the reference is to only one boy and only 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.

? ? Try It

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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*, and *double*, precede the definite article when used in combination (*all of the team*, *both of 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.

? ? Try It

Read the following passage and make any necessary changes to the articles. 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.

[practice-area rows="4"][/practice-area]
[reveal-answer q="666227"]Show Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="666227"]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.

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*.

[/hidden-answer]

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16.17: Introduction to Sentence Structure

What you'll learn to do: analyze sentence structure



Language is made up of words, which work together to form sentences, which work together to form paragraphs. In this outcome, we'll be focusing on sentences: how they're made and how they behave. Sentences help us to organize our ideas—to identify which items belong together and which should be separated.

So just what is a sentence? Sentences are simply collections of words. Each sentence has a subject, an action, and punctuation. These basic building blocks work together to create endless amounts and varieties of sentences.

In this outcome, we'll look at the different parts that work together to create sentences and at the different types of sentences that work together to create variety in your writing.

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16.18: Parts of a Sentence

Learning Objectives

- Identify the subject and predicate of a sentence
- Identify the direct and indirect objects in a sentence

Subjects and Predicates

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, and the **predicate** is the rest of the sentence after the subject. The predicate tells us more about what the subject does or is, and therefore must contain a verb explaining what the subject does (and can also include modifiers). The predicate is basically everything in the sentence that is not the subject.

- Einstein's general **theory** of relativity has been subjected to many tests of validity over the years.
- In a secure landfill, the **soil** on top and the **cover**block storm water intrusion into the landfill.
  - This is called a *compound subject*, because there are two subjects in this sentence: *soil* and *cover*.
  - Notice that the introductory phrase, "In a secure landfill," is not a part of the subject or the predicate.
- The **pressure**is maintained at about 2250 pounds per square inch then lowered to form steam at about 600 pounds per square inch.
  - This is called a *compound predicate*, because 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."
- Surrounding the secure landfill on all sides are impermeable barrier **walls**.
  - This sentence has an *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.

A predicate can include the verb, a direct object, and an indirect object.

Try It

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Direct Object

A direct object—a noun, pronoun, phrase, or clause acting as a noun—takes the action of the main verb (e.g., the verb is happening to the object). 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.
- 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)*

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.
- 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.

Note: Objects can belong to any verb in a sentence, even if the verbs aren't in the main clause. For example, let's look at the sentence "When you give your teacher your assignment, be sure to include your name and your class number."

- *Your teacher* is the indirect object of the verb *give.*
- *Your assignment* is the direct object of the verb *give*.
- *Your name* and *your class number* are the direct objects of the verb *include*.

? ? Try It

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16.19: Phrases and Clauses

Learning Objectives

- Differentiate between phrases and clauses
- Differentiate between dependent and independent clauses

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** is a group of words that may have a partial subject or verb but not both, or it may have neither a subject nor a verb. Phrases never have a subject doing the action of a verb. A **clause**, however, is by definition a group of words that has a subject and a verb. A sentence can have any number of clauses and phrases combined together. See the examples below:

Phrases	**Clauses**
Needing help	Sarah smiled
With a green shirt	She laughs at shy people
Best friend	Because he gave her a puppy
On the horizon	When the saints go marching in
After the devastation	I waited for him
Because of her glittering smile	He wants to become an engineer

Notice how each of the clauses has a subject and a verb, but the phrases do not. Some of the clauses contain phrases, like “She laughs at shy people.” “She laughs” is a clause, and “at shy people” is a phrase that complements the clause and completes the sentence.

Phrases can be any combination of words that do not combine a subject and a verb. There are many types of phrases, including **noun phrases** (*the nice neighbor*, *my best friend*, *troops of soliders*), **verbal phrases** (*waiting for the rain to stop*, *have been sleeping*), and **prepositional phrases**, which follow a preposition (*after the storm*, *to the end of time*, *in the road*).

You might be tempted to just assume that phrases are shorter than clauses. This is not always true. Many phrases are only two words long, but many are much longer. Look at the following sentence:

- **In 1833**, Faraday’s experimentation **with electrolysis** indicated a natural unit **of electrical charge**, thus **pointing to a discrete rather than continuous charge**.

Each of the bolded segments of this sentence is a phrase. Be sure as you analyze each sentence that you are looking for a subject and a verb to decipher what is a clause and what is just a phrase.

WAtch It

Click through this interactive to learn more about the differences between clauses and phrases.

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290910165214270728/embed

Dependent and Independent Clauses

There are two types of clauses: dependent and independent. A **dependent clause** has both a subject and a verb, but is not a complete sentence and does not express a complete thought. It is dependent on something else: it cannot stand on its own. Some examples of dependent clauses include:

- When we get enough snow
- Because I was upset
- Which book I want to read next
- Until the sun sets

You can see that each of these clauses has a noun and a verb, but they also have an additional word, like a **subordinating conjunction** (*because*) or a **relative pronoun** (*which*), which makes the clause feel incomplete. These clauses must be attached to an independent clause to be a part of a complete sentence.

An **independent clause**, on the other hand, is free to stand by itself. It contains a subject and a verb, and expresses a complete thought which does not require anything else. Here are some examples of independent clauses:

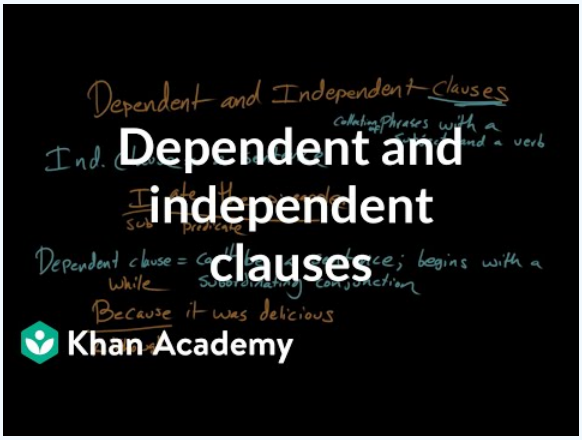
- I enjoy sitting by the fireplace.
- The sun set.
- This is the book I want to read next.

So how can you tell if a clause is dependent or independent? Sometimes they can be almost exactly the same. 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.

Look for the common words that are known to make dependent clauses, like subordinating conjunctions and relative pronouns. Some common ones are: **after, although, as, as if, because, before, even if, even though, if, in order to, since, though, unless, until, whatever, when, whenever, whether, and while.** Also pay attention to if the clause makes sense standing by itself. Do you understand the whole idea of what the sentence is saying? Does the thought seem incomplete? If it feels incomplete, it is probably a dependent clause.

✔ ✔ Watch it

Watch this video to learn more about dependent and independent clauses.



A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: pb.libretexts.org/ec1/?p=602

You can view the transcript for "Dependent and independent clauses" here (opens in new window).

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16.20: Common Sentence Structures

Learning Objectives

- Identify common sentence structures and 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.

Try It

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.

[practice-area rows="4"][/practice-area]
[reveal-answer q="77635"]Show Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="77635"]

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.

[/hidden-answer]

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.

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**.

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.

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.

Complex Sentences

A complex sentence is made up of an independent clause and at least one dependent clause.

- Because my hot chocolate got too cold, I heated it back up on the stove.
- Wherever you go, there is always something beautiful.
- When he got a pie smashed in his face, everyone laughed.

Compound-Complex Sentences

A compound-complex sentence is exactly what it sounds like: a compound sentence mixed with a complex one. Since a compound sentence has (at least) two independent clauses, and a complex sentence has (at least) one dependent clause, those are the elements that are a part of a compound-complex sentence. Compound-complex sentences sound like they are hard, but they are actually really common in the way we speak and write. See if you can identify which are the independent clauses and which are the dependent clauses in the example sentences below.

- Jessie forgot her aunt's birthday, so she sent her a card when she finally remembered.
- When we won the state championship, our captain jumped for joy and the rest of the team cheered.
- Even if he is hungry, he still won't eat oatmeal; he only wants to eat cold cereal.

Watch it

Here is a basic summary of the main types of sentence structures. Watch this for a comprehensive summary of how different clauses can work together to make sentences.

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

You can view the transcript for "Sentence Structure- Learn About the Four Types of Sentences" here (opens in new window).

Try It

Identify the type of each sentence below. Why is each type of sentence useful in each instance?

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.

[practice-area rows="4"][/practice-area]
[reveal-answer q="745490"]Show Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="745490"]

1. This sentence has a compound predicate—that is, there are two predicates, joined with the conjunction *and*: "is usually covered with cloth" and "has two rubber tubes attached to it."
   - Without the use of the compound predicate, you would need two separate sentences with the same subject. Using a compound predicate reduces needless repetition.
2. This is a compound sentence. There are two independent clauses joined together by a semicolon.
   - Combining the independent clauses with a semicolon indicates that the two ideas are closely related. Putting a period between the two clauses and dividing them into two separate sentences would separate the ideas as well.
3. This is a simple sentence with a compound subject. The subject is "Words, sentences, and paragraphs," and the predicate is "are all combined to create a book."
   - Without a compound predicate, it would be very difficult to convey this idea.
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" and "look at things from a different perspective"
   - This sentence doesn't have an explicitly stated subject, just the implied *you*. You do not need a comma before *and*.

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Punctuation Patterns

While your sentence's punctuation will always depend on the content of your writing, there are a few common punctuation patterns you should be aware of.

Simple sentences have these punctuation patterns:

- _____.
- _____, _____.

Compound predicate sentences have this punctuation pattern: _____ _____ and _____.

Compound Sentences have these punctuation patterns:

- _____, and _____.
- _____; _____.

Complex and compound-complex sentences don't follow any specific patterns, although they will commonly have commas in between the clauses as well (but don't have to).

As you can see from these common patterns, periods, commas, and semicolons are the punctuation marks you will use the most in your writing. As you write, it's best to use a variety of these patterns. If you use the same pattern repeatedly, your writing can easily become boring and drab.

? ? Try It

The sentences in this passage follow a single punctuation pattern: _____. Revise the passage to create variety.

> Johann Sebastian Bach wrote six Cello Suites. The Cello Suites are suites for unaccompanied cello. They are some of the most frequently performed and recognizable solo compositions ever written for cello. Each movement is based around a baroque dance type. This basis is standard for a Baroque musical suite. The cello suites are structured in six movements each. Each includes a prelude; an allemande; a courante; a sarabande; two minuets, two bourrées, or two gavottes; and a final gigue. The Bach cello suites are considered to be among the most profound of all classical music works.

[practice-area rows="4"][/practice-area]
[reveal-answer q="318161"]Show Answer[/reveal-answer]
[hidden-answer a="318161"]There are an infinite number of revisions for this passage. As you compare your work with ours, keep these things in mind:

1. When combining sentences into complex or compound sentence, make sure you use punctuation and conjunctions correctly.
2. When there is redundant information, you can easily remove it and combine the other parts of a sentence together.

Johann Sebastian Bach's six Cello Suites, written for unaccompanied cello, are some of the most frequently performed and recognizable solo compositions ever written for cello. As is standard for a Baroque musical suite, each movement is based around a baroque dance type. The cello suites are structured in six movements each: a prelude; an allemande; a courante; a sarabande; two minuets, two bourrées, or two gavottes; and a final gigue. The Bach cello suites are considered to be among the most profound of all classical music works.

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16.21: Putting It Together- Grammar

Grammar is made up of lots of little rules that work together to create a language. Since there are so many rules, you can't expect to remember everything, especially not at once. No one can, not even professional writers and editors, who typically have at least three reference books and style manuals at their fingertips. Feel free to come back and reference the material taught in this modules as often as you need.

Here's a quick recap of the parts of speech we learned about in this module:

https://lumenlearning.h5p.com/content/1290928710549160118/embed

Remember, language is always changing: new words are being created (e.g., *google*, *selfie*), and words are changing meaning (e.g., *they*, *literally*). This kind of change is how these are all from the same language:

- Hwæt, we gar-dena in geardagum, þeodcyninga þrym gefrunon, hu ða æþelingas ellen fremedon! (*Beowulf*, the Beowulf poet, c. 700 AD)
- Thanne kam þer a Kyng: Kny3thod hym ladde; Might of þe communes made hym to regne. (*Piers Plowman*, William Langland, c. 1300 AD)
- And for myself, foe as he was to me, Might liquid tears or heart-offending groans Or blood-consuming sighs recall his life. (Henry VI, William Shakespeare, c. 1550 AD)
- Never do anything by halves if you want to get away with it. Be outrageous. Go the whole hog. Make sure everything you do is so completely crazy it's unbelievable. (*Matilda*, Roald Dahl, 1988)

In another couple hundred years, the things we say right now will be just as incomprehensible to people as the things Shakespeare wrote are to us.

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16.22: Discussion- Does Grammar Still Matter?

STEP 1: Click on the link below and read all of the corresponding background information about it from *The New York Times*, including the questions at the bottom of the page.

1. Does Grammar Still Matter in the Age of Twitter?

STEP 2: Post your reply to the question (in at least 250 words) in the discussion forum. Your response should include a clear stance on the issue with supporting evidence as to why you feel the way you do. Show that you can think critically on the topic by integrating your own thoughts, analysis, or experiences.

STEP 3: Respond in two separate posts to two classmates (in at least 75 words). Explicitly address their responses and try to extend, complicate, or redirect their points in a substantive, knowledge-demonstrating way.

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16.23: Discussion- Grammar Book Assignment

For this assignment, you will create a grammar "story" or book designed to explain one of the grammar concepts presented in this module. You may have heard of "ELI5" (Explain it Like I'm Five) examples that attempt to explain difficult concepts in the most basic way—that's almost the level we are aiming for, but perhaps with a little bit more detail.

STEP 1: You will make a six to ten-slide presentation or video recording using PPT, Google Slides, Prezi, YouTube, or a similar presentation or video software, that explains one of the grammar concepts from this module (nouns, pronouns, verbs, subject-verb agreement, non-finite verbs, adjectives, adverbs, conjunctions, prepositions, articles, phrases, clauses, or some other specific aspect of grammar introduced in this module). You are encouraged to be creative. It could be written as a story, poem, song, or rap and presented in any way you find to be fun and educational, so long as you meet the minimum requirements.

- The presentation must explain the term or concept and give at least 3 examples of correct uses of that concept.
- There should also be at least one reference of how NOT to use that term or concept.
- There should be images (at least 5).
- All sources should be cited in MLA.

STEP 2: Post the link to your finished story to the discussion forum. Add in a paragraph about what you learned and are most proud of in your assignment.

STEP 3: Respond in two separate posts to two classmates (in at least 75 words). Explicitly address their stories and try to extend, complicate, or redirect their points in a substantive, knowledge-demonstrating way.

Rubric

Sample Grading Rubric

Criteria	Proficient	Developing	Not Evident	Points
Grammar Concept and Examples	Correctly identifies a punctuation or grammar concept from the module and explains it in the presentation. There are three good examples and at least one bad example of the concept on the poster.	Does not correctly identify or describe the punctuation or grammar concept. Examples are off or incomplete.	Does not appropriately give examples of the punctuation concept.	__/8
Visual Presentation	Presentation is interesting and informative; includes at least five images. Includes MLA citations or attributions for images.	Some use of visuals to display information, but layout is confusing or without clear connections. May not include two visuals or citations.	No attempt at presenting information in a creative manner. Project lacks visual cohesion.	__/8
Discussion	Posts personal story to the forum and comments on at least two classmate's stories.	Posts story; offers incomplete responses to classmate.	Does not comment on another post.	__/4
Total:	__/20			

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