

FRAMEWORKS FOR ACADEMIC WRITING



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Frameworks for Academic Writing

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Stephen V. Poulter

Licensing

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For the Instructor

Appendix B

What makes this book different?

This book is designed for a Mastery Learning environment. Mastery Learning is based on the assumption that all students can learn, given the proper time on task. This means that different students “master” different tasks at differing rates and with differing ways of processing. This should be obvious: each student learns at a different pace and with different learning styles. Mastery Learning also implies that learning content is made up of small enough “chunks” that students may master them a few at a time.

This kind of learning environment has never lent itself to the academic writing classroom. For one thing, how can we have 30 or more students all writing at different rates? How can we give all students the practice they need (on different skills) and ever make progress as a group? How can we teach to 30 different learning or processing styles as well? What kind of small “chunks” are there that students may master before can make progress on their own, and how do we monitor and assess these chunks?

It should come as no surprise that Mastery Learning and the writing process as most of us know it are difficult to merge into a workable curriculum. The reasons for this are complex. For one thing, a teacher must break writing down into small chunks and then ask writers to master each item. In other words, the teacher “prescribes” a framework within which to write, something antithetical to the idea of writing for most people.

Another problem with smaller elements is that most people assume writing is made up of sentences and paragraphs, and so emphasize practicing these. However, nearly everyone will tell us that good writing is not accomplished by sentence and paragraph practice. The problem here is that sentences and paragraphs are *orthographic* in nature, or printing conventions. Once students master sentence and paragraph construction, they do not seem to have mastered writing, at least beyond the sentence and paragraph.

How do we fit Mastery Learning into the writing classroom?

In order to use Mastery Learning, an instructor should identify small chunks of writing as elements of modes or rhetorical patterns. To do this an instructor must first see written language not as orthographic but as rhetorical. In other words, we must think in terms of elements and modes rather than sentences and paragraphs.

Most of us are aware that certain phrases or words tend to indicate what mode or pattern we are reading or writing. Most of us know when we are being told a story, or when we are in an argument, or when we are given directions to a destination, without having to be told ahead of time what pattern to expect. This is because there are key words and phrases that tell us whether we are in narrative, argument, or process. Once we know the pattern, we can identify some phrases that make up that pattern, and we can show our students these patterns.

This brings us to the problem of being prescriptive, or “telling them what to write,” or “filling in the blanks,” and so on. This can be overcome by putting the key phrases in elements of patterns into a *heuristic*, or a series of leading questions. By incorporating key phrases into open-ended questions, students are led to use the same or similar phrasing in their answers. Questions also give students the option of answering using their own similar phrasing, or simply answering without the aid of key phrases.

The heuristic questions also allow a teacher to provide example answers using these key pattern phrases. From example answers, a template can be easily constructed. Weaker writers tend to use templates and examples until they get the hang of it. Better writers tend to use the heuristics. Their answers may be as short as a sentence, or they may be as long as the series of paragraphs that answer the two questions in bold, above.

Who is this book for?

This book is aimed at first-year college writing students, but we have found it very useful in developmental and even second-language applications. It is also useful for dyslexic writers and others who learn or process language differently. We have had great success too with upper-level writers who need a guide for longer papers and other writing projects. In other words, this book is:

Primarily Aimed At → First-Year College Writers
Very Useful For → Developmental Writers
Dyslexic Writers
Second-Language Writers
Writers With Alternative Learning Styles
Anyone Who Needs A Guide For Long Papers

(1)

What are the benefits or advantages to a Mastery Learning writing classroom?

- There is no plagiarism
- Students work on their own, at their own pace
- They collaborate naturally
- They spend most if not all of their time in class writing
- The teacher almost never has to read/grade papers outside of class
- Students are less interested in their grade and much more interested in writing
- The students get their papers back the same hour they submit them, or at the next class session at the latest
- Students are eager to revise their work
- They want to have a maximum rather than a minimum length to their writing
- Without the teacher assigning it, students do homework on their own
- The teacher does not have to teach the writing process, audience, usage, structure, organizing, MLA format, grammar, group collaboration, peer editing, voice, conventions, and so on.
- No formal lecture is required on the teacher's part
- While students write, the teacher may stroll around the room, waiting for students to ask individual, specific questions about their writing
- This kind of classroom management is easy to learn and apply, especially for first-year teachers, GAs, and so on.
- Students come to class early and are reluctant to leave
- They learn to adapt to changing research demands, resources, and documentation
- Instead of a rubric, students work from (and are assessed by) checklists
- They find it easy to apply what they learn in this class to other classes (across the curriculum)
- They find that what they say is important
- Many of their writings are of publishable quality
- They develop inquiry as a habit of mind before they leave the course
- They see the teacher as an ally
- They see academic and literary prose more clearly and critically
- They leave the course eager to write authoritatively for other instructors and on their own
- *Most of them earn an "A" for the course

How This Book Works

When we look at a pattern for writing, we tend to see the things that change, rather than the things that stay the same. To illustrate, I highlighted the words in the sentence below that give it meaning:

| A **sandal** is a kind of **shoe** that has only **straps** and a **sole**.

The sentence above is an example pattern for "classification" or "definition." It works because other meaningful words may be substituted into the pattern:

| A **dachshund** is a kind of **dog** that is **shaped** like a **wiener**.

However, this book focuses on the *pattern* words rather than the meaning words; all the *questions*, *templates*, *tutorials*, and *examples* call for the writer to practice the pattern words that all academic writers accept. Using this book will help the writer see and use the patterns to help him or her say what needs to be said. In other words, the pattern looks like this:

| A **sandal is a kind of shoe that has only straps and a sole**.

Or,

*A dachshund is a **kind of** dog **that** is shaped like a wiener.*

The sentences above serve as examples and a template for a sentence-sized “classification” or “definition” pattern. A tutorial might look like this:

A sandal	is a kind of	shoe	that	has only straps and a sole.
↑		↑		↑
Word/Term		Category/Class		Difference from other things in the category or class

A question that prompts such an answer will look something like this:

*What are you defining, what **kind of thing** is it, and how is it **different from** other things in the same class?*

Using the words in **bold** in their answer, but replacing the other words with new ones, helps students practice the patterns (words in bold), practice inquiry (applying the question to an assignment or problem), and think about each question/answer, yet answer in their own unique way and at their own pace. It also allows them to answer in class while you are there to help them, particularly in a computer classroom.

A Writer-Editor Relationship

The best way to approach a class with this book is to establish a writer-editor relationship with your students. In other words, treat them in the same way that you will be treated by the editor of a journal: Call for papers; give parameters; establish submission deadlines; require peer review; edit the work as it comes in (rather than grading it); return to writers for corrections; have them resubmit; edit and return. The most sensible setting for this process is a computer classroom.

Let Writers Write

Insist that class time be used for writing. Unless everyone is having trouble with the same thing, or you need to make announcements, avoid speaking to the whole class at once. This will take some practice – lecturing is what many of us have been taught. Encourage your writers to ask for help from you directly and individually.

What To Do During Class

If no one needs help, edit the pages already submitted and return them. If no one needs help and there are no papers to edit, relax, wander around, and enjoy a beverage until you must help or edit. Our classes look more like a writing center than writing classes.

Teachable Moments

When you edit their papers and expect changes to be made, most students will understand and make those changes. However, some students will not understand what you want them to do. This is when you may individually teach that student that particular lesson. This is very efficient and effective.

Edit Checklist

When each writer finishes a section, direct him or her to the Edit Checklist. You may change or delete or add anything on the Edit Checklist. However, insist that every item on the list (or your list) is addressed before assigning a grade. We require that the writer use the checklist, then hand the paper to a peer to use the checklist as well.

Insist on Peer Review

Ask each student to submit each writing to a peer reviewer. The peer reviewer should use the Edit Checklist and **ONLY** the Edit Checklist. You can be responsible for anything else. We hand the paper back to students if we find errors from the Edit Checklist. I

circle the first few and then give back the paper. Ask them to edit according to the Edit Checklist until they have done so.

Focus on Answering Prompts

The prompts for each pattern are designed to elicit answers that flow from one to the next without any more effort than simply answering the questions in complete sentences (usually just one-sentence answers are required). No extra lessons in transitions are needed because transition phrases are inherent in the question/ answer process. Watch that prompts are answered specifically, and that students understand the nature of each prompt (some prompts can be ambiguous).

Keep a Portfolio

Every draft of every assignment should go into a “portfolio” for submission at the end of the semester. Students keep these with them in a 3-ring binder. You collect these for a grade (you may collect them halfway through the semester and assign a grade if you wish). Of course, since you have “edited” all assignments, you will only have to read the final assignment for assessment.

Note

If a student writes answers to each prompt in class for each pattern to produce a draft, you edit it, the student revises it in class, and you ask students to keep all drafts in a portfolio, **this will eliminate plagiarism.**

Do not correct WHAT they say; correct HOW they say it

Remember that you are teaching them patterns for academic writing. It is not important in practicing academic writing **what** they say (even if we know they are wrong); what is important in practicing academic writing is **how** they say it. Trust that the questions and answers in each pattern will direct writers to some workable conclusion. Even in the Personal Writing section, focus on the structure (questions/ answers) rather than the content and you might be surprised by their creativity and depth of thought.

CHAPTER OVERVIEW

1: How to Use this Book

Topic hierarchy

[1.1: A Little History](#)

[1.2: Using the Book](#)

[1.3: Edit Checklist](#)

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1.1: A Little History

Left Brain/Right Brain

Years ago a professor at my university conducted a study of incoming freshmen and English faculty. The professor gave the freshman class and the members of English department a “Left Brain/Right Brain” questionnaire, the score from which indicated a tendency in us to favor the “right brain” (seeing things holistically, being creative) or the “left brain” (seeing things linearly, being structured).

Students vs. Faculty

What the results suggested was that over 95% of the freshman class tended to use “left brain” thinking, while 100% of the English faculty tended towards “right brain” thinking. Even though this is an overly simplistic way to characterize thinking, we were surprised by the results and felt that they could tell us something about how we teach writing and how students learn to write.

Adjusting the Curriculum

After looking at the typical methods we tend to use in writing classes and listening to students describe how they perceived these methods, we found that there was a disconnect between faculty and student assumptions about writing. Faculty favored lots of reading, and discussing topics, “discovering” ways to write, brainstorming, writing processes, and so on. Unfortunately, students tended to see all of this as “dancing around the subject” and not very valuable for their own writing. Students overwhelmingly requested a “step-by-step” approach, one that gave them much more direction while they were drafting their papers. Outlines and the like seemed to help, but there were still vast (to them) blank spaces for which they had many questions.

Coaching

One breakthrough idea that emerged from listening to students was the request to have writing teachers present while drafting their papers. They wanted to do their drafting during class. This was revolutionary for some of us, but we tried it anyway. As you can imagine, it presented a number of problems. What do they write? Do they write for the whole class? Does the teacher teach each student individually? What do other students do while the teacher is with one at a time? Many of our methods seemed almost counter-productive, but we experimented with writing in class as much as possible. During one of these “writing with the teacher present” classes, a student said that these classes were more like athletic practice than class. We were practicing while the coach was around to break steps down into smaller and smaller elements and to help us learn the skills “in real time.”

Elements

At this point, we were forced to think about what makes up smaller segments of writing than essay, genre, and so on, but found that working with sentences and paragraphs (topic sentences, concluding sentences, etc.) was very difficult to do on the fly. At the same time, we noticed that, as they wrote in class, students consistently stopped after a sentence or two and asked, “What do I do next?” This forced us to identify elements that make up, for example, an introduction, or a summary, or a conclusion, and so on. It also forced us to identify elements *before* students began writing.

Orthographic vs. Rhetorical

The more we identified “elements” of sub-essay parts, the less we dealt with “types” of sentences. In other words, identifying types of sentences did not help in generating the parts of a narrative, for example. What did help was identifying *key phrases* that indicated that it was a narrative. This led to a major paradigm shift: elements of an academic essay – at least elements that help generate new writing – are not based on sentences and paragraphs (the orthographic system), but more on the modes (the rhetorical system) inherent in an essay. And how did we know which mode we were using (or wanting to generate)? A mode (narrative, argument, description, summary, procedure, comparison, and so on) is revealed by key phrases within that mode. So our job became identifying key phrases – something we could do in advance – to help students know what comes next in a typical mode and what phrases they could actually use.

Prompts

So how do we present these key phrases in such a way that allows the freedom to create content and generate ideas – within an academic structure – without telling each student individually how and what to write? After some experimenting, we developed a series of prompts for each element of each mode – each prompt containing a key phrase for that element. From the prompts, we also developed some examples and templates, and then we created checklists and tutorials from the same prompts.

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1.2: Using the Book

Computer room

This system works best in a computer classroom where students work while in class. Once students arrive at a topic (or you give them one), they can write nearly 100% of the time they are in class by answering the prompts in each section. The aim of this book is for each student to create a draft by answering the prompts for each section. In a computer room, they are drafting while you are present and can answer questions.

Pace and Skill Calibrated

Because most sections contain a checklist, prompts, a template, a sample, and tutorials for each prompt, this way of drafting can be self-paced and skill calibrated. For example, stronger writers will only need the checklist to make sure they have all the elements of an introduction, for example. The checklist is reflected in the prompts. Most average students are able to answer the prompts to create a draft. Some may need a little help by looking at the sample writings constructed from the prompts. Weaker writers tend to need the templates and examples, and they have the tutorials to fall back on if they need additional help. All of this causes each student to progress at different rates and need help at different points with different skills. Essentially, students work at their own pace.

Teacher Role

With students writing at different rates and skill levels and essentially on individualized tracks, a teacher's role becomes that of an editor, coach, and helper. A typical class consists of students at their computers, writing their drafts by answering the prompts in each section. When they need help with a prompt, the teacher is available to respond. When each one finishes a section, like an abstract or introduction, he or she can submit it. These sections are small and easy to edit; you can check that all the prompts are addressed, conventions are correct, and style and format are proper. This makes editing easy, fast, and individual. Submissions are spread out because students finish sections at different times.

The role of teacher becomes facilitator rather than gatekeeper; it is teacher and student together trying to answer the prompts – in class – instead of the teacher assessing work done outside of class with little structural direction.

The easiest way to teach the four types of writing in this book (persuasion, technical, analysis, and personal) is to complete one type of writing during a semester. Some may finish early and some may need some outside class time to work, but both of those are OK. Persuasion and technical writing are the most straightforward. Literary analysis is a little more involved because it deals with language in figurative as well as literal terms (the first two are mainly literal). Personal writing, done correctly, is the most difficult for most students, at least in my experience.

A student-friendly process is to require all sections of a type of writing be handed in when the student finishes each section. While the instructor is editing that section, the student begins on the next section. It is helpful to answer the prompts in each section, in real time and in a projected word processor program, in front of the class. I tend to avoid deadlines and grades until the end of the semester.

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1.3: Edit Checklist

<i>Format:</i>	☐ Times New Roman (12 pt) font	
	☐ Double spaced	
	☐ Removed space after paragraph	
	☐ Heading (top left)	
	☐ My name in the heading	
	☐ My professor's name in heading	
	☐ The course name and number in heading	
	☐ The date in the heading	
	☐ Title centered and capitalized (not all caps)	
	☐ First sentence indented	
	☐ Punctuation marks inside quotation marks	
<i>Eliminated:</i>	☐ "you" (all forms)	
	☐ "I" "me" "my" "mine" "we" "ours"	
	☐ "a lot"	
	☐ "would"	
	☐ "started to" "began to" "decided to"	
	☐ "etc."	
	☐ "..." (ellipses) except in quotes	(1.3.1)
<i>Used correctly:</i>	☐ "A person ... he or she ..." (not "A person ... they ...")	
	☐ "A person ... who ..." (not "A person ... that ...")	
	☐ Comma before "and" in a list	
	☐ Comma before "which"	
	☐ Used author's first initial and last name	
	☐ Used author's last name only (after the first reference)	
<i>Structure:</i>	☐ Answered all questions for draft	
<i>Quotation marks:</i>	☐ All borrowed words or phrases have quotation marks	
	☐ All quotes within a sentence of my own (no "stand alone" quote)	
	☐ All quotes cited	
<i>Citations:</i>	☐ All paraphrases/summaries cited	
	☐ Author, comma, date Inside parentheses	
	☐ Period after parentheses at end of sentence	
<i>Passive constructions:</i>	☐ Ran a style check	
<i>Spelling:</i>	☐ Ran a spell check	
<i>Grammar:</i>	☐ Ran a grammar check	

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

2: Persuasive Writing

- 2.1: Overview
- 2.2: Get Started – Drill Down to a Topic
- 2.3: Abstract
- 2.4: Introduction Paragraph
- 2.5: Review of the Literature
- 2.6: Evaluation
- 2.7: Definition
- 2.8: Implementation
- 2.9: Refutation
- 2.10: Conclusion
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- 2.14: Putting It All Together

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2.1: Overview

Most academic writing is “persuasive” in one way or another. We try, for example, to persuade our teacher that the research we have done backs up our claims or interpretations. At other times, we try to persuade others to change their minds about something, or we try to persuade others to do something differently.

For this section, we will compile a project using the kinds of patterns favored by the sciences and the social sciences. However, these patterns may be applied to any long research project.

What are “the Sciences”?

When we refer to sciences, we generally mean the life sciences (like physics, chemistry, biology, technology, and all the specialized areas in each) and the social sciences (like sociology, psychology, education, history, and specialized areas in each).

Fundamentally different

The aim in writing in the sciences is fundamentally different from writing in humanities and self-expression. In the humanities, we tend to *analyze or interpret a work*. In self-expression, we tend to *re-present the self*.

In the sciences, the aim is *observing and synthesizing facts*. What we observe, we *situate in context*. In reporting what we observe about an object of study and where we situate it, writing is structured as *persuasion*, using precise language, evidence, data, proofs, case studies, testimony, and logical reasoning to help the reader place an object in the same context we place it. Sometimes writing in the sciences involves solving a problem. Presenting the problem and its possible solution(s) also tends to use a *persuasive* structure.

Of course, analysis and expressive writing may use persuasion, and science writing may use analysis and an observer’s perspective; these kinds of writings are really a mix. For practice, however, we will use persuasive structures to accomplish most writing tasks in the sciences because these are the structures that tend to be most valued in the sciences.

Hierarchy

“Situating in context” in the sciences usually means categorizing the object of study, the issue, the problem, the idea, and so on, according to its differences from other things in the same category. In Biology, organisms may be placed into such categories as *genus*, *species*, *family*, and so on. This categorization may be visualized as an upside-down “tree” diagram. In linguistics (the science of spoken language), similar “structures” have sometimes indicated how meaningful sounds relate to each other. This categorization results in a *hierarchy*, which is usually visualized as a diagram or chart that shows how things relate to each other.

APA style

Because the focus in the sciences is on understanding the place of new information in context, the way this information is reported demands a style format that emphasizes this way of ordering things. APA style format connects the stated observations with sources that support those statements, and reflects the hierarchical order and precise language that science values. This style is more exacting and structured than MLA, and fits the reporting of factual information (and where and how we got it) better.

Objectivity

Objectivity means taking as much of our own biases and preconceived notions out of the reporting we do in the sciences. APA style helps to structure and order the larger format to keep us objective in our reporting. There are a few language-oriented preferences to remember about your readers as well. These preferences help to keep the language in an objectively oriented tone and with an academic voice.

Third person preferred

Student-writers frequently ask, “Can I use ‘I’ in my papers?” The pronoun “I” is considered “first person” in grammar (along with “me,” “my,” and “mine”). If we want to remove our “self-oriented” views and biases from the language we use, one way is to avoid referring to ourselves indirectly by using these words. The use of first-person also closes the distance between our readers and us

(the information passes from “I” – a *person* – to a reader). If we want to remain at a distance from our reader (the information passes from *the language* to the reader), then we avoid first person. Objective writing favors this distance.

“You”

Second person “you” is also a problem in writing because either it implies that the author is speaking directly to the reader, which closes the author/reader distance in the same way “I” does, or it means something like “people in general,” which is not as exact as science writing prefers. Avoid “you” in writing.

Passive voice

Instructors frequently scribble “passive” in the margins and helpfully underline the offending bits of sentences for you. I find this most *un-helpful*, though I understand the rationale. Passive constructions tend to be imprecise, because the subject can be *implied* rather than stated outright, and science writing prefers precision. Word processing programs also point out passive constructions and even offer suggestions to make them active constructions. Just be careful that the new word order says what you want it to say.

Probably the easiest way to recognize and fix the kind of passive voice that hinders precision (some passive constructions are more precise) is to identify the action in a sentence (the verb) and to ask, “Who or what is performing (or performed) this action?” If the subject is stated, the voice is “active.” If the actor or object is implied, or ignored completely, the voice is “passive.” For example:

Example 2.1.1:

Active:

I **wrote** the book.

What is the verb/action? (“wrote”)

Who or what “wrote”? (“I” wrote)

Since “I” – the actor – is stated, this is an *active* construction.

Passive:

The book **was written** in 1972.

What is the verb/action? (“was written”)

Who or what “wrote”? (not identified)

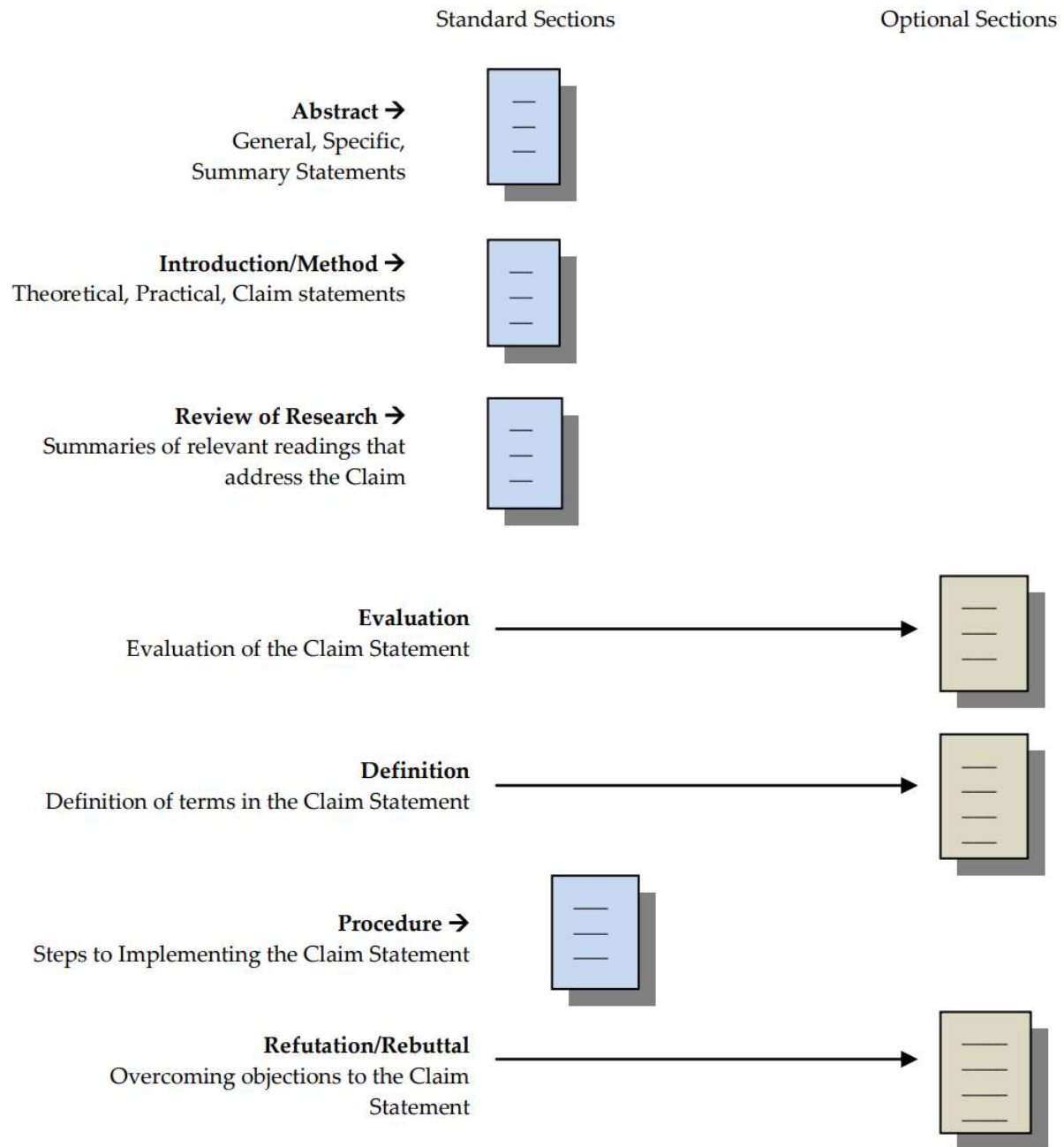
Since the actor is implied, this is a type of *passive* construction.

Please note that this statement, “The book **was written** in 1972 by Harold Boone,” *does* identify, precisely, who wrote the book – but it is still a passive construction. This kind of passive is more precise, and more acceptable, than the example above. When in doubt, however, make it an active sentence, like “Harold Bloom **wrote** the book in 1972.”

Figurative language

Precise language is simple language. Precise language tends to be literal language as well. For this reason, avoid forms of figurative language. Clichés, metaphors, figurative comparisons, figures of speech, and other “poetic” or “literary” devices are subject to interpretation, and science writers tend to avoid them. Keep your language simple, direct, and literal.

Sections of a Persuasive Research Paper



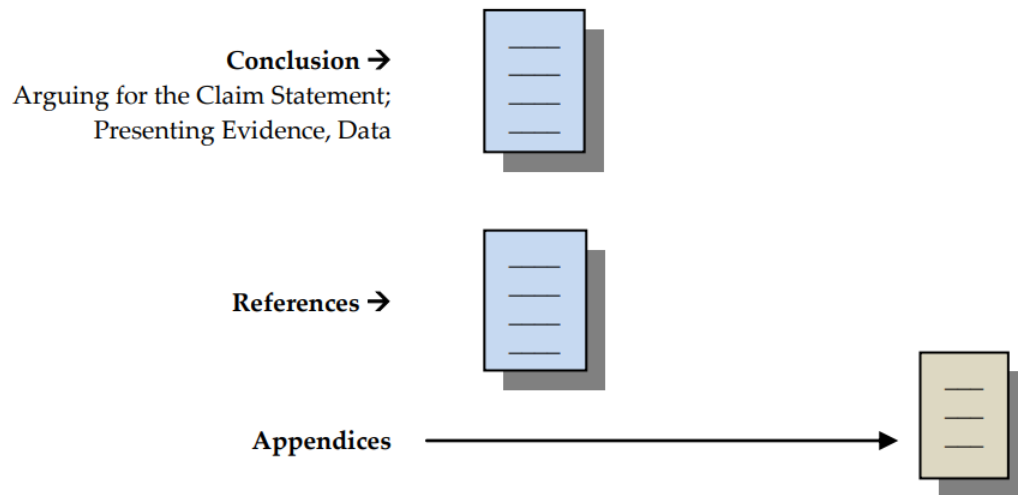


Figure 2.1.1

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2.2: Get Started – Drill Down to a Topic

Topic Writing

A “topic writing” is an exercise designed to arrive at a starting place with a topic or subject. As a practical matter, the goal for a topic writing is to write your way through a brainstorming technique to a starting sentence for the Abstract.

Selecting a topic

Sometimes our research problems are articulated for us (assigned) and our choices are limited.

However, in some cases we are allowed to choose our own topic, or at least couch some assigned topic in our own terms. If this is the case, here are some questions to ask ourselves to arrive at a topic that fits our assignment and our interests at the same time.

Checklist

Make a list of items to include in a topic writing draft.

1. Draft Checklist

- ___ My topic/subject in general
- ___ My background (experience, expertise) with the topic/subject
- ___ Something I want to change in the topic/subject area
- ___ Someone I hope to help (change, influence)
- ___ Why I want this change
- ___ Steps I imagine taking to make this change
- ___ A summary statement about what, why, and how I want this change

When you have given each item above some thought, answer each of the Prompt questions below in a single sentence. You are creating a draft.

Prompts

Try answering the questions below as if you are writing a draft paragraph. In other words, make each answer a sentence in a single paragraph.

checklist

2. Prompts from Draft Checklist

1. What **am I good at,*** or what do **I know a lot about**, or what do **I have a lot of experience with**?
2. What is a **problem I want to solve or a situation I want to address** or **something I want to change** in that area or field?
3. What group, organization, demographic, or institution do **I want to apply my experience**, or knowledge, or expertise, skills to?
4. Why do **I want to solve this problem** or address this situation?
5. What is a **first step** toward accomplishing this?
6. What is a **next step**?
7. What is **another step**?
8. **In other words**, what do **I propose** to change or to do?

*Phrases in bold are academic phrases you may use in your draft

If you need help answering these questions, you may use the template below. The template is taken directly from the questions above.

Template

3. Template from Prompts

Topic Writing

I have* [how much?] **experience** [doing what?]. **Something I want to change about** [something in my experience] **is** [what?]. **I want to apply** [what in my experience?] **to** [whom? what group, institution, organization?]. **I want to** [do what?] **because** [why?]. **A first step is** [what?]. **A second step might be** [what?]. **Another step is** [what?]. **In other words, I propose** [what?].

*Phrases in bold are academic phrases you may use in your draft

Sample Draft

The draft below is generated from the checklist, prompts, and template above.

4. Draft from Template

Topic Writing

I have years of experience teaching writing. **Something I want to change about** teaching writing **is** how teachers who are not writing teachers assign writings. **I want to apply** some different ideas for assigning writing **to** non-writing teachers at Newman who expect a large amount of writing from their students. I want to change the way teachers assign writing **because** many of the assignments are self-defeating, convey faulty messages, and are downright difficult for both teacher and student unnecessarily. **A first step** towards changing the way teachers assign writing **is** to identify which ones assign large amounts of writing in their classes. **A second step might be** to hold a series of seminars, maybe in the summer, for talking about ways to improve. **Another step is** to visit with various classes to determine what suggestions might help those instructors improve their assignments. **In other words, I propose** to hold summer writing workshops for teachers who assign writing in their classes.

Note

The last statement of the topic writing can be used to begin your Abstract.

Most Common Question: "Shouldn't I 'do research' before I begin writing?"

Not if the issue you have chosen is already something you know quite a bit about. Doing research after beginning to write can be more efficient if you have a specific problem and key words to limit your searches. You will have to "do research" before you write if you do not choose (or are not assigned) something with which you are familiar. Otherwise, begin writing and, as questions arise, look up answers.

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2.3: Abstract

Overview

An **Abstract** is a summary introduction for your project.

For this kind of writing, an **Abstract** serves as a planning writing. This takes the place of an outline. Each element below should be addressed or each question should be answered. It also serves as an **Abstract** for others to read and ask questions about. It will serve as a summary to your project. It also may be submitted before you finish your project. It may also serve as part of the detailed introduction to your project.

Of course, you should consider it a tentative document until you finish all of the sections of your project. This is beneficial because you only have a small amount of writing invested in the Abstract, so even wholesale changes (or starting again) will not be too difficult (as opposed to writing five or more pages – or even a whole paper – only to have to admit it is not going to work). Plan to spend much time on this Abstract and the Introduction; the other sections will come more quickly the more time you spend on the Abstract and the Introduction.

Elements (statements) that make up an **Abstract**:

Issue/problem statement

Very specific statement(s)

Summary statement

draft checklist

1. Draft Checklist

- ___ General Statement
- ___ Very Specific Statements
- ___ Summary Statement

Prompts

Write your Abstract by answering the questions below. Think about each one carefully. Then type an answer to the question in a new, blank document. Each *answer* is a sentence or sentences in your Abstract *draft*, so indent the first answer and place each of the rest of the answers, one after another, in paragraph form.

checklist

2. Prompts from Draft Checklist

1. In general, what topic, subject, or problem do **I want to explore**?
2. **In particular**, what do **I want to explore**, solve, or change about this topic?
3. How may I summarize the statements I have made so far **in other words**?

*Phrases in bold are academic phrases you may use in your draft

If you need help answering these questions, you may use the template below. The template is taken directly from the questions above.

Template

3. Template from Prompts

Abstract

I want to explore [a topic, in general, in a single sentence]. **In particular**, [be as specific as possible about what you intend to do with this subject or topic in 3 to 5 sentences]. **In other words**, [a summary statement of the previous sentences in your abstract].

*Phrases in bold are academic phrases you may use in your draft

Sample Draft

The draft below is generated from the checklist, prompts, and template above

4. Draft from Template

Abstract

I want to explore how recreational drug use may affect the learning process. **In particular**, recreational drugs include ecstasy, LSD, and marijuana. Other recreational drugs are prescription drugs like Oxycontin and Valium, and others appear in legal products like coffee and alcoholic drinks. Recreational drugs have a range of effects on people. Some affect people based on age, race, gender, and the like. Others affect different parts of the body, but these tend to affect the brain in some way. In some cases, the effects are helpful in a learning environment. Learning is the acquisition of information and the processing of it. It is also the storing and remembering of this information. Learning also involves applying, synthesizing, and evaluating information. **In other words**, some prescription drugs may affect the way adolescents learn how to write academic papers.

*Phrases in bold are academic phrases you may use in your draft

Tutorial

How to answer the prompts

Prompt 1

In general, what topic, subject, or problem do **I want to explore**?

Use a version of the last answer you give in the drill down to choosing a topic above. Remember, this is the first statement of a draft for an abstract; **you can change this statement as often as you need to** in order to say what you intend to say.

Here is the way I might start my abstract:

Example 2.3.1:

I want to explore the way recreational drugs affect the way people learn.

This is simply a general statement about the topic I wish to explore. Note that you may want to fashion your statement in other ways:

Example 2.3.2:

Recreational drug use may affect the learning process.

Or

People use recreational drugs to change the way they learn.

These two statements omit the first-person pronoun “I” in the opening statement of the abstract. Now go to the second question and answer it.

Prompt 2

In particular, what do **I want to explore**, solve, or change about this topic, in very specific terms?

Begin by identifying those main words, ideas, or terms in your initial statement. Then explain, describe, or define (in your own words) each term as specifically as possible. They should be so specific that each should seem hyper- or over-specific. Then put

your answer into as few or as many sentences as it takes to make your “term statements” as specific as possible. Again, it should seem almost ridiculous how extremely specific you are with each term.

For example, here my initial statement with the key terms identified:

Example 2.3.3:

Recreational drug use may affect the learning process.

The words highlighted above are words that are general enough that I need to explain them more fully. They are also the words that I understand in specific ways that may not be the same for everybody. Specify in writing each key *term* as you understand it; note that a *term* can be a word or phrase. **At this point, I only explain or describe my terms as I know them and want to deal with them; I do NOT provide formal definitions.** Here are some examples of how I explain the key terms in my first statement:

Example 2.3.4:

Recreational drugs include ecstasy, LSD, and marijuana. Other recreational drugs are prescription drugs like Oxycontin and Valium, and others appear in legal products like coffee and alcoholic drinks.

The important thing to remember here is to be as specific as possible. This is to put the reader on the same track I am taking. In other words, what the reader may think of as “recreational drugs” might be much different from what I intend to cover in my project. Here are the phrases that indicate I am specifying what I mean by this term:

Example 2.3.4:

Recreational drugs **include** ecstasy, LSD, and marijuana. Other recreational drugs **are** prescription drugs like Oxycontin and Valium, **and others appear** in legal products **like** coffee and alcoholic drinks.

Likewise with my second key term:

Recreational drug use may affect the learning process.

I might make the highlighted term more specific in this way:

Example 2.3.4:

Recreational drugs have a range of **effects** on people. Some affect people based on age, race, gender, and the like. Others affect different parts of the body, but these tend to affect the brain in some way. In some cases, the effects are helpful in a learning environment.

Here are the phrases that indicate I am specifying what I mean by this term:

Example 2.3.4:

Recreational drugs have a range of **effects** on people. **Some** affect people based on age, race, gender, and the like. Others affect different parts of the body, but **these tend to** affect the brain in some way. **In some cases**, the effects are helpful in a learning environment.

Likewise with my third key term:

Recreational drug use may affect the learning process.

I might make the highlighted term more specific in this way:

Example 2.3.5:

Learning is the acquisition of information **and** the processing of it. **It is also** the storing and remembering of this information. Learning **also involves** applying, synthesizing, **and** evaluating information.

After each of the key terms is made as specific as possible at this point in my writing, and I put my answers into prose (paragraph form), my abstract looks like this so far:

Example 2.3.6:

Recreational drug use may affect the learning process. Recreational drugs include ecstasy, LSD, and marijuana. Other recreational drugs are prescription drugs like Oxycontin and Valium, and others appear in legal products like coffee and alcoholic drinks. Recreational drugs have a range of effects on people. Some affect people based on age, race, gender, and the like. Others affect different parts of the body, but these tend to affect the brain in some way. In some cases, the effects are helpful in a learning environment. Learning is the acquisition of information and the processing of it. It is also the storing and remembering of this information. Learning also involves applying, synthesizing, and evaluating information.

Prompt 3

How may I summarize the statements I have made so far **in other words**?

In order to construct a final statement for my abstract, I want to restate in a summary statement what I have said so far. This statement should be more specific than the first abstract statement, but less specific than the specific statements. The academic phrase that notes a summary statement is *in other words*, so begin with that phrase and complete the summary statement:

Example 2.3.7:

In other words, some prescription drugs may affect the way adolescents learn how to write academic papers.

Notice that there are any number of ways you might have summarized my other abstract statements. **You control what is said in the summary statement.** Don't hesitate to try different versions of your summary statement until you get one that you can work with.

Also, be aware that the **scope** of your project can be controlled with this statement. For example, to shorten the project, instead of "some prescription drugs," which implies that I will look at more than one, I could insert "the prescription drug valium" and limit my research to the effects a single drug might have on teenagers learning to write. I could further limit by age, gender, learning activity, and so on. Now, put your answers together into prose and you have a draft for an abstract (see example above).

Note that the abstract forces us (and the reader ultimately) to think about the problem or issue or subject in "general-to-specific" terms. You start with a very general statement, move to very specific statements, and end with a statement that is somewhere in-between. Remember, all of these statements are tentative and may be changed (probably should be changed) as you continue to write your paper.

You will continue the revision of the summary statement in the next section of your project: the Introduction.

Note

The abstract is a separate section that begins on its own page, usually after the front matter or title page.

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2.4: Introduction Paragraph

Overview

The Introduction is a more specific summary of your project than the Abstract and contains these kinds of statements:

checklist

1. Draft Checklist

___ The summary statement from the end of your Abstract

___ Theoretical/rationale statements (reasons **why** your idea should work, or **why** we should accept or implement it, **why** it should be solved, etc.)

___ Practical/method statements (steps for **how** your idea should work, or **how** we should implement it, **how** it should be solved, etc.)

___ Thesis (a type of claim statement that **states a fact** to be proved, **or** calls for some kind of **change**, **or** looks at the **value you place** on the idea or object you are writing about.)

Here is a way to visualize the process of arriving at a thesis/claim statement by writing a Topic Writing, then an Abstract, then an Introduction. We first experiment with different statements on a general-to-specific continuum to reach a summary statement in the **Abstract**. In the **Introduction**, we try different statements on a theoretical-to-practical continuum (at the intersection with our summary statement) to reach a thesis/claim statement:

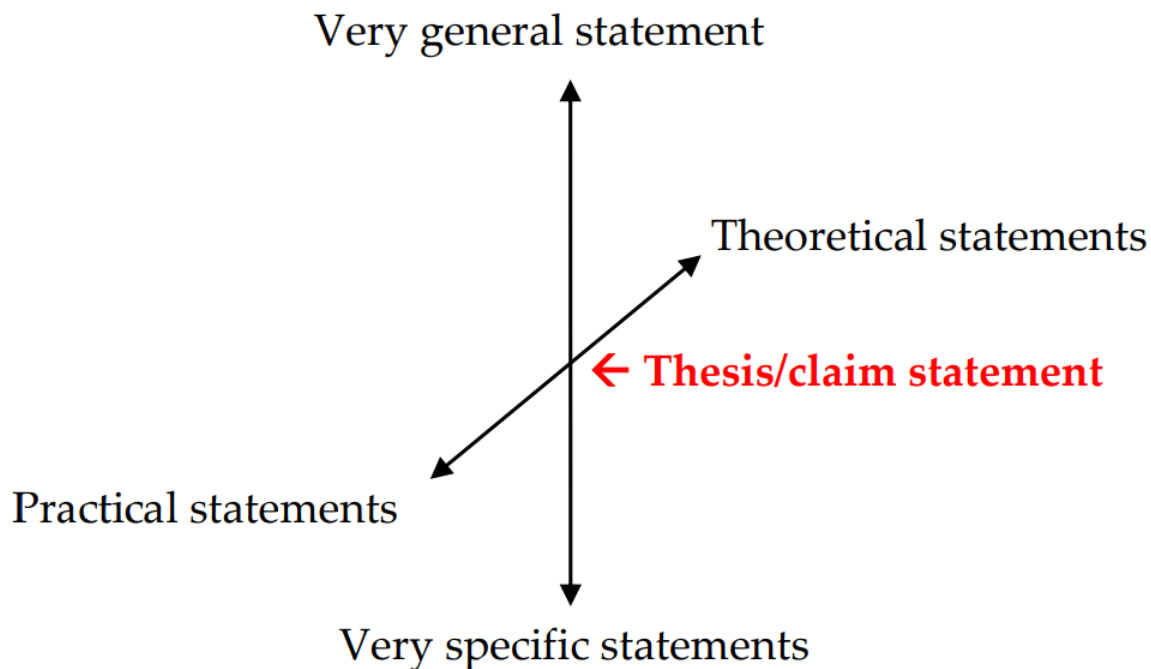
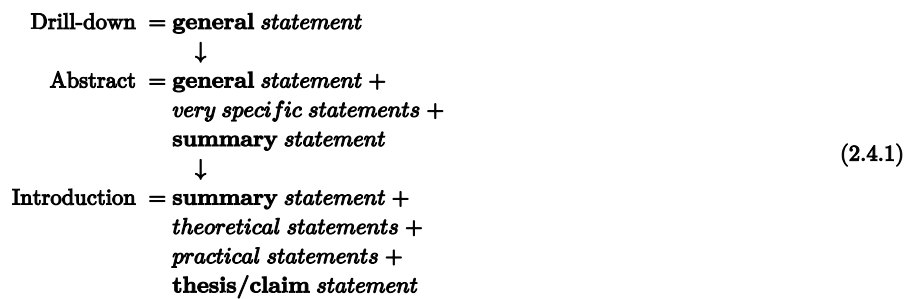


Figure 2.4.1

Another way to think of the abstract-introduction writing process is like this:



Remember, we should change and adjust the answers to the prompts below while we are writing, researching, talking about them, thinking about them, or listening to someone else. In other words, each statement we write is tentative. Each time we change a statement, the final thesis statement will change as well.

To arrive at a thesis/claim statement in a methodical way in writing, we may formulate and reformulate each answer to the following prompts:

Prompts

Write your Introduction by answering the questions below. Think about each one carefully. Then type an answer to the question in a new, blank document. Each *answer* is a sentence or sentences in your Introduction *draft*, so indent the first answer and place each of the rest of the answers, one after another, in paragraph form.

checklist

2. Prompts from Draft Checklist

1. What is my **summary statement** from the Abstract?
2. **In theory**, I think my summary statement will work (or should be accepted) **because** (why?)
3. What are some practical **steps** to implementing my summary statement?
4. **In other words**, how may I restate my summary statement as a thesis or claim?

*Phrases in bold are academic phrases you may use in your draft

If you need help answering these questions, you may use the template below. The template is taken directly from the questions above.

Template

3. Template from Prompts

Introduction

[Insert summary statement from end of Abstract]. **In theory**, [restate summary] **because** [why?]. **First**, [what is a practical first step to implementing claim/proposal?]. **Second**, [what is a second step?]. **Third**, [another step?]. **In other words**, [who?] **should** [do what to change the way things are?].

*Phrases in bold are academic phrases you may use in your draft

Sample Draft

The draft below is generated from the checklist, prompts, and template above.

4. Draft from Template

Introduction

Some prescription drugs may affect the way adolescents learn how to write academic papers. **In theory**, some prescription drugs may affect the way adolescents learn how to write academic papers **because** some of these drugs interrupt or change processing functions in the brain, and writing involves very complex processing skills. **First**, a doctor must approve the use of

any drug in such an experiment as this. **Second**, a committee should approve the use of human subjects. **Third**, the writing activity must be as similar as possible for each participant. **In other words**, teachers **should** find out how drugs affect the ways student writers process information and adjust teaching strategies accordingly.

*Phrases in bold are academic phrases you may use in your draft

Tutorial

How to answer the prompts

Prompt 1

What is my **summary statement** (from my Abstract)?

Simply copy the summary statement at the end of your Abstract and make it your first statement in the Introduction.

Prompt 2

Why do I think my summary statement will work (or why should it be accepted)?

What sort of theoretical **assumptions** support the summary statement you just wrote? “Theoretical” means the theory or theories behind my last statement. It means **why it will work or why it should be accepted**. Look at your summary statement and ask why (or based on what theory or theories) will it work. You might use a formula similar to this:

Theoretically, [insert summary statement from abstract here] because [insert the reasons you think it will work or should be accepted here].

If that formula seems forced, try listing any theories for key terms in the last sentence. Try asking “What do I have to assume to be true before I can accept this?” or “What do people have to assume to be true before I can accept this?” Begin your first sentence with “Theoretically, ...” if you need help getting started.

Copy the main idea from the Abstract summary statement:

Example 2.4.1:

In other words, some prescription drugs may affect the way adolescents learn how to write academic papers.

Ask, “Why...?”

Use pattern from above to insert summary statement and form a theoretical statement:

Example 2.4.2:

Theoretically, some prescription drugs may affect the way adolescents learn how to write academic papers **because** some of these drugs interrupt or change processing functions in the brain, and writing involves very complex processing skills.

Add at least 2 more theoretical statements (reasons for implementing your summary statement, or reasons to accept your summary statement, or reasons your idea will work, etc.). A good rule-of-thumb for the number of statements we need is **3 to 5**. Remember, if you can’t seem to answer this question honestly, you will have to change the answers to the other questions above. Changing them now, however, is much easier, with only a few sentences, than with pages and pages of writing later on.

Prompt 3

What are **some practical steps to implementing** my summary statement?

These practical statements outline as simply as possible the **practical steps** that must be taken in order to accept your summary statement or solve your problem or achieve some outcome. “Practical” here means what actions a single person must take. If a statement such as the following is part of your practical statements, then it is not very practical: “First we must change the laws in this state.” Many other steps must be taken before a law is changed. If you really do want to change the laws, ask yourself what the first thing YOU will do to change the laws. Call a legislator? Write a letter? Read more about it? Write a petition to pass around?

Once you determine where to start, what is the next step? And so on. From the short list above, the simplest task sounds like writing a letter. If so, I will then simply list the steps I must take in writing the letter.

Note

This series of steps should be one a reader can actually follow as an individual; it should really be “do-able.” If my project needs a **methodology**, this is where I put it, or at least introduce it.

“Method” or “practical steps” or “process” towards implementing your summary statement may be indicated in writing as simply as First ... Second ... Third... :

Example 2.4.3:

First, a doctor must approve the use of any drug in such an experiment as this. **Second**, a committee should approve the use of human subjects. **Third**, the writing activity must be a similar as possible for each participant.

Or by which steps we are taking:

Example 2.4.4:

Step one, a doctor must approve the use of any drug in such an experiment as this. **For the next step**, a committee should approve the use of human subjects. **For step three**, the writing activity must be as similar as possible for each participant.

And so on. Note that in both examples, the transition phrases may be left out and the reader still understands that these are method or practical or process statements.

A good rule-of-thumb for the number of statements we need is **3 to 5**.

Prompt 4

How may I restate my summary statement as a **claim**?

A “claim” is a statement that one has to prove, either by argument, testimony, or other evidence. The language or words we use in the claim statement will determine, to some extent, how we go about finding and using “proof.” Note that the claim for any particular reading may contain a combination of types below, but there is usually a primary type of claim (as indicated by the words in **bold**).

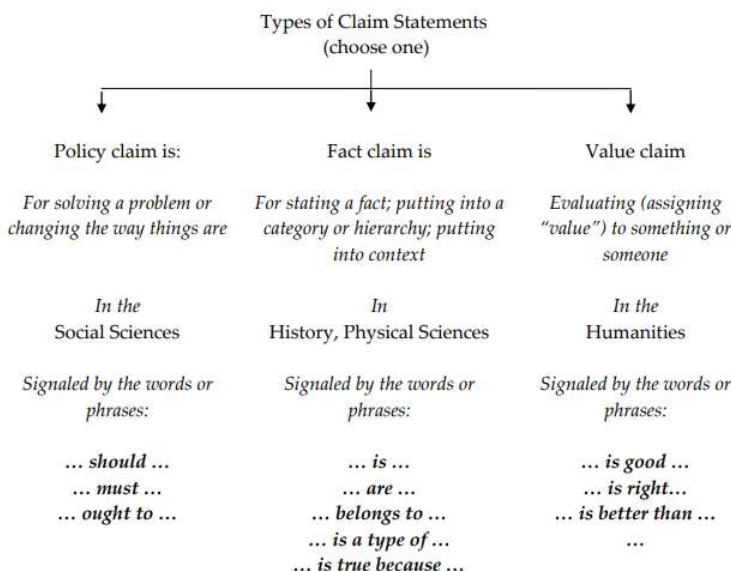


Figure 2.4.1

A “policy” claim

A policy claim is a statement that claims or implies that **some action should be taken or avoided**. In other words, state your issue in a way that calls for some kind of change. Examples:

Example 2.4.5:

We **must** stand up for our rights. (We don’t at the moment):

_____ **must** _____.

Readers **should** read literature from multiple perspectives. (We don’t at the moment):

_____ **should** _____.

Teachers **should** teach students that essays are made up of elements. (We don’t at the moment):

_____ **should** _____.

If you are **proposing a solution to a problem**, it is still considered a policy claim. You may put it in one of the formats above, or you might simply use this format:

Example 2.4.6:

I propose that writing teachers focus more on patterns and less on grammar.

A “fact” claim

This is a statement that **states a fact** to be proved or disproved. For example:

Example 2.4.7:

Teenagers **are** bad drivers.

A fact claim sometime **categorizes** an object of study:

Example 2.4.8:

Sausage **is a type of** meat.

A “value” claim

A value claim evaluates or assigns value to something:

Example 2.4.9:

It is wrong to attack before the government explores all diplomatic possibilities.

The **best** way to drive is 5 mph below the posted speed limit.

Restate your summary statement above (the answer to the “How may I summarize...” question) using the key phrases in **bold** above to experiment with the thesis as a claim.

I am going with a policy claim:

*Teachers **should** find out how drugs affect the ways student writers process information and adjust teaching strategies accordingly.*

Most Common Question: “After this introduction, what is all the rest of the paper about?”

The last statement of your introduction is also your claim statement. **Every other question in your essay will be directed to this statement.** In other words, when you go to the next set of questions, each question will be asked of your claim statement

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2.5: Review of the Literature

Overview

The **literature review** is the section where you offer summaries of *relevant research* about your claim or thesis. It is the information upon which your idea rests.

Primary/secondary sources

Often your instructor will use the terms “primary” and “secondary” to categorize broadly the kinds of sources he or she expects. Generally, a “primary” source is the original source of information or a report of original discovery. A “secondary” source is one that interprets, analyzes, or otherwise “talks about” the information from a primary source.

Your instructor will advise you on how many of which to use, but – *in general* – the more primary sources you can use the better.

Where to begin

A good way to find good sources is to do a general search for your claim or subject. Once you find a general source that gives you good information about your subject, look at the sources cited by that source and save them. Use those as a general guide to sources about your subject.

You may also save several general searches with citation or reference lists and look for authors/texts that are referred to on more than one list. These are going to be good sources.

Articles from academic journals

Use the university web page and locate the link to the library. Follow instructions there to locate abstracts and full-text articles about your claim. Once you locate sources that you can use, copy and paste the article and the documentation information into a blank document so you may access quotes, title, author, and citation information without having to type them (copy and paste).

Note

BE SURE YOU USE QUOTATION MARKS AROUND ANY QUOTES YOU COPY AND PASTE INTO YOUR PROJECT, AND PROVIDE IN-TEXT CITATION FOR ANY INFORMATION YOU PARAPHRASE OR SUMMARIZE.

Most Common Question: “How many sources do I need?”

Your instructor will usually tell you how many sources she expects.

Otherwise, the best rule of thumb for how many sources to use in your Review of the Literature is to use your sources as a guide. In other words, **count the number of sources that your sources cite in their reference sections and average them.** If most of your sources cite 10 to 20 sources, then you should look for 12 to 15 sources. If 10 is the fewest number listed, then you should have at least 10.

If your sources average fewer than 5, then you should use at least 5.

Write a Summary for each source you find. Below is how to summarize each source.

Draft Checklist

checklist

1. Draft Checklist

- ___Type of selection, title, author, summary phrase.
- ___A statement of what the point to the selection is or seems to be
- ___At least one quote from selection supporting the point
- ___An evaluation statement (assign a value to the selection or to the point of the selection)

Summarize each source (or article) in the Literature Review section of your project. All four questions should apply to each source you find. A Review of the Literature is comprised of a Summary for each of your sources.

Prompts

Write each Summary by answering the questions below. Think about each one carefully. Then type an answer to the question in a new, blank document. Each *answer* is a sentence or sentences in the Summary *draft*, so indent the first answer and place each of the rest of the answers, one after another, in paragraph form.

checklist

2. Prompts from Draft Checklist

1. **In the selection** (what is the title?), **the author** (who is the author?) **seems to be saying**, suggesting, doing, or calling for what (in the whole reading)?
2. What **seems to be the point** or main idea of the selection?
3. What is one phrase, passage, or sentence quoted from the selection that **best sums up this point**?
4. In the selection as a whole, you (the student) **believe** what **to be valuable** about the point?

*Phrases in bold are academic phrases you may use in your draft

If you need help answering these questions, you may use the template below. The template is taken directly from the questions above.

Template

3. Template from Prompts

Summary 1

In the [insert the kind of writing or the word “selection”] [insert the title of the selection], [insert the author’s name] **seems to be** [saying, suggesting, etc.] **that** [insert a sentence-length summary of the whole selection]. **The point that** [insert author’s last name] **seems to be making in this** [insert type of selection] **is** [insert what you think the message or point is here]. **This point is best summed up when he says**, [insert, using quotation marks, one word, phrase, or statement from selection that sums up point]. **The point that** [insert author’s last name] **makes** [insert what you observe to be true or what you value about the selection in general].

*Phrases in bold are academic phrases you may use in your draft

Sample Draft

The draft below is generated from the checklist, prompts, and template above.

4. Draft from Template

Summary 1

In the article “Stimulant use and information processing in ADD children,” J. Smith (1999) **seems to be** arguing **that** children must process small bits of information while dealing with language symbols. **The point that** Smith **seems to be making in this article is** that teachers teach writing as a “holistic” activity, even though it is better for ADD kids, especially ones who are taking medication, to learn in smaller bits of information. Smith **best sums up this point by saying**, “The data suggests that short, linear activities lead to more effective processing for ADD children, especially adolescents” (p. 4). **This point is** important because reinforces the idea that many factors go into how a person processes or thinks about an activity and that a person is much more likely to learn when a teacher knows something about how that person processes information.

*Phrases in bold are academic phrases you may use in your draft

Note

Use only first initials with authors at all times to avoid identifying the gender of the author

Tutorial

How to answer the prompts

Prompt 1

In the selection (what is the title?), **the author** (who is the author?) **seems to be saying**, suggesting, doing, or calling for what (in the whole reading)?

Opening Statement (1 sentence, indented)

The answer to this question forms the opening statement to your summary. Use the pattern below to get started.

A template for an Opening Statement to your Summary:

In the [insert the kind of writing or the word “selection”] [insert the title of the selection], [insert the author’s name] ***seems to be*** [saying, arguing, suggesting, etc.] ***that*** [insert a sentence-length summary].

Example Opening Statement:

Example 2.5.1:

In the article “Stimulant use and information processing in ADD children,” J. Smith (1999) **seems to be** arguing **that** children must process small bits of information while dealing with language symbols.

Note

Each time you summarize or paraphrase an author’s ideas, cite the author’s last name and the publication date of the article in parentheses.

Prompt 2

What seems to be the point or main idea of the selection?

Summarizing the Point (1 sentence)

Put into your own words the “message,” “main idea,” or “point” that the author seems to be making.

A template for Summarizing the Point:

The point that [insert author’s last name] ***seems to be making in this*** [insert type of selection] ***is*** [insert what you think the message or point is here].

Example Statement for Summarizing the Point:

Example 2.5.2:

The point that Smith **seems to be making in this** article **is** that teachers teach writing as a “holistic” activity, even though it is better for ADD kids, especially ones who are taking medication, to learn in smaller bits of information (Smith, 1999).

Prompt 3

What is one phrase, passage, or sentence from the selection that best sums up this point?

Quoting a Passage (1 sentence, with phrase, passage, or sentence quoted)

Example answer:

Example 2.5.3:

Smith **best sums up this point when he says**, “The data suggests that short, linear activities lead to more effective processing for ADD children, especially adolescents” (p. 4).

Please note: the quote is part of my sentence – it does not stand alone. Always incorporate your quotes into a sentence.

Prompt 4

How can I summarize the point?

Summary Statement (1 or more sentences)

This is a statement that summarizes what you observe generally to be true about the point as you understand it.

A template for a Summary Statement:

The point that [insert author’s last name] makes [insert what you observe to be true about the point in general].

Example Summary Statement

Example 2.5.4:

The point that Smith **makes** reinforces the idea that many factors go into how a person processes or thinks about an activity and that a person is much more likely to learn when a teacher knows something about how that person processes information.

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2.6: Evaluation

Overview

Sometimes as writers, we wonder whether what we have to say is “any good.” We wonder, too, whether what we have to say is important. “Evaluate” means “to assign a value to something.” In this assignment you will be telling the reader of your paper how important your claim is. The purpose for this assignment is twofold:

1. To make sure that, in your own mind, this is really an issue, and;
2. That your claim is worthy of the reader's investment of time and effort.

checklist

1. Draft Checklist

- ___ Verify that your topic is an issue or proposal
- ___ State who your issue or proposal is for
- ___ Indicate how you know this is an issue and for whom
- ___ Origin of issue for you
- ___ Indicate how you first heard of issue
- ___ Cause for the issue
- ___ Indicate how you know this is a cause
- ___ Effects if idea/proposal is accepted
- ___ The value/importance of the idea/proposal
- ___ Idea/proposal compared to alternatives

Prompts

Write an Evaluation of your claim statement by answering the questions below.

checklist

2. Prompts from Draft Checklist

1. Does this issue/claim exist? (Is it really an issue?); Who will this claim most affect?
2. How do I know this is true?
3. Where does this issue seem to come from? (How did it begin, as far as I know?)
4. How do I know this is true?
5. What is the cause of this issue?
6. How do I know this is true?
7. What will change (How will the world be different) if my idea is accepted?
8. Why is mine a good idea to deal with?
9. Why should it be sought or accepted?
10. Why is it better than (some alternative)?

Template

3. Template from Prompts

Evaluation

The issue of [state the subject of your issue/proposal from your claim/proposal statement at the end of your Introduction paragraph] **exists for** [whom specifically?]. **This is true because** [you have heard/seen the issue, where?]. **This issue may**

start with [whom, or what event(s)?]. **This is true because** [you have heard/seen an origin or beginning of the issue, where?]. **The cause for this problem may be** [what source?]. **This is true because** [you have heard/seen a source or cause for the issue, where?]. **If** [restate proposal/solution] **then** [what will happen? what are some good effects or outcomes of your proposal?]. [Restate your proposal] **is a good idea because** [why?]. [Restate your proposal] **should be emphasized because** [why?]. [My idea] **is better than** [what?] **because** [why?].

Sample Draft

4. Draft from Template

Evaluation

The issue of putting more emphasis on elements of composition and arrangement of the elements of composition **exists for** most teachers who teach essay writing **and for** any student who writes essays. **This is true because** most English teachers (or students) would answer, "No" if asked whether they felt like the essays they read (or wrote) were "successful."

This issue may start with administrators or teachers who need an objective way to test a student's writing ability. **It is probably** too subjective and uncontrolled to simply rely on English teachers to evaluate that ability. The thinking goes something like this: there are "standards" for education that should be equally applied and evaluated. This is easy for grammar rules because they tend to be either right or wrong. However, for an essay, which most people consider an art form, evaluation would have to depend on whether it conforms to its own rules. **This is true because** any standard grammar/composition textbook will show the standardization of rules for the student (or "academic," or "five-paragraph") essay.

The cause for this problem may be in what these "standards" assume to be true about writing an essay. It seems logical that an essay should follow conventional grammar rules. However, what makes an essay artful is a different kind of element, namely; elements like narrative, description, analogy, analysis, history, definition, comparison, cause and effect, and the like. **This is true because** even a so-called "professional academic essay" that attempts to demonstrate a proper academic form employs many, if not all, of the above named elements. It just does not emphasize them.

If students focus on mastering these kinds of elements **then** they will learn how to write more effectively. As elements they may still be evaluated, because people know what makes up these elements in the same way that they know what makes up sentences. People know when they are being told a story, as opposed to an analysis, as opposed to a description. And this attention to elements **will actually** facilitate learning grammar, in much the same way that a good-tasting toothpaste facilitates brushing: the more people like it the more good it does them.

Mastering elements of writing **is a good idea because** it is important for students and teachers to understand what actually makes up good writing. Improving composing skills **should be emphasized because** they not only improve the eventual essay, they increase a student's interest in conventions like spelling and grammar. It also helps students master a discourse larger than a paragraph, and helps him understand writing in terms of elements of a whole and how they're arranged. Thinking of essays as works of art composed of elements and arranged by principles of composition **is better than** what we currently teach in secondary schools **because** it allows students to master more than sentences and paragraphs, and it allows them to see that writing, and literature, and other arts may be seen as elemental as well as structural.

Tutorial

How to answer the prompts

Prompt 1

Does this issue/claim exist? (Is it really an issue?); Who will this claim most affect?

Here is a claim statement:

Example 2.6.1:

Teachers **should** teach essays by putting more emphasis on elements of composition and how to arrange those elements in an essay.

Look at your claim and the issue it represents. Before you can identify whom this claim affects, you should make sure this is indeed an issue. "Does this issue exist?" means does it exist as a serious issue. Think about it before you answer "Yes." If it exists, whom does it exist for? Is it an issue for a narrow group of people, or is it an obscure or out-of-date issue, or is it indeed an issue? Claiming "The sky is blue" is a relatively safe claim, and so is not a serious issue with many, if any, people. If this is the case with your claim, go back to the Introduction and revise your claim. If you are convinced that this is a serious issue, then answer the question "Does this issue exist? For Whom?" in one or more statements.

Here is an example:

Example 2.6.2:

The issue of putting more emphasis on elements of composition and arrangement of the elements of composition **exists for** most teachers who teach essay writing **and for** any student who writes essays.

Prompt 2

How do I know this is true?

Here is an example "How I might prove it" statement:

Example 2.6.3:

This is true because most English teachers (or students) would answer, "No" if asked whether they felt like the essays they read (or wrote) were "successful."

Here are the first 2 answers put together in a draft:

Example 2.6.4:

The issue of putting more emphasis on elements of composition and arrangement of the elements of composition **exists for** most teachers who teach essay writing **and for** any student who writes essays. **This is true because** most English teachers (or students) would answer, "No" if asked whether they felt like the essays they read (or wrote) were "successful."

Most Common Question: "How do I know that this issue exists for people without looking up facts and statistics?"

Remember that this is "conjecture" or speculation about your issue, not evidence. You might ask, "How do I know this is true?" Here, you are not bound to later prove it by actually doing what you say you could do to prove that the issue exists. So use your imagination, but make sure that it is possible to actually carry it out.

Prompts 3, 4

Where does this issue seem to come from? (How did it begin, as far as I know?) How do I know this is true?

Think about how the issue may have started. Remember, you are speculating. You may have more than one idea about its origins. Explore a few of them. Then answer how you might go about proving your speculations.

Speculate about where the issue may start. If you are not sure about your impressions regarding an issue's origins, ask classmates or instructors where they think the issue may come from.

Example 2.6.5:

This issue may start with administrators or teachers who need an objective way to test a student's writing ability. **It is probably** too subjective and uncontrolled to simply rely on English teachers to evaluate that ability. The thinking goes something like this: there are "standards" for education that should be equally applied and evaluated. This is easy for grammar rules because they tend to be either right or wrong. However, for an essay, which most people consider an art form, evaluation would have to depend on whether it conforms to its own rules.

Tell me now how you know this is true. Remember, if you can't be more specific than "I could do research," then you may need to rethink the issue. You should be able to give me some idea about where we could find proof.

Example 2.6.6:

This is true because any standard grammar/composition textbook will show the standardization of rules for the student (or "academic," or "five-paragraph") essay.

Combine the statements above:

Example 2.6.7:

This issue may start with administrators or teachers who need an objective way to test a student's writing ability. **It is probably** too subjective and uncontrolled to simply rely on English teachers to evaluate that ability. The thinking goes something like this: there are "standards" for education that should be equally applied and evaluated. This is easy for grammar rules because they tend to be either right or wrong. However, for an essay, which most people consider an art form, evaluation would have to depend on whether it conforms to its own rules. **This is true because** any standard grammar/composition textbook will show the standardization of rules for the student (or "academic," or "five-paragraph") essay

Prompts 5, 6

What is the cause for this issue? How do I know this is true?

What caused it to be an issue in the first place? Your answer may sound similar to the previous one. Try to pinpoint an incident or an idea that brought your issue into existence. Remember to explain how you might prove it.

Example 2.6.8: answers

The cause for this problem may be in what these "standards" assume to be true about writing an essay. It seems logical that an essay should follow conventional grammar rules. However, what makes an essay artful is a different kind of element, namely; elements like narrative, description, analogy, analysis, history, definition, comparison, cause and effect, and the like. **This is true because** even a so-called "professional academic essay" that attempts to demonstrate a proper academic form employs many, if not all, of the above named elements. It just does not emphasize them.

Most Common Question: "What is the difference between 'affect' and 'effect'?"

The grammatical difference is this: "affect" is always a verb (except in some specialized vocabularies) and "effect" is always a noun (except in one case that is not used as much now as it used to be).

Usually, "affect" is a verb: Everything I say **affects** others in some way.

When we use the word "effect," it is usually a noun: Everything I say has some sort of **effect** on others.

I remember the difference this way: If I can put "the" or "an" in front of it and it means the same thing in the sentence, it is "effect."

Prompt 7

What will change (How will the world be different) if my claim is accepted?

Imagine the results of implementing your plan or claim. Think about how the world, as it pertains to your claim, will become different.

Example 2.6.1:

Allowing students to focus on mastering these kinds of elements **allows them to** learn how to write more effectively. As elements they may still be evaluated, because people know what makes up these elements in the same way that they know what makes up sentences. People know when they are being told a story, as opposed to an analysis, as opposed to a description. And this attention to elements **will actually** facilitate learning grammar, in much the same way that a good-tasting toothpaste facilitates brushing: the more people like it the more good it does them.

Prompts 8, 9, and 10

Why is mine a good claim to deal with?

Why should it be sought or accepted?

Why is it better than (some alternative)?

These three questions have to do with the **quality** of your claim. In other words, how good a claim is it? In a sense, you are evaluating (assigning or placing a value on) your claim. This is where you get to say why this claim is important. It is in this assignment because, by answering these questions honestly, you:

1. know that you may further invest your time and energy into pursuing this claim;
2. may go back and revise any of the above sections as it becomes necessary during your evaluation, and;
3. evaluating a claim shows the reader that accepting your claim can improve him in some way, or that he may otherwise benefit from it.

Write at least one sentence for each question. Let the answers to each question spawn more explanation. It might be helpful to begin each answer with a part of the question: “Why is mine a good claim to deal with?” “Mine is a good claim to deal with because...” Later, you may go back and eliminate the beginnings of your answers.

After each of the following questions is an example answer. The brackets indicate what I wrote originally but later took out: Again, here is my claim (the last sentence in my Introduction): “Teachers **should** teach essays by putting more emphasis on elements of composition and how to arrange those elements in an essay”:

*[This is a good claim to deal with because] It is important for students and teachers to understand what actually makes up good writing. [This claim should be accepted because] Improving composing skills not only improves the eventual essay, it increases a student's interest in conventions like spelling and grammar. It also helps students master a discourse larger than a paragraph, and helps him understand writing in terms of elements of a whole and how they're arranged. Thinking of essays as works of art composed of elements and arranged by principles of composition is **better than** what we currently teach in secondary schools **because** it allows students to master more than sentences and paragraphs, and it allows them to see that writing, and literature, and other arts may be seen as elemental as well as structural.*

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2.7: Definition

Overview

Look at your claim/proposal statement at the end of your Introduction. Highlight or underline all key words in that statement. There are three things to keep in mind when defining the key terms in your claim statement. Your definition draft will consist of these three elements:

Specialized Terms

First, define for the reader any **specialized** terms or jargon. A specialized term is one that is understood by a specialized group of people in a particular way. Specialized terms are frequently more than one word, like “learning styles.” Use an expert, glossary, or some resource other than a general dictionary for these terms. A quick way to find definitions for a word or phrase without looking in a dictionary is to type the following into **Google** or some other search engine:

Define:[specialized term]

This will get you a list of definitions from specialized websites. You should define at least one key specialized term from your claim statement.

Common/Ambiguous Terms

Second, define any terms that may be **ambiguous** (“ambiguous” means a common term that may be taken a number of ways) or **common** (these are usually a single, everyday word, like “teach” or “writing”) so a reader may understand them in the same way you do. You must respectfully teach the reader the exact sense of the words you wish to use. **Use the best possible dictionary available (one with etymologies)**. If the OED (Oxford English Dictionary) is available, use it – it is the best one in existence.

One term is enough here, so explore the definitions of several key terms carefully before choosing one.

Formal Re-Definition – Re-define Common/Ambiguous Term

Third, re-define the ambiguous term in the way you want it defined (in your own words) but in a “formal” definition. You are the author of this project, and as such, you have the authority to define ambiguous words, within reason, in the way you want to use them, particularly if they may be understood in different ways.

Most Common Question: “What is the difference between ‘specialized’ and ‘common’ terms?”

Specialized terms are words, frequently more than one word at a time, that cannot be defined in a general dictionary, like “stream of consciousness;” if you look up “stream,” then “consciousness,” you still will not know what the phrase means as a term. In the case of this phrase, you will probably have to ask a literature teacher or literary critic. Specialized terms call for specialized sources.

Common/ambiguous terms are those terms most of us are familiar with that are frequently one word, like “teacher;” everyone knows what a “teacher” is. However, you may want people to think of “teacher” in a particular way.

You can describe a teacher as “coach,” “disciplinarian,” “leader,” “coordinator,” “facilitator,” or any number of somewhat different senses of the word. It is important for you to define the word (or present a definition) that most closely resembles the way you want the word used. In other words, you want to take away some of the **ambiguity** (multiple meanings at the same time) of your common terms.

checklist

1. Draft Checklist:

- ___ Identify one **specialized** term and one **common**/ambiguous term from claim
- ___ Find definition(s) for the specialized term (not from dictionary)
- ___ Find definition(s) for the **common** term (from OED)
- ___ Etymology for common term

- ___Antonyms, synonyms, or examples for common term
- ___Re-define common term by re-classifying in a formal definition

Prompts

Write a definition by answering the prompts below. Think about each one carefully. If you need examples or further explanation, refer to the explanation of each in the Tutorial. Then type an answer to each prompt.

checklist

2. Prompts from Draft Checklist:

1. What are a **key term** in my claim statement or thesis from a **specialized** vocabulary and a **key term** from a **common** vocabulary?
2. How does a resource (other than the dictionary) define the **specialized** term or phrase?
3. What **common** term in my claim needs clarification?
4. What different **definitions** of the common term are in the dictionary?
5. What different senses of the term existed in the past (what is its **etymology**) from the dictionary?
6. What are some **antonyms, synonyms, or examples** of the way the term is used from the dictionary?
7. How do I **re-define** the common term using a **formal definition**?

Template/Draft

Template/Draft created from prompts:

Definition

What do people mean by “composition” and “elements of composition?” The term “elements of composition” is one familiar to many English teachers. Most English teachers understand the “elements of composition” to be words, sentences, and paragraphs. What “makes up” an essay, **according to them**, is skillfully crafted sentences that perform specific functions. These sentences are elements of paragraphs that themselves perform certain functions and must be crafted or arranged in specific ways according to specific rules.

The Oxford English Dictionary defines “composition” as “the arrangement of elements” in a given work (733). **The word “composition” is associated with** the word “compose” which comes from the French compound com- “together” and poser- “to place” or to “put down. “Compose” originally meant “to place together.” “Composition” in Latin meant “of action.” Over time the two words (which interestingly enough have “no connection in origin”) came to be “naturally associated” with each other (OED 733-35). The original meaning of these words taken together then is “the act of placing together.”

The first recorded use of the word in English occurred circa 1386, **when** Chaucer **used it in** “The Squire's Tale” when he referred to the “composiciouns/Of anglis and of slye reflexions,” meaning the arrangement of angles in a skillful manner (Fisher 191). **The same sense emerged in** Dryden's 1695 use of the word in the following sentence: “In the composition of a picture the painter is to take care that nothing enter into it which is not proper ... to the subject” (OED 736). These examples seem to reflect the original French and Latin senses of this word. This last definition seems to be the narrow definition applied to composition courses today. I hope to go back to the original sense of the word and apply it here in this paper.

So “composition,” as used throughout this essay, **is a kind of art that** focuses on the arrangement or combination of various writing elements (or parts) into an effective essay (or whole). In this essay, “elements of composition” are parts of an essay rather than parts of written language or grammar. Instead of “paragraphs,” there are “descriptions,” or “anecdotes,” or “definitions,” or “analyses,” and so on.

Note

Words defined are **in quotation marks** (A “teacher” is defined as ...) **and all quoted definitions are in quotation marks.** Note, too, that **punctuation** at the end of the sentence **goes inside quotation marks.**

Tutorial

How to answer the prompts

Prompt 1

What are a **key term** in my claim statement or thesis from a **specialized** vocabulary and a **key term** from a **common** vocabulary?

Choose any term or word that you wish to clarify in your claim statement at the end of the Introduction. This should be a word or words that may be misunderstood or that have a range of meanings or that may be taken differently by different people. You should use the best dictionary you can find to find the history and meanings that you want to use for your own. Here is my claim again:

Teachers should teach essays by putting more emphasis on elements of composition and how to arrange those elements in an essay.

Note that the word that seems to be key to understanding what I mean is probably “composition.” Note too that I will probably end up defining “elements,” and I may take the words “elements of composition” as a specialized term as well. So two key terms are “composition” and “elements of composition.”

Here is an example of how I express to the reader which words I want to define and redefine:

Example 2.7.1:

I want to clarify what I mean by “composition” and “elements of composition.”

(Note how quotation marks are positioned)

Prompt 2

How does a resource (other than the dictionary) define the **specialized** term or phrase?

These are terms that are specific to a discipline or a group of people. They may be jargon or made up terms, and they may mean something different from what we expect. All you have to do to answer this question is to identify the term as a specialized one. They tend to have more than one word. Do not use a general dictionary or other source to answer this question; ask an expert or consult a specialized dictionary, glossary, or other specialized source.

Example 2.7.2:

The term “elements of composition” is one familiar to many English teachers.

Specialized terms are words, or groups of words, that have a specific meaning to a specific group of people. For those words, I simply look them up in a source published by that group of people, or, if one of those people is available, I ask him or her to define it for me.

1. Choose a term that may be defined or understood in a specialized way.
2. Find a resource for that specialized sense of the term.
3. Record the definition.

I choose the term “elements of composition” from my claim. I ask English teachers how they define that term (or look the term up in a specialized glossary or specialized dictionary). I synthesize their answers into a faithful summary of their definitions.

Example 2.7.3:

Most English teachers understand the “elements of composition” to be words, sentences, and paragraphs. What “makes up” an essay, **according to** them, is skillfully crafted sentences that perform specific functions. These sentences are elements of paragraphs that themselves perform certain functions and must be crafted or arranged in specific ways according to specific rules.

Prompt 3

What **common** term in my claim needs clarification?

These are words that people are familiar with, and use in everyday conversation, or consider “common knowledge.” However, they may be key to understanding your claim, and you don’t want them misunderstood. These words may have a range of definitions, or may simply be commonly understood in a way that you do not want to use them.

Look at the words you chose. Address specialized terms above. If any words are not specialized, they may be common or ambiguous terms. For those terms, indicate which one or ones you will define.

Example 2.7.4:

The word “composition” **is used** in many ways **by** many different people.

Prompt 4

What different **definitions** of the common term are in the dictionary?

Look up one of the ambiguous or common words you chose in the dictionary. Look at each definition of the word. Print a copy of the page or pages where your word appears. Then carefully read through the definitions and the notations of when and where they appeared in our language. Underline any information, quotes, dates, or definitions that emphasize or underscore the sense of the word AS YOU INTEND TO USE IT.

Example 2.7.5:

The word “composition” **is associated with** the word “compose” which comes from the French compound *com-* “together” and *poser-* “to place” or to “put down.” “Compose” originally meant, “to place together.” “Composition” in Latin meant “of action.” Over time the two words (which interestingly enough have “no connection in origin”) came to be “naturally associated” with each other (OED 733-35). The original meaning of these words taken together then is “the act of placing together.”

Prompt 5

What different senses of the term existed in the past (what is its etymology) from the dictionary?

The etymology of a word frequently appears within the brackets at the beginning of the definition. The etymology may use abbreviations, which may be located in the front of the dictionary. You must decipher the etymology and put it into an English sentence before going to the next question.

Example 2.7.6:

The first recorded use of the word in English occurred circa 1386, **when** Chaucer **used it** in “The Squire’s Tale” when he referred to the “composiciouns/ Of anglis and of slye reflexions,” meaning the arrangement of angles in a skillful manner (Fisher 191). **The same sense emerged in** Dryden’s 1695 use of the word in the following sentence: “In the composition of a picture the painter is to take care that nothing enter into it which is not proper ... to the subject” (OED 736). **These examples seem to reflect** the original French and Latin senses of this word. **This last definition seems to be the narrow definition applied to** composition courses today. I hope to go back to the original sense of the word and apply it here in this paper.

Prompt 6

What are some antonyms, synonyms, or examples of the way the term is used from the dictionary?

Look for terms that mean the opposite of your term. List and explain why it is important for me to know what its opposites are. Also, list words that mean nearly the same thing or the same thing, **IN THE WAY YOU WANT THE TERM UNDERSTOOD**.

Most Common Question: "What do I have to remember to do when quoting something from the dictionary?"

Several picky yet important "conventions" that APA style demands. First, when you quote something from the dictionary (or anywhere for that matter), **incorporate** the quote into your own sentence. For example, this is NOT correct:

| "To instruct and guide."

That sentence is not incorporated into a sentence. The following is:

| According to The Oxford English Dictionary, the word "teach" means "to instruct and guide."

Note that "incorporated" also means that the quote fits the grammar of the sentence; I can read the sentence, and it makes grammatical sense, whether the quotation marks are there or not. Also, note that the title of the dictionary is underlined. I should also add where I found this definition in the dictionary:

| According to The Oxford English Dictionary, the word "teach" means "to instruct and guide" (977).

Note, too, that when we put a page number at the end of a quote **the period moves** from inside the quotation marks to outside the parentheses.

Prompt 7

How do I re-define a common or ambiguous term as a formal definition?

This part of your definition is called a "formal" definition because it has a 3-part "form" to it. It does not mean it is "formal" in the sense that it is "not informal."Redefine each term as needed in a formal definition, in exactly the way you wish that term defined, using your own words and/or the words from the dictionary.

Formula for formal definitions

A formal definition is a term classified by differences. In other words, a formal definition has specific parts:

1. the term itself
2. the class of things that the term falls into
3. how that term is different from other things in the same class

OR:

Term + Classification - Differences = Formal Definition (2.7.1)

A simple example of this formula is this:

Example 2.7.7:

1. term = a "sandal"
2. class = **is a type of** "shoe"
3. differences in class = **that** "has open toes and straps"

OR:

A _____ is a type of _____ that _____.

Example 2.7.8:

A sandal **is a type of** shoe **that** has open toes and straps.

However, the above definition of "sandal" is the definition you would expect to find in the dictionary. Remember that you have the authority to define your terms. To do this, you simply put the term into a different class and tell how the term differs from items in THAT class.

Example 2.7.9:

For example, instead of:

A sandal is a type of *shoe* that *has open toes* and *straps*.

I could say:

A sandal **is a type of** weapon **that** may be used on insects.

OR:

A sandal **is a type of** accessory **that** is worn in the summer.

OR:

A sandal **is a type of** reminder **that** brings the beach to mind.

Note that I can choose the class that I want the term to fall into. Just remember that the class you put the term into should be credible to the reader.

Note too that the transitions I use are consistent: _____ is a type of _____ that _____. The transition phrases are not confined to these exact words, but they are useful in staying focused on the parts of a formal definition.

Put together with transitions, here is my example formal definition for "composition:"

Example 2.7.10:

So "composition," as I will be using the term throughout this essay, **is a kind of** art **that** focuses on the arrangement or combination of various writing elements (or parts) into an effective essay (or whole).

Note that all punctuation marks go inside quotation marks.

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2.8: Implementation

Overview

The purpose of this section is to show what steps the reader (and/or the writer) must take to accept or carry out your proposal. These steps must be specific, feasible, and outlined explicitly and completely. This section is more or less an expansion of the practical statements from your Introduction, along with questions about your proposal/claim. However, the point is to provide an explicit plan for carrying out your proposal. For someone writing about a way to teach, a detailed unit and lesson plan might be appropriate. If you are making a claim about something in literature, you might outline the steps I must take to see your perspective (or perhaps the steps you took). Otherwise, use the checklist and prompts below.

checklist

1. Draft Checklist:

- ___ List each step from the Introduction
- ___ Expand and explain each step in detail
- ___ Declare a starting point
- ___ List outcomes

Prompts

checklist

2. Prompts from Draft Checklist:

1. How may I **outline each step**, in great detail, of my practical statements from my Introduction?
2. What has to happen to initiate **changes**?
3. What is **the process** if this proposal (or claim) is accepted?

Template/Draft

Template/Draft from Prompts:

Implementation

The first step in teaching "composing" **is** to understand an essay as an arrangement of elements, as mentioned above. Understanding composing in this way means teachers will have to quit focusing on sentences and paragraphs. It will mean not focusing on grammar. It does not mean that teachers will quit focusing on these as "conventions," because, as conventions, they are important, indeed critical. Composing in this way means assuming writing is made up first as individual elements arranged in some way, then as conventions. **So**, as a teacher, **one will** teach students how to write a narrative, rather than a paragraph. A teacher should identify the parts of a short narrative, like an anecdote, and ask students to write one with these parts. These parts include such things as "beginning" (who, what, where), "middle" (what happened, sequence of events), and "end" (an explicit ending versus an implicit one).

The teacher should **then** focus on polishing that anecdote using narrative principles, such as "showing not telling," "focusing on an insignificant object, place, or person," and "allowing the reader to draw his own conclusions," and so on. **Next is** to focus on conventions, such as spelling, grammar, and other rules, such as MLA style. If teachers follow this procedure with each element, each student will be able to write in that element and get a chance to practice conventions with each element, and with every rewrite of that element.

A second step in teaching composing **is** ...

[Remember to elaborate on each step in your practical statements in your Introduction – I only elaborated on two for this example]

In order to start putting more emphasis on elements of composition teachers **will have to** begin with how English teachers are taught to teach composition. Teachers **will have to** teach others that teaching composing is a way of teaching elements rather than teaching about elements. At the same time, writers **will have to** think of their works as compositions of elements rather than compositions of sentences and paragraphs. **To accomplish this**, an expert should write a manual or text that outlines how to master each element, then how to master smaller elements, then how to arrange these elements into a "composition" according to principles of composing.

This will require a shift in basic assumptions about writing for many people. However, **if** it is laid out in a text or guide so that a writer may master elements, along with arrangement and style principles, and practice conventions when editing (or being edited) and revising, **then** some of these assumptions about what is basic about writing may change.

Some results of thinking about writing more as composing and less as building sentences and paragraphs **will include** writers arranging their elements for maximum effect on a reader rather than imparting information, writers experimenting with the relationship between conventions and their effects on readers, readers understanding literary works better because they have learned about it by "doing" it rather than "interpreting" or "analyzing" it, and writers understanding better how some other works of art or music are "composed."

Tutorial

How to answer the prompts

Prompt 1

How may I outline each step, in great detail, of my practical statements from my Introduction?

Here is the first sentence from the practical statements in my Introduction:

***The first step** in teaching "composing" is to understand an essay as an arrangement of elements, as I mentioned above.*

Now I state what it will take, in practical, specific terms, for me (or a reader) to carry out this step:

Example 2.8.1:

The first step in teaching "composing" **is** to understand an essay as an arrangement of elements, as mentioned above. Understanding composing in this way means teachers will have to quit focusing on sentences and paragraphs. It will mean not focusing on grammar. It does not mean that teachers will quit focusing on these as "conventions," because, as conventions, they are important, indeed critical. Composing in this way means assuming writing is made up first as individual elements arranged in some way, then as conventions.

When you are finished, combine the sentence from the Introduction with the explanation above. Then go to the next sentence (or step) in your practical statements from your Introduction and go into similar detail.

Note

Repeat this process for each sentence of the practical statements.

Prompt 2

What has to happen to initiate changes?

Here you tell how your claim will fit into existing programs, conditions, or contexts. It asks essentially how your claim or change will get started, or how you will start the change. First, restate (or summarize) your claim. Then explain how your claim will be implemented (how it will be put into action within the context of existing conditions).

Here is my claim:

Teachers should teach essays by putting more emphasis on elements of composition and how to arrange those elements in an essay.

Here is how it may be implemented:

Example 2.8.2:

In order to start putting more emphasis on elements of composition teachers **will have to** begin with how English teachers are taught to teach composition. Teachers **will have to** teach others that teaching composing is a way of teaching elements rather than teaching about elements. At the same time, writers **will have to** think of their works as compositions of elements rather than compositions of sentences and paragraphs. **To accomplish this**, an expert should write a manual or text that outlines how to master each element, then how to master smaller elements, then how to arrange these elements into a "composition" according to principles of composing.

Now combine these answers into a single paragraph. Explain how conditions have to change, or what will have to change about people or things, in order for your claim or change to get started:

Example 2.8.3:

This will require a shift in basic assumptions about writing for many people. But **if** it is laid out in a text or guide so that a writer may master elements, along with arrangement and style principles, and practice conventions when editing (or being edited) and revising, **then** some of these assumptions about what is basic about writing may change.

Prompt 3

What is the process if this proposal (or claim) is accepted?

Something that many of us never consider, or articulate, is what will actually happen if our proposals or claims really are accepted and implemented. For this question, imagine what will result from people actually doing what you propose or accepting what you claim. Be as specific as you can. You may outline changes that will take place or suggest what might be the result of thinking about or seeing your issue in a new or different way. You might suggest that these will be "results" or "effects":

Example 2.8.4:

Some results of thinking about writing more as composing and less as building sentences and paragraphs **will include** writers arranging their elements for maximum effect on a reader rather than imparting information, writers experimenting with the relationship between conventions and their effects on readers, readers understanding literary works better because they have learned about it by "doing" it rather than "interpreting" or "analyzing" it, and writers understanding better how some other works of art or music are "composed."

Most Common Question: "Do I really have to DO what I am asking to be implemented?"

Why not? You have spent a great deal of time and thought on this essay so far. Why not make your procedure so specific that you can actually go out and do it today?

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2.9: Refutation

Overview

The purpose for this section is to address (and overcome) any objections or arguments anyone might have with your claim. An objection is anything stating something contrary to your claim. For our purposes, we will stick with a simple formula: **state an objection to your claim in as few words as possible, and then explain in detail why your claim is better**. Do this for all the objections you can find. As a rule, there should be at least three major objections to your claim, but not more than about five. If you can think of more than five objections, and if you have difficulty explaining many of them, then you should re-think your claim. If you cannot seem to overcome a particular objection, you may have to change the wording of your claim to avoid or otherwise accommodate that objection, or start over completely. Remember, it is never too late to change your mind. If you change your claim, be sure you change it, and anything else that is taken directly from it, all the way through your writing, starting with the Introduction. To find arguments and objections to your claim, ask your classmates (or anyone familiar with your issue), “Why would anyone object to *[insert your claim here]*?”

checklist

1. Draft Checklist:

- ___ List objections to the proposal/claim statement (3 to 5 objections)
- ___ For each objection, respond with reasons why it is not valid

Prompts

checklist

2. Prompts from Draft Checklist:

1. What are **some major objections** to my claim?
2. **However**, how do I respond (as completely as possible) to each objection? Why is it that my opponent’s claim **will not work**? Why **is it wrong**?

Template/Draft

Refutation means, “Overcoming objections to my claim statement.” The formula is to boil down an objection to your claim to one statement only, then to use as many sentences/statements as you can to explain why the objection is wrong.

Template/Draft from Prompts:

Refutation

Some teachers say that this changes the definition of "elements of composition" to something more like "modes," and teaching modes is out of style. **Other teachers say** that this focus on elements ignores written conventions and “standards.” **Others say** that a method like this one is too “prescriptive.”

Some teachers say that this changes the definition of "elements of composition" to something more like "modes," and teaching modes is out of style. **However**, adding modes to the notion of composition elements reflects a long rhetorical tradition, one much longer than the current emphasis on objective analysis. A little over a hundred years ago, the emphasis in academic writing changed to reflect a strong scientific approach towards knowledge. Student writers went from modeling themselves after classical rhetoricians and various literary genres, as well as "investigating" the world, to primarily investigation as a means of literary interpretation. Writing as a writer became, in the academic world, writing as an observer. It gradually became necessary to write about writing, rather than simply writing. This objective form of writing, in order to stay ostensibly objective, could not consist of the very things it was observing and analyzing. Therefore, instead of objective analysis being made up of "modes" like narrative, analogy, definition, comparison, description, argumentation, and so on, it had to have a structure all its own. Therefore, it shifted from a writing in the "modes" to writing simply in certain kinds of "sentences" and

"paragraphs." The argument here is to show that, even though it is a useful form of writing, objective analysis is not "composition." It is, in a sense, "precomposed" for your writing convenience. This position advocates for admitting that writers can be "analytical" and "objective" while learning to utilize modes, or mode-like structures, in an essay. They can also be "narrative," "argumentative," "descriptive," and so on, in an analysis. So the shift from looking at elements of composition as "sentence/paragraph" elements to "mode" elements is more a re-infusion of those elements of composition that have existed for over two thousand years into a system that favors objective analysis, at the expense of other modes, almost exclusively.

Other teachers say that this focus on elements ignores written conventions and "standards." **However**, they do not take into consideration ...

[Note: continue with this pattern for each objection.]

Tutorial

How to answer the prompts

Prompt 1

What are some **major objections** to my claim?

Imagine why anyone would object to your claim, and write down his or her arguments. Remember any objections you have read or heard (or have gotten from classmates and others), and write them down in summary form. Make a one-sentence summary of each objection.

(Here is my claim: Teachers should teach essays by putting more emphasis on elements of composition and how to arrange those elements in an essay.)

Here are some possible objections to this claim:

- "You are changing the definition of "elements of composition" to something more like "modes," and we all know that teaching modes is out of style."
- "This is a mechanical and formulaic way to teach writing; it is not "natural"."
- "Teaching students how to write this way is more like "creative writing"."
- "Writers should learn the "basics" of grammar and usage before they learn to write in certain styles."

There may be other objections, but these are the ones I have heard, or expect to hear, most often. Make a list of the major objections to your claim. Put them into sentences and a single paragraph.

Prompts 2, 3, and 4

However, how do I respond (as copiously and completely as possible) to each objection? Why is it that my opponent's claim **will not work**? Why **is it wrong**?

Now take each objection sentence in your list, one at a time, and respond to it. **Please note that the response should be much longer than the objection.** Be sure that your response to each objection is quite a bit longer than the objection itself. Remember, this is your chance to explain why you are doing or saying what you are doing or saying, in spite of some objections. Give as many reasons as you can for why you think each objection will not work or is wrong in some way. If you need extra prompting to answer this question, ask the other two questions: "Why won't my opponent's claim work? Why is it wrong?"

(Objection number 1 from above):

Some people say that this changes the definition of "elements of composition" to something more like "modes," and teaching modes is out of style.

Now I respond to this accusation in at least one paragraph (the more I can respond with the better).

Note

Begin your rebuttal with the word “however,” which signals to the reader that you are changing course from the first sentence.

Example 2.9.1:

However, adding modes to the notion of composition elements reflects a long rhetorical tradition, one much longer than the current emphasis on objective analysis. A little over a hundred years ago, the emphasis in academic writing changed to reflect a strong scientific approach towards knowledge. Student writers went from modeling themselves after classical rhetoricians and various literary genres, as well as “investigating” the world, to primarily investigation as a means of literary interpretation. Writing as a writer became, in the academic world, writing as an observer. It gradually became necessary to write about writing, rather than simply writing. This objective form of writing, in order to stay ostensibly objective, could not consist of the very things it was observing and analyzing. Therefore, instead of objective analysis being made up of “modes” like narrative, analogy, definition, comparison, description, argumentation, and so on, it had to have a structure all its own. Therefore, it shifted from a writing in the “modes” to writing simply in certain kinds of “sentences” and “paragraphs.” The argument here is to show that, even though it is a useful form of writing, objective analysis is not “composition.” It is, in a sense, “pre-composed” for your writing convenience. This position advocates for admitting that writers can be “analytical” and “objective” while learning to utilize modes, or mode-like structures, in an essay. They can also be “narrative,” “argumentative,” “descriptive,” and so on, in an analysis. So the shift from looking at elements of composition as “sentence/paragraph” elements to “mode” elements is more a re-infusion of those elements of composition that have existed for over two thousand years into a system that favors objective analysis, at the expense of other modes, almost exclusively.

Now, using “**however**,” combine the first objection with the first response:

Example 2.9.2:

Some people say that this changes the definition of “elements of composition” to something more like “modes,” and teaching modes is out of style. **However**, adding modes to the notion of composition elements reflects a long rhetorical tradition...

Then finish combining the response and the objection. **Note that the objection to my claim is only one sentence, but my response is at least one very long paragraph.**

Then go to objection number two and follow the same process. Then **follow the same process for each objection until you have answered each one.** Finally, arrange them by objection, then response, and one at a time, until you have a completed assignment.

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2.10: Conclusion

Overview

In a sense, you have been arguing all along in your writing. Up to this point, however, the arguments have not necessarily been couched in Argument terms, though they may have been persuasive. An argument is a claim that contains warrants (assumptions) and is supported by grounds. Some of what you do in this section will be a repetition of what you have already said (this is perfectly fine because repetition – reminding the reader – is also persuasive). We will simply make sure that you identify, articulate, or make explicit some of the warrants, or underlying assumptions, inherent in your claim. We will also make explicit some grounds that may support your claim.

checklist

Draft Checklist:

- ___ Claim statement
- ___ Identifying and listing warrants
- ___ Controversial warrant explained
- ___ Kind of issue
- ___ Examples, Data, Statistics, Case study, Testimony
- ___ Analogy
- ___ Restated Claim

Prompts

checklist

Prompts from Draft Checklist:

1. What is the central **claim**?
2. What sorts of **warrants** underlie my claim?
3. Which of these underlying **assumptions** needs some clarification in order for the audience to agree?
4. What **kind of issue** is my claim?
5. What are some **examples** of where [my claim] works (or applies, exists, is true, etc.)?
6. What is an **analogy** for my claim? or What is something analogous to my claim?
7. What is the **claim** again?

Template/Draft

Template/Draft from Prompts:

Conclusion

Teachers **should** teach essays by putting more emphasis on elements of composition and how to arrange those elements in an essay. Making the claim that teachers should teach essays by putting more emphasis on elements of composition and how to arrange those elements in an essay **assumes that** essays should be taught by qualified teachers. **It also assumes that** many teachers do not teach this way because they understand the notion of “elements of composition” differently than briefly outlined above, and **that** this is true because most teachers' training has emphasized the traditional way of looking at composition in these terms.

This also assumes that teaching elements, arrangement, and essays in the way I am describing is better than the way it is currently done. **This statement is based on** the difference in the product (the essays) because of this method. These essays tend to have many of the same mistakes and problems, but they also have many of those things that outline-generated, stated thesis-

based, five-paragraph academic essays lack: audience awareness, control of conventions (some even used unconventionally), control of subject, flow, balance, a desired effect, unity, and other qualities that some call “literary,” like control of figurative language and control of the elements of particular genres. However, **this also includes** a positive shift in attitude towards writing, stimulated curiosity, and a realization by student writers that “professional” and literary writers employ exactly the same tactics and methods in their writings. This tends to dispel the notion that there are student writers and then there are “real” writers. Students tend to conclude that those writers, with only the occasional “genius” thrown into the mix, have simply practiced longer at the very ideas that student writers discover from this method. Emphasizing elements of composition over sentences and paragraphs in writing classes **is an educational issue**.

Students seem to write better when they understand writing as “composing” rather than “composition.” **For example**, essay students who consistently use this method in developing essays, make up half of the students who win the yearly freshman writing contests (Winn, 1999). They find they are competing with other people who employ this method. **Last year four of the eight winners** were students who used this method, and **the others were ones** who used this method within a typical five-paragraph essay, possibly without even knowing that this is what they were doing (Winn, 1999). More may have won, except that one of the judges objected that the theses in many essays were “implied” rather than “stated.” Much effective writing was ignored because a thesis must apparently be explicit, in spite of the fact that it is not always explicit in professional essays.

In some cases, students have gotten teaching jobs or professional positions because they have demonstrated to their employer an ability to write professional essays, using this method. **For instance**, a former student called one researcher to say “thank you” for helping her get her job with a law firm. **Her writing was** what distinguished her from other candidates (Hebert, 2006). **In many cases**, students have asked why they were not taught this simple concept much earlier in their writing training. **They say** their papers would have been much better, easier to write, and much more interesting for readers and writers both (Johnson, 2001). **One student in particular** who transferred from UCLA said that she learned more about writing in one semester using this method than she had learned in her entire California education (Ling, 2005).

Elements in writing patterns **are like** notes in music; **they** may be “arranged” for different effects or styles, **they** can be broken down into small parts for practice or study, **and they** can be designed to emphasize different voices or media. Like a good composition in music, or even art, a subtle and carefully constructed essay – when viewed as rhetorical elements rather than orthographic ones – can change minds and change lives. **For these reasons**, teachers should teach essays by putting more emphasis on elements of composition and how to arrange those elements in an essay.

Tutorial

How To Answer the Prompts

Prompt 1

What is the central **claim**?

By now, your claim or proposal should be pretty well thought out. To answer this question in most cases, simply restate or copy your claim from the end of your Introduction section. If you are not sure about how to state a claim (or re-state it), review the “claim” section of the Introduction questions.

Example 2.10.1:

Teachers **should** teach essays by putting more emphasis on elements of composition and how to arrange those elements in an essay.

Prompt 2

What sorts of **warrants** underlie my claim?

Have you ever heard anyone say, “Let’s assume [something] to be true, just for the sake of argument”? What that person is doing is identifying his **warrants**. In many written arguments, warrants are implicit (not stated). For your argument, try to make as many warrants as explicit as you can by stating them. **A warrant is an underlying assumption** we have to make in order to accept a claim as true. In other words, what do I have to assume to be true to believe what you have to say?

For example, if a person sneers and says to you: "I don't talk to Yankees," what is that person (or that statement) assuming to be true about you? One underlying assumption is that you are a Yankee, whatever that means. Another assumption is that the speaker belongs to a group who does not speak to Yankees. Another assumption is that there must be some reason or reasons not to speak to Yankees. Another assumption is that speakers don't have to talk to strangers who belong to a particular group, like Yankees. And so on.

I was recently standing outside the door to a "smoke free" building with a group of teachers who smoke (I don't) when a student whom I did not know drew close to my face and loudly stated the following claim: "You have a nasty habit."

For example, if a person sneers and says to you: "I don't talk to Yankees," what is that person (or that statement) assuming to be true about you? One underlying assumption is that you are a Yankee, whatever that means. Another assumption is that the speaker belongs to a group who does not speak to Yankees. Another assumption is that there must be some reason or reasons not to speak to Yankees. Another assumption is that speakers don't have to talk to strangers who belong to a particular group, like Yankees. And so on. I was recently standing outside the door to a "smoke free" building with a group of teachers who smoke (I don't) when a student whom I did not know drew close to my face and loudly stated the following claim: "You have a nasty habit."

What are some of the warrants (underlying assumptions) this particular student has for her claim? Here are some possible warrants: She assumes I am a smoker. She assumes smoking and smokers have a "nasty habit." She also assumes it is acceptable to express her perspective to smokers. She assumes her language and its context are appropriate for the situation. And so on.

Please note that these warrants are assumptions, and are not stated explicitly in her claim.

In order to answer the question "What warrants underlie my claim?" there are questions you should answer first, like:

- What do I have to assume to be true in order to accept [my claim]?
- On which of these underlying assumptions is the audience most likely to agree with me?
- What do I have to assume to be true in order to accept [my claim]?

Step 1 - List warrants

The first step in the process for revealing the warrants in your claim (or in the claims of others) is to list them. There are warrants in the claim I am making about teaching composition. In order to find these warrants, I look for answers to the question "What do I have to assume to be true in order to accept" [my claim that "teachers should teach essays by putting more emphasis on elements of composition and how to arrange those elements in an essay?"]

Make a list of these underlying assumptions or warrants (the answer to the above question) on a separate page (these might not all be included at the end of this process).

Here are some **possible** warrants for the claim "Teachers **should** teach essays by putting more emphasis on elements of composition and how to arrange those elements in an essay":

- essays should be taught
- teachers teach essays
- teachers don't teach elements of composition this way, at least for the most part
- how we teach essays depends to some degree on how we understand "elements of composition"
- the emphasis currently is on other ways of teaching essays
- teaching elements, arrangement, and essays in the way I am describing is better than the way it is currently done

Step 2 - Prioritize your warrants

List these on a separate piece of paper. Arrange in order of acceptability (I already did this in the above list). In other words, the first few are obvious, and easily accepted by most people. Some "go without saying" because most people will not question them, whereas others are assumptions with which some, or many, people might beg to differ. This is what I mean by "acceptability." For example, the first two in the list are ones that most, if not all, of my audience will accept without question. (That does not mean, however, that the warrants cannot be questioned). The next three are ones that a large part of my audience will probably accept for the sake of argument. The last one, however, is subject to disagreement by a large number of people in my field. That is the one that bears some explanation on my part:

- teaching elements, arrangement, and essays in the way I am describing is better than the way it is currently done

Step 3 - Put agreeable warrants into a paragraph

The second question that you must answer is:

- On which of these underlying assumptions is the audience most likely to agree with me?

Decide how to handle warrants in your claim; do you simply mention them? Clarify them? Argue with them? For those that seem to “go without saying” (the ones most of the audience will probably agree with), simply mention them.

These are the ones from my list the audience most likely agrees with:

- essays should be taught
(This one is so widely and easily acceptable I don't want to address it at all.)
- teachers teach essays
(Same here; so acceptable I will assume that most of my audience will not question it.)
- teachers don't teach elements of composition this way, at least for the most part
(I have alluded to this one before in my essay. I choose to ignore it because it is too easy to prove with statistics and other evidence. You may choose to provide evidence if you feel yours is not too easy to prove. I think most people would agree with this assumption.)

Example/template – Prompt 2

Simply state the assumptions that seem obvious (the ones that few people would probably disagree with). There is no need to argue them, just state the ones that are most likely to be agreed with by the audience. Now put these warrants, the ones your audience will most likely agree with, into sentence form:

Example 2.10.2:

Making the claim that teachers should teach essays by putting more emphasis on elements of composition and how to arrange those elements in an essay **assumes that** essays should be taught by qualified teachers. **It also assumes that** many teachers do not teach this way because they understand the notion of “elements of composition” differently than briefly outlined above, and **that** this is true because most teachers' training has emphasized the traditional way of looking at composition in these terms.

Prompt 3

Which of these underlying assumptions needs some **clarification** in order for the audience to agree?

These are the warrants from the list above that might need some clarification:

- how we teach essays depends to some degree on how we understand “elements of composition”
(I think I have explained how I understand “elements of composition” well enough that the reader at least grasps the concept enough to listen to the rest of my argument without further explanation. If I had not done so, I would do it now.)
- the emphasis currently is on other ways of teaching essays
(Again, a reader might take issue with this underlying assumption about the current state of affairs in writing instruction, but to take up space here arguing this point, like the last three, seems to be a topic for some other essay. In my estimation, it is an acceptable warrant for my claim. I might address it by saying “this is beyond the scope of this essay.” Otherwise, it might need some clarification.)

The last warrant or underlying assumption in my list probably should be addressed or clarified:

- teaching elements, arrangement, and essays in the way I am describing is better than the way it is currently done
(This is one I am going to have to address (see example below) because I suspect that more people might argue that the current way is better. Regardless, this is the group I am targeting anyway. So I will offer some explanation for resting my claim on this assumption, among others.)

Example 2.10.3: Prompt 3

This also assumes that teaching elements, arrangement, and essays in the way I am describing is better than the way it is currently done. **This statement is based on** the difference in the product (the essays) because of this method. These essays tend to have many of the same mistakes and problems, but they also have many of those things that outline-generated, stated thesis-based, five-paragraph academic essays lack: audience awareness, control of conventions (some even used unconventionally), control of subject, flow, balance, a desired effect, unity, and other qualities that some call “literary,” like control of figurative language and control of the elements of particular genres. However, **this also includes** a positive shift in attitude towards writing, stimulated curiosity, and a realization by student writers that “professional” and literary writers employ exactly the same tactics and methods in their writings. This tends to dispel the notion that there are student writers and then there are “real” writers. Students tend to conclude that those writers, with only the occasional “genius” thrown into the mix, have simply practiced longer at the very ideas that student writers discover from this method.

Prompt 4

What **kind of issue** is my claim?

Identify type of issue

One day when I was 14 years old, I asked my dad for the car keys. He refused. I told him he did not trust me. “It is not an issue of trust,” he said. I told him I knew how to drive safely. “It is not a safety issue,” he said. I offered to pay for gas. “It is not an economic issue,” he said. I told him I needed more practice to learn driving skills. “It is not an educational issue,” he said. Finally, I asked him what kind of an issue we were dealing with. “This is a legal issue; you are not legally old enough to drive,” he said.

Kinds of Issues:

If you have a policy claim, identify what category your issue falls into (or what category you WANT it to fit into). In other words, ask yourself, “What kind of issue is it?” Luckily, the number of categories is somewhat limited much of the time to one of the following

- Moral
- Legal
- Economic
- Ethical
- Efficiency
- Educational
- Scientific
- Safety
- Social
- Religious
- Health
- Rights
- Privacy

And so on.

My claim (“Teachers **should** teach essays by putting more emphasis on elements of composition and how to arrange those elements in an essay”) can be categorized as “an educational issue.” This is important to point out because declaring the type of issue frees me from arguing the claim as other kinds of issues, like as a moral or legal issue. It also limits my critics from arguing outside this category. If they do so, they risk their entire argument unless they address the issue within the category of “education.”

Example 2.10.4: prompt 4

Emphasizing elements of composition over sentences and paragraphs in writing classes **is an educational issue**.

Prompt 5

What are some **examples** of where [my claim] works (or applies, exists, is true, etc.)?

A **generalization** is a type of ground that offers proof inductively. In other words, this is where you use **examples** to support your claim. The idea is that, if you can present **some** examples where your claim is true, your claim will be true if you could present **all** the examples that existed. The reader has to be able to generalize that something is true from the few examples you give. As a rule of thumb, you need at least three examples. A good way to start a generalization sentence or series of sentences is with the following key words: “for example,” “for instance,” “in this case,” “in most cases.”

Look at your claim and restate it if necessary in order to answer the question, “What are some examples?” Since it is an “educational” issue, look for examples from educational sources, like articles written by or for teachers.

Examples take many forms, but you should use examples from sources that pertain to your claim. There are different types of examples to choose from:

- Data (scientific or mathematical measurements of observations)
- Testimony (what experts have written about the subject)
- Statistics
- Case studies
- Reports

And so on.

Example 2.10.5:

Students seem to write better when they understand writing as “composing” rather than “composition.” **For example**, essay students who consistently use this method in developing essays, make up half of the students who win the yearly freshman writing contests (Winn, 1999). They find they are competing with other people who employ this method. **Last year four of the eight winners** were students who used this method, **and the others were ones** who used this method within a typical five-paragraph essay, possibly without even knowing that this is what they were doing (Winn, 1999). More may have won, except that one of the judges objected that the theses in many essays were “implied” rather than “stated.” Much effective writing was ignored because a thesis must apparently be explicit, in spite of the fact that it is not always explicit in professional essays.

In some cases, students have gotten teaching jobs or professional positions because they have demonstrated to their employer an ability to write professional essays, using this method. **For instance**, a former student called one researcher to say “thank you” for helping her get her job with a law firm. **Her writing was** what distinguished her from other candidates (Hebert, 2006). **In many cases**, students have asked why they were not taught this simple concept much earlier in their writing training. **They say** their papers would have been much better, easier to write, and much more interesting for readers and writers both (Johnson, 2001). **One student in particular** who transferred from UCLA said that she learned more about writing in one semester using this method than she had learned in her entire California education (Ling, 2005).

Prompt 6

What is an **analogy** for my claim? or What is something analogous to my claim?

Overview

An analogy is a **simile** that is extended as far as you can extend it. A simile is when you say that one thing “is like” something else. In other words, it compares an idea or situation, which is new or unfamiliar to the reader, to something concrete or familiar to that reader.

It helps the reader see the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar. Using analogy at the end of a project is like holding up the Mona Lisa in the middle of a lecture on painting portraits; it illustrates the way you see your subject or idea in an efficient and graphic way, it simplifies complex ideas by showing us something familiar, and it helps us remember an image by associating it with something else that we can remember. (The previous sentence is a short, simple example of an analogy).

Step 1 - Constructing a simile for your analogy

A simile emphasizes how your idea and a concrete object familiar to the reader are alike or similar. Here is a way to construct a simile:

[your idea or subject] **is like** [something familiar to reader].

A rhetorical mode **is like** a clothes hangar.

Note

Even though I write “A rhetorical mode,” I am thinking of the characteristics I associate with modes and with a hangar that are similar.

Create a simile comparing your object/place to something similar and familiar to the reader. Remember that the way you see your object/place is probably conceptual in nature, so make the comparison to something concrete. Use this formula to get started:

[my subject (the way I see it)] **is like** [something concrete and familiar to many readers, and is similar in some way to the way I see my subject].

In other words,

_____ **is like** _____.

Grammar is Important!

When filling in these blanks, try to fill each with similar grammatical constructions. For example, in the simile “life **is like** a highway,” the first part (life) is a noun and the thing compared (a highway) is also a noun. Notice too that “life” is conceptual in nature, as well as the thing we are trying to describe. It is also the unfamiliar side of the equation. On the other side of the equation, “a highway” is both concrete (no pun intended) and familiar. So we are trying to understand “life” (unfamiliar concept) in terms of “a highway” (familiar and tangible), and both are nouns.

However, if we begin the left side of the equation with something like a gerund phrase (an “- ing” construction) we should also use a gerund phrase in the right side of the equation. For example, if I take the above simile “life is like a highway” and begin it “living life,” followed by “is like,” then I should finish it with a similar construction, like “driving down a highway.” Instead of comparing two things (“life” and “highway”), we are now comparing two processes (“living” and “driving”). Whichever the case, keep both sides of the equation the same construction.

Here are these two ways illustrated:

Example 2.10.6:

Noun to noun comparison:

A rhetorical **mode** is like a clothes **hangar**.

OR

Gerund to gerund comparison:

Using a rhetorical mode is like **draping** clothes on a hangar

Notice that I am trying to make my reader understand my idea in the same way I understand it, *by analogy*. He or she does not think of a linguistic concept as a common object like a hangar, or *using* it in the same way we use a hangar; I have to compare it to one to make him or her understand this.

Most Common Question: “What is the difference between a comparison and a simile?”

In a **comparison**, the reader generally understands how the two objects are connected without any additional explanation from the writer:

A typewriter **is like** a computer.

This is a **comparison** for two reasons: the two objects and the characteristics they share are familiar to most readers, and the objects are not different enough to need explaining (they are both tangible and have some similar characteristics). In a **simile**, the two sides of the **simile/analogy** are as different as possible but still connected:

A typewriter **is like** a rookie first-baseman's glove.

A "typewriter" and a "rookie first-baseman's glove" should be different enough that you are asking yourself, "What? How in the world is a typewriter like a rookie first-baseman's glove?" However, if you can answer that question (How are these two things alike?) with at least 3 characteristics that the compared objects share, then you are on your way to an analogy:

A typewriter **is like** a rookie first baseman's glove; **it** causes my hands to hurt, **it** makes many mistakes, and no one wants to use **it**.

Step 2 - From simile to analogy – Stretch the analogy

"**How** is _____ like _____?"

Find more specific similarities between the characteristics of your idea (or the way you THINK of your idea) and the thing you are comparing. You do this by asking "How?" after your simile, and then answering that question as thoroughly as possible. For the simile "life is like a highway," I simply ask "**How** [is life like a highway]?" I find similarities by answering that question, using a formula like this:

[How is life like a highway]?

They both _____.

They both _____.

They both _____.

Example 2.10.7:

[**How** is life like a highway]?

They both have detours, obstacles, turns, and accidents.

They both take me to places I did not expect.

They both leave me feeling run over at times.

Please note that I answer the question "How?" at least three times.

Example 2.10.8:

[How is a rhetorical mode like a clothes hanger?]

It can hold an infinite variety of styles.

It holds a recognizable shape.

It keeps things smooth and easy to see.

Note that the word "it" refers to "rhetorical mode" **AND** "hanger" at the same time. In other words, "it" is ambiguous. This is the way your "how?" answers should be constructed.

Now put all these elements together and you have the skeleton of an analogy:

Example 2.10.9:

A rhetorical mode **is like** a clothes hanger; **it** can hold an infinite variety of styles, **it** holds a recognizable shape, and **it** keeps things smooth and easy to see.

Notice that I put them into one sentence with a semicolon before the list of answers to the question "How?"

Example 2.10.10:

Here is my “Mona Lisa analogy”:

Using analogy in the middle of an essay **is like** holding up the Mona Lisa in the middle of a lecture on painting portraits; **it** illustrates the way you see your object/place in an efficient and graphic way, **it** simplifies complex ideas by showing us something familiar, and **it** helps us remember an image by associating it with something else that we can remember.

Step 3 - Elaborate

I can now elaborate on each one of these (see full example below). Put into a prose paragraph or paragraphs, elaborating on each one with at least one sentence per answer to the “**How?**” question.

Step 4 - Conclude with a statement that refers to or reflects the simile

I end my analogy with a sentence that connects to the original simile at the beginning of the analogy.

Example 2.10.11: Prompt 6 (analogy)

A rhetorical mode **is like** a clothes hangar; **it** can hold an infinite variety of styles, **it** supports a recognizable shape, and **it** keeps things smooth and easy to see. A mode like narrative, for example, is infinite in the variety of literary styles, plot lines, characters, and so on, it can hold or accommodate. People know when they are “in” narrative – that is, they recognize it – without being told that’s what it is. Modes are recognizable shapes and familiar frameworks upon which writers hang novel items infinitely. Recognizing what mode is behind a text smoothes the reader’s acquisition of the meaning of the text. A mode gives the writer and the reader a framework upon which to hang meaning.

Prompt 7

What is the claim again?

Use a transition phrase (other than “in conclusion”) and copy your claim statement one last time:

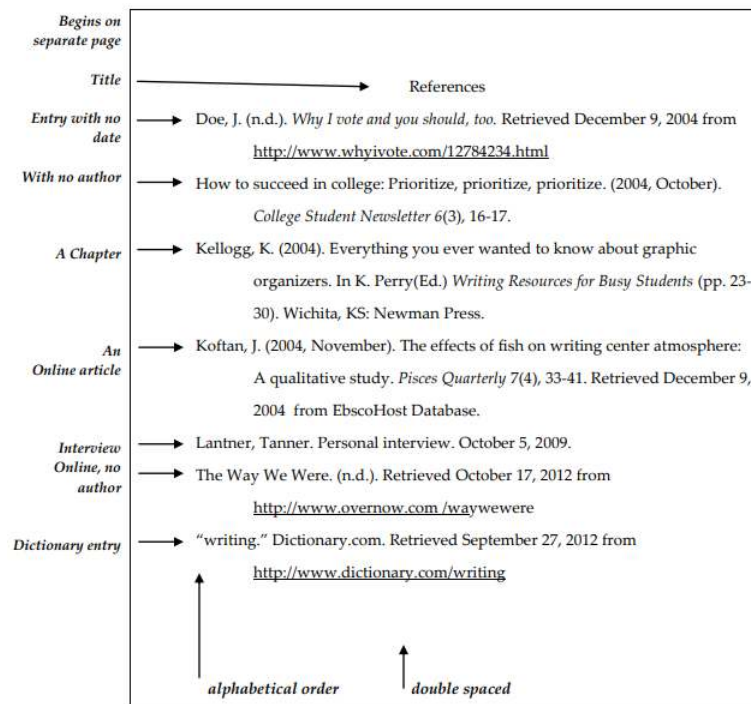
For these reasons, teachers should ...

Based on this study, teachers should ...

With all this in mind, teachers should ...

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2.11: References



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2.12: Title and Title Page

Constructing a Title

Use the formula “**TC: SUM**,” which means: a **Twisted Cliché**, followed by a **colon**, followed by a **Summary**.

1. Twisted Cliché

A “cliché” is a phrase or expression that we have nearly all heard at some time. It frequently has a figurative meaning rather than literally meaning what it says. If I were to accept something “hook, line, and sinker,” that does not literally mean that I swallowed fishing equipment. It means, figuratively, that I accepted without questioning or believed fully something that may turn out to be dubious. Anyway, a cliché is a group of words that, “if you’ve heard them once, you’ve heard them a million times.” A “twisted cliché” is a cliché that you change or “twist” to fit your own purposes (in this case, to fit the main idea of your essay). For example, “Two’s company; three’s a crowd” is a common cliché. A way to twist it (and its meaning) might be the following: “Two’s company; three’s a party.”

The point to twisting a cliché is to make it fresh, different, and noticeable, and to make it say what you want it to say, while reminding the reader of the original cliché.

Guidelines for twisting a cliché:

The longer the cliché, the easier it is to twist:

“*Running around like a chicken with its head cut off*” is a long cliché, “*Just do it*” is too short to twist effectively.

Replace one or only a very few of the key words of the cliché (the fewer the better; in fact, if you can change one letter and still make it fit your purpose, so much the better):

“*Running around like a teacher with his head cut off*” changes a key element and a minor one in this cliché.

Or truncate or shorten a cliché and let the reader fill in the blank:

“*Like a chicken:*” or “*With Its Head Cut Off:*”

Or rearrange the elements:

“*Running around like a head with its chicken cut off*” (*I didn't say it had to be a literary gem, just twisted*).

We should be able to identify the original cliché after you change it:

“*Dining Like A Man With An Appetite Suppressant*” does not look enough like the original “*chicken with its head cut off*” cliché above for me to recognize it.

Here is the process for twisting a cliché for your title:

Decide or identify what your essay or writing is about, what the main point is, or what the main idea is, and try to put into one word or a series of single ideas:

Example 2.12.1:

What is my paper about? Let's see, it's about “improving the education system.” I can sum that idea up with words like “**learning**,” “**improving**,” “**making life better**,” “**changing the system**,” and so on.

Try to recall (or brainstorm with unwitting classmates, or look up in a dictionary of clichés) as many clichés that apply to each idea or term above:

For the idea “**learning**” here are some clichés:

- “you can’t teach an old dog new tricks” or
- “the light bulb came on” or
- “to throw new light on the subject;”

For the idea “**improving**” or “**making life better:**”

- “this is as good as it gets” or
- “if at first you don’t succeed, try, try again” or
- “every cloud has a silver lining;”

For the idea “**changing the system:**”

- “if you can’t beat ‘em, join ‘em” or
- “you can’t change city hall” or
- “you can lead a horse to water but you can’t make him drink”

Note that these don’t have to be literary gems either, nor do they have to be exactly matched to your subject, just “close enough for government work”.

Pick one of the clichés you remember. I like the “old dogs/new tricks” cliché above in this case because it can apply to all the basic ideas I stated that my paper might be about.

Now twist the cliché you choose according to the rules for twisting a cliché:

Example 2.12.2:

You Can't Teach An Old Student New Tricks,

or

New Tricks for an Old Dog,

or

Old Dogs and New Tricks

So for the cliché side of the title, I will probably use:

Old Dogs and New Tricks

2. Summary

The “summary” side of your title is just that: In about 10 words or fewer, summarize your entire essay in straightforward, literal language; tell me what the writing is about or what it is going to do.

I want to summarize what my paper is about. One way to start a title summary is “A Look At” or “An Essay Exploring” or “An Analysis Of”, and later removing that part if the summary seems too long.

So a summary of what my paper is about might go like this:

“*[A Look At] Improving Education through Increased Teacher Training*”

When I remove the bracketed material, it still sounds like it describes an essay.

3. Colon

Now put the parts of the title together, separating the parts with a colon:

*Old Dogs and New Tricks: Improving Education
Through Increased Teacher Training*

Note the following:

- There is a **twisted cliché**, followed by a **colon**, followed by a **summary**.
- **Capitalize** key words
- **Center** the title
- **No quotation** marks before and after the title
- **Not** all caps
- **No period** after the title

Sample Title Page

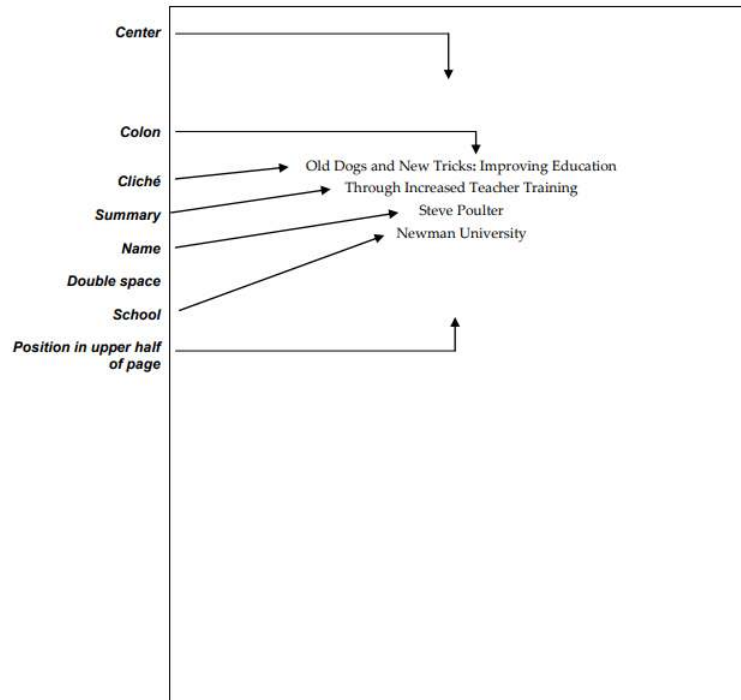


Figure 2.12.1

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2.13: Quick Reference to APA Style

Note

All of this information is taken from: <http://www.apastyle.org/>

APA Style

1. Resources:

- APA Publication Manual: American Psychological Association (6th ed.).(2010). Publication manual of the American Psychological Association. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.
- APA website tutorial: www.apastyle.org/learn/tutorial...-tutorial.aspx

2. General Rules:

- Language:
 - Use literal language (no metaphor, simile, and the like).
 - Use precise language (no clichés or euphemisms).
 - Use active voice if possible.
 - Use the past tense.
 - Use gender-neutral language (first initial and last name only for names of people); do not refer to the gender of any person using pronouns.
 - Use bias-free language (do not identify/refer to people by sexual orientation, racial or ethnic identity, disability, or age).
 - Alphabetize (multiple authors in references)
- Citing References in Text (see Basic Citation Chart)
 - Cite every direct quote, paraphrased statement, new term, etc.
 - The general pattern for citation is author-date: (Jones, 2009).
 - The same is true for in-text citations: According to Jones (2009), the best ...
 - Within paragraphs, cite author/date after each reference.
 - The first time you cite a work with 3 or more authors, use all the names: "...in his time" (Jones, Lontif, Norton, and Peters, 2007).
 - With 3 or more authors, after the first reference, use et al.: "...breaking the rules" (Jones et al., 2007).

3. Reference Page – Basic Rules:

- All lines after the first line of each entry in your reference list should be indented one-half inch from the left margin. This is called **hanging indentation**.
- Authors' names are inverted (**last name first**); give the last name and initials for all authors of a particular work for up to and including seven authors. If the work has more than seven authors, list the first six authors and then use ellipses after the sixth author's name. After the ellipses, list the last author's name of the work.
- Reference list entries should be **alphabetized** by the last name of the first author of each work.
- If you have **more than one article** by the same author, single-author references or multiple-author references with the exact same authors in the exact same order are listed in order by the year of publication, starting with the earliest.
- When referring to any work that is NOT a journal, such as a book, article, or Web page, **capitalize only the first letter** of the first word of a title and subtitle, the first word after a colon or a dash in the title, and proper nouns. Do not capitalize the first letter of the second word in a hyphenated compound word.
- Capitalize all major words in **journal** titles.
- **Italicize** titles of longer works such as **books and journals**.
- Do not italicize, underline, or put quotes around the titles of shorter works such as journal articles or essays in edited collections.

Single Author

Last name first, followed by author initials:

Example 2.13.1:

Berndt, T. J. (2002). Friendship quality and social development. *Current Directions in Psychological Science*, 11, 7-10.

Two Authors

List by their last names and initials. Use the ampersand instead of "and":

Example 2.13.2:

Wegener, D. T., & Petty, R. E. (1994). Mood management across affective states: The hedonic contingency hypothesis. *Journal of Personality & Social Psychology*, 66, 1034-1048.

Organization as Author

Example 2.13.3:

American Psychological Association. (2003).

Unknown Author

Example 2.13.4:

Merriam-Webster's collegiate dictionary (10th ed.).(1993). Springfield, MA: Merriam-Webster.

Note

When your essay includes parenthetical citations of sources with no author named, use a shortened version of the source's title instead of an author's name. Use quotation marks and italics as appropriate. For example, parenthetical citations of the source above would appear as follows: (Merriam-Webster's, 1993).

Introductions, Prefaces, Forewords, and Afterwords

Cite the publishing information about a book as usual, but cite Introduction, Preface, Foreword, or Afterword (whatever title is applicable) as the chapter of the book.

Example 2.13.5:

Funk, R. & Kolln, M. (1998). Introduction. In E.W. Ludlow (Ed.), *Understanding English Grammar* (pp. 1-2). Needham, MA: Allyn and Bacon.

Article in Journal Paginated by Volume

Journals that are paginated by volume begin with page one in issue one, and continue numbering issue two where issue one ended, etc.

Example 2.13.6:

Harlow, H. F. (1983). Fundamentals for preparing psychology journal articles. *Journal of Comparative and Physiological Psychology*, 55, 893-896.

Article in Journal Paginated by Issue

Journals paginated by issue begin with page one every issue; therefore, the issue number gets indicated in parentheses after the volume. The parentheses and issue number are not italicized or underlined.

Example 2.13.7:

Scruton, R. (1996). The eclipse of listening. *The New Criterion*, 15(30), 5-13.

Basic Format for Books

Author, A. A. (Year of publication). Title of work: Capital letter also for subtitle. Location: Publisher.

Note

For "Location," you should always list the city and the state using the two letter postal abbreviation without periods (New York, NY).

Example 2.13.8:

Calfee, R. C., & Valencia, R. R. (1991). *APA guide to preparing manuscripts for journal publication*. Washington, DC: American Psychological Association.

Article From an Online Periodical**Note**

In 2007, the APA released several additions/modifications for documentation of electronic sources in the APA Style Guide to Electronic References. These changes are reflected in the entries below. Please note that there are no spaces used with brackets in APA.

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Date of publication). Title of article. Title of Online Periodical, volume number(issue number if available). Retrieved from www.someaddress.com/full/url/

Example 2.13.9:

Bernstein, M. (2002). 10 tips on writing the living Web. *A List Apart: For People Who Make Websites*, 149. Retrieved from <http://www.alistapart.com/articles/writeliving>

Article From an Online Periodical with DOI Assigned

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Date of publication). Title of article. Title of Journal, volume number. doi:0000000/000000000000

Example 2.13.10:

Brownlie, D. (2007). Toward effective poster presentations: An annotated bibliography. *European Journal of Marketing*, 41(11/12), 1245-1283. doi:10.1108/03090560710821161

Article From a Database

When referencing material obtained from an online database (such as a database in the library), provide appropriate print citation information (formatted just like a "normal" print citation would be for that type of work). This will allow people to retrieve the print version if they do not have access to the database from which you retrieved the article. You can also include the item number or accession number in parentheses at the end, but the APA manual says that this is not required. For articles that are easily located, do not provide database information. If the article is difficult to locate, then you can provide database information. Only use retrieval dates if the source could change, such as Wikis. For more about citing articles retrieved from electronic databases, see pages 187-192 of the Publication Manual.

Example 2.13.11:

Smyth, A. M., Parker, A. L., & Pease, D. L. (2002). A study of enjoyment of peas. *Journal of Abnormal Eating*, 8(3), 120-125.

Chapter/Section of a Web document or Online Book Chapter

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Date of publication). Title of article. In Title of book or larger document (chapter or section number). Retrieved from www.someaddress.com/full/url/

Online Encyclopedias and Dictionaries

Often encyclopedias and dictionaries do not provide bylines (authors' names). When no byline is present, move the entry name to the front of the citation. Provide publication dates if present or specify (n.d.) if no date is present in the entry.

Example 2.13.12:

Feminism. (n.d.). In Encyclopædia Britannica online. Retrieved from <http://www.britannica.com/topic/feminism>

Nonperiodical Web Document, Web Page, or Report

List as much of the following information as possible (you sometimes have to hunt around to find the information; don't be lazy. If there is a page like www.somesite.com/some/page.htm, and [somepage.htm](http://www.somesite.com/somepage.htm) doesn't have the information you're looking for, move up the URL to www.somesite.com/):

Author, A. A., & Author, B. B. (Date of publication). Title of document. Retrieved from Web [address](#)

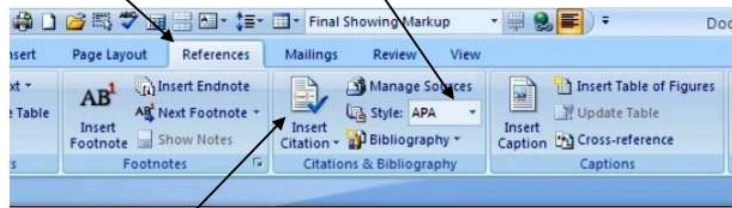
Table 6.1. Basic Citation Styles

Type of citation	First citation in text	Subsequent citations in text	Parenthetical format, first citation in text	Parenthetical format, subsequent citations in text
One work by one author	Walker (2007)	Walker (2007)	(Walker, 2007)	(Walker, 2007)
One work by two authors	Walker and Allen (2004)	Walker and Allen (2004)	(Walker & Allen, 2004)	(Walker & Allen, 2004)
One work by three authors	Bradley, Ramirez, and Soo (1999)	Bradley et al. (1999)	(Bradley, Ramirez, & Soo, 1999)	(Bradley et al., 1999)
One work by four authors	Bradley, Ramirez, Soo, and Walsh (2006)	Bradley et al. (2006)	(Bradley, Ramirez, Soo, & Walsh, 2006)	(Bradley et al., 2006)
One work by five authors	Walker, Allen, Bradley, Ramirez, and Soo (2008)	Walker et al. (2008)	(Walker, Allen, Bradley, Ramirez, & Soo, 2008)	(Walker et al., 2008)
One work by six or more authors	Wasserstein et al. (2005)	Wasserstein et al. (2005)	(Wasserstein et al., 2005)	(Wasserstein et al., 2005)
Groups (readily identified through abbreviation) as authors	National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH, 2003)	NIMH (2003)	(National Institute of Mental Health [NIMH], 2003)	(NIMH, 2003)
Groups (no abbreviation) as authors	University of Pittsburgh (2005)	University of Pittsburgh (2005)	(University of Pittsburgh, 2005)	(University of Pittsburgh, 2005)

Figure 2.13.1

To set Microsoft Word to create a Reference page for you:

Go to References tab and set "Style:" to APA:



Open "Insert Citation" and choose "Type of Source" then fill in information that you have:

Once you have ALL of your references typed in to the Bibliographic Fields, open the Bibliography menu and click on "Bibliography"

Figure 2.13.2



Figure 2.13.3

Title Page (<http://www.apastyle.org>)

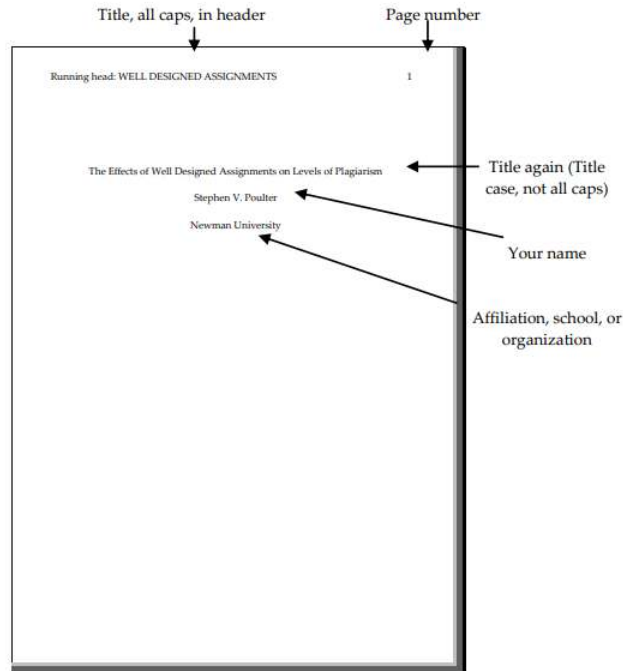


Figure 2.13.4

Introduction Page (<http://www.apastyle.org>)

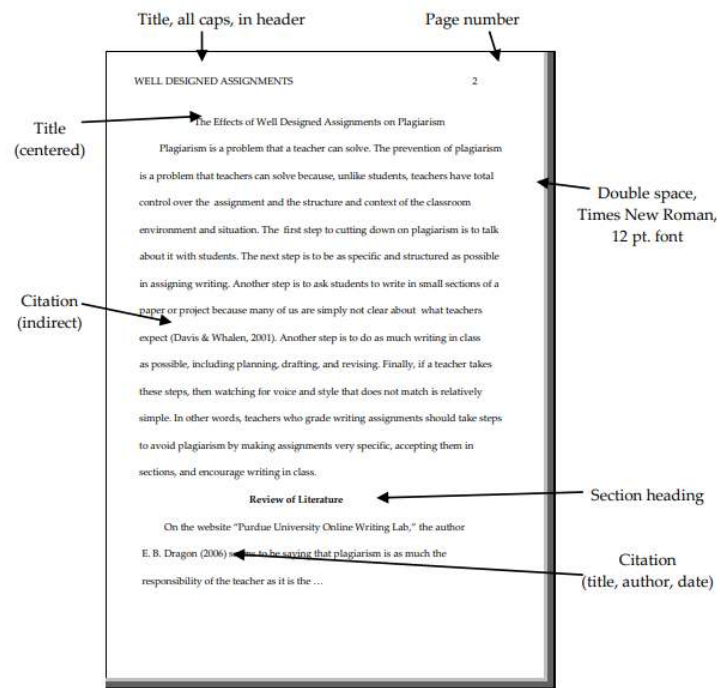


Figure 2.13.5

Citations (<http://www.apastyle.org>)

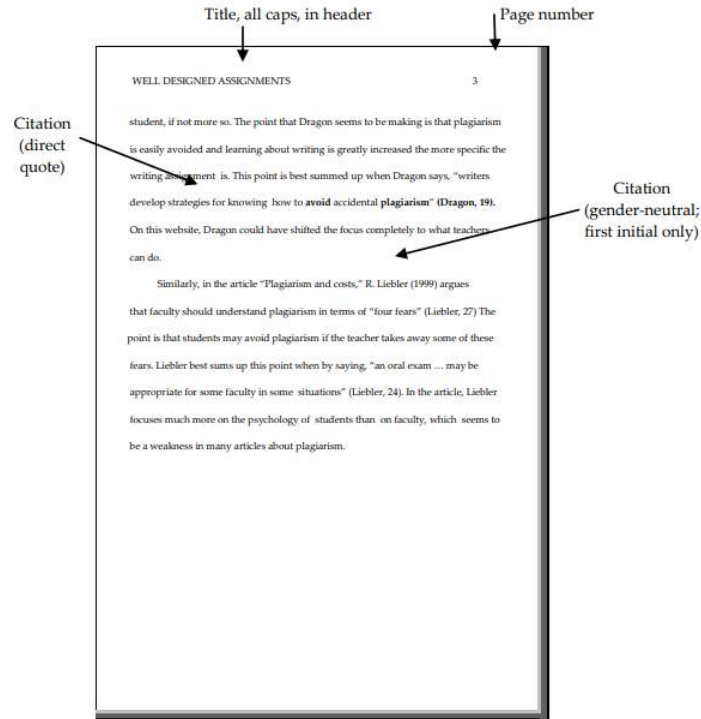


Figure 2.13.6

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2.14: Putting It All Together

Completed project, first draft

When you get your References page and Title page checked by instructor, copy and paste all of the checked drafts of all sections together into a single document. Make sure you have no extra spaces or indents in the body of the paper. Submit this final document draft to instructor for review. Include the following parts in this order:

checklist

- ___ Title page (separate page)
- ___ Abstract (separate page)
- ___ Introduction
- ___ Review of Literature
- ___ Evaluation
- ___ Definition
- ___ Implementation
- ___ Refutation
- ___ Conclusion
- ___ References (separate page)

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

3: Business and Professional Writing

- [3.1: Overview](#)
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- [3.3: Statement of the Problem](#)
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3.1: Overview

This section is designed for two purposes:

1. as a step-by-step guide to a **long proposal** in any field that requires professional writing, and
2. as **sections** that may be used individually.

In other words, you may propose a thorough study of a problem and present your solution to the appropriate people. In that case, you will use most, if not all, of the sections in this book. On the other hand, you may need to produce an **abstract**, a **short proposal**, a **memo**, a **bio**, an **executive summary**, a **letter**, a **resume**, a **rationale**, or any number of other individual writings. In that case, simply follow the instructions from that section in this book.

Solving problems

Most people will tell you that the point to professional writing is to “communicate.” Of course, that is the point to any verbal or written language. However, this book assumes that your ultimate goal is to propose solutions to problems. In the course of proposing solutions, you will use individual writings like those in bold above. You will learn a sophisticated framework for an in-depth proposal while practicing the smaller elements that make up that framework.

Rule of Thumb

If you are writing for someone you do not know personally, or who is in a position of authority, use objective language. If you are personally acquainted or a peer of your target audience, use more personal language.

Objective language

Professional writing favors concise, simple language. Short, to-the-point sentences are valued over long, descriptive ones. It also favors objective language, which means that words like “I” and “you” are left out as a rule. However, the overarching structure of professional writing is persuasion. This means that you want to persuade someone to change in some way. To do this sometimes requires using language that closes the gap between the writer and his audience (“objective” language increases this gap) by using more personal words.

Much of the **argument** in a business or technical environment is presented in the form of a **proposal**. A **proposal** still has the elements of argument (claim, rationale, evaluation, summary, evidence, implementation, etc.), but the elements are arranged and broken up a little differently.

Note

Assemble **Front Matter** last.

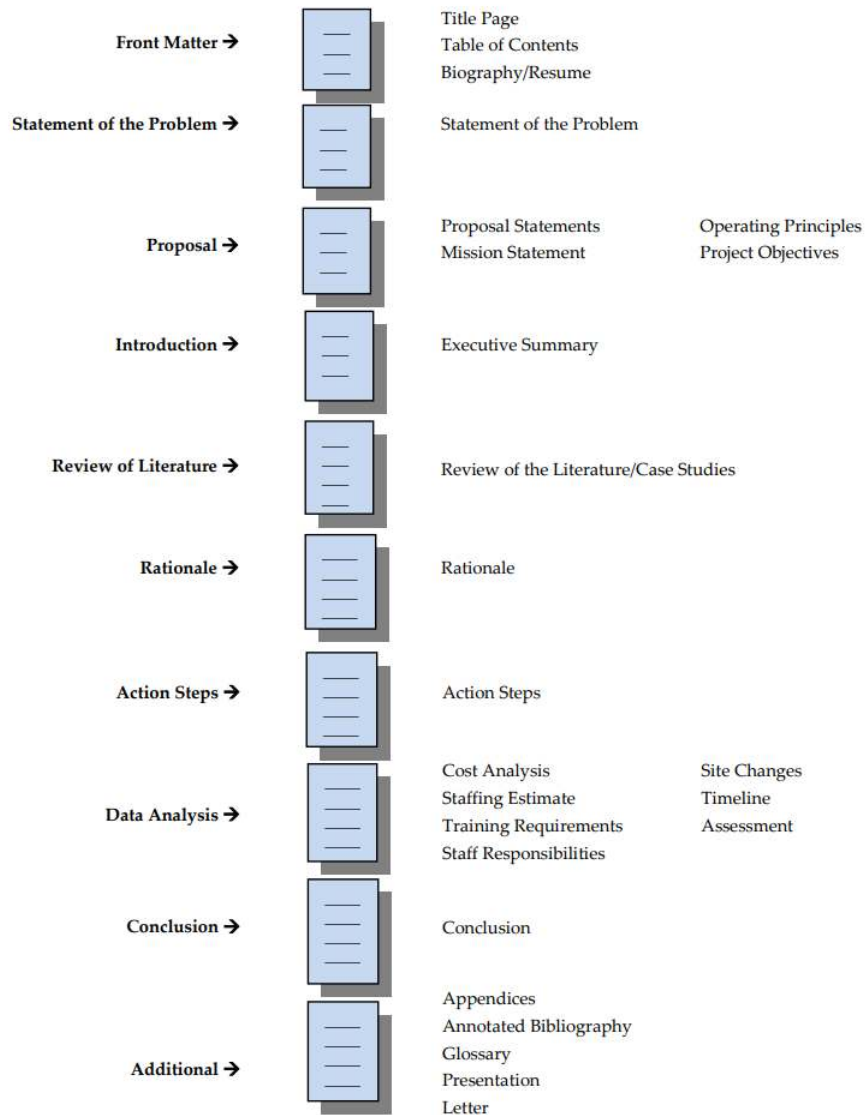


Figure 3.1.1 - Sections of a Business Proposal

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3.2: Front Matter

On the following pages are some examples of the kinds of materials that precede the Proposal. These are collectively called the **Front Matter**.

Rule of Thumb

The Front Matter should be assembled **AFTER** you complete your project.

Title Page

On the next page is an example of a title page. Use it as a guide for creating your own title page. Note the following:

- The **title** is centered
- It is in the upper quarter of the page
- It is single-spaced
- It has two parts
- The **first** part of the title is an expression, cliché, or other common phrase that frames your project
- The **first** part of the title is in all caps
- The **first** part of the title is followed by a colon
- The **first** part of the title is on its own line
- The **second** part of the title is a brief (10 or fewer words) summary of the project
- The **second** part of the title is capitalized, but not in all caps
- *Author* Appears in second quarter of page
- “Prepared by” is on its own line
- The author’s name is on its own line
- The author’s title is on its own line
- Appears in third quarter of page
- Seasons are not capitalized
- “Prepared for” on its own line

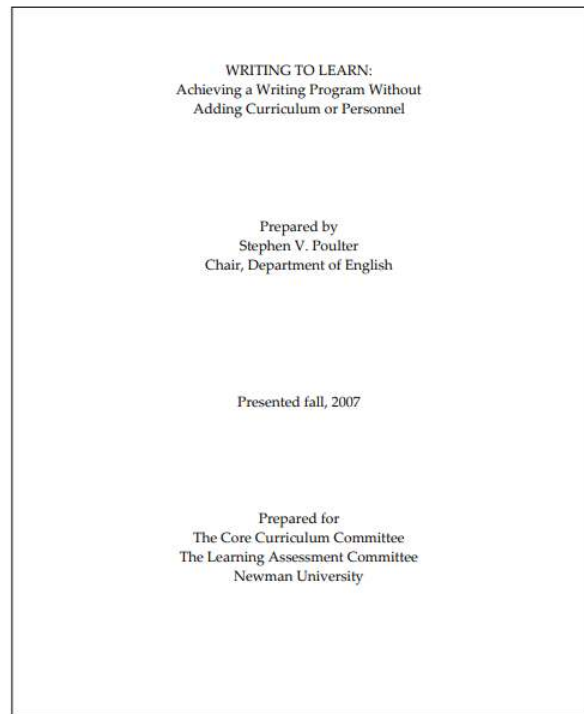


Figure 3.2.1

Table of Contents

For a detailed description of how to create a Table of Contents in Microsoft Word 2007, see the following link: office.microsoft.com/en-us/wo...253721033.aspx

Biography

Please note that a **Biography** is written in third person and is a mix of personal and professional information (see Resume/Vita). It is usually in chronological order.

Biography

Steve Poulter earned a B.A. in English, an M.A.T. in Humanities, and a Ph.D. in Rhetoric and Composition from the University of Texas at Arlington. He served as a teacher and coach at Bishop Lynch High School in Dallas, Texas, a director of education and center director for Sylvan Learning Centers, a teaching assistant at the University of Texas at Arlington, an instructor and assistant professor of English at Northeastern State University in Tahlequah, Oklahoma, and currently serves as an assistant professor of English Composition at Newman University. His contributions to college composition curriculum includes two published composition textbooks and two published, co-edited composition readers, composition programs for computer-assisted classrooms and web-based distance education, a graduate teaching assistant handbook and several teaching guides published through Northeastern State University, and an online academic journal for undergraduates. He has developed new course curricula for college writing courses, including developmental, freshman, honors, and advanced composition at the undergraduate level, and research, rhetoric, applied rhetoric, pedagogy, composition, and composition theory courses at the graduate level. At Northeastern State University, where he directed the freshman writing program, he was a four-time nominee for teacher of the year and received awards from the Graduate Student Association, the John Vaughn Library, and Sigma Tau Delta. At Newman, Steve teaches composition and writing courses and currently serves as Math/Writing Center Director.

Resume/Vita

A **Resume** (for most jobs) or **Vita** (for academic positions) includes at least the following information sections:

Personal

(name, address, phone numbers, email, and any other contact information you have)

Education

(the last two or three places you went to school, beginning with the last)

Work Experience

(any paid jobs, part-time and full-time, that you have held successfully in the past, beginning with the last. Generally, list position title, name of company, description of duties, location, and dates for each)

Volunteer Experience

(list the same way as Work Experience)

Optional sections may include:

Employment Objective

Interests/Hobbies

Clubs/Organizations

Awards/Honors

Specialized Training

3.3: Statement of the Problem

In one statement, summarize the problem for which you intend to propose a solution.

Rule of Thumb

The problem should be “local,” in the sense that you are already connected personally with it.

This statement is a poor statement of a problem:

Schools do not have designated smoking areas.

It is not connected to anyone or any place. A **better** statement of the problem is:

East High School does not have a room for students who smoke to study or a place for students who smoke to hang out.

This statement assumes it is “local” (if I attended East High School) and personal (if I know the situation from my own experience).

In my own experience, which is teaching writing, teachers often tell me that they think students should be better writers when they graduate. I think I can help out. First, however, I must articulate the problem if I ever hope to propose a solution. For example:

Example 3.3.1:

Statement of Problem

Students leave Newman University without professional writing skills.

It is something I am connected with personally and something I think I can offer a solution for. I will start with that statement.

Rule of Thumb

Assume that the “Statement of Problem” will change constantly while you are writing your other sections.

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3.4: Proposal Section

Proposal

Checklist

Draft Checklist:

- ___ **General** statement
- ___ Very **specific** statements
- ___ **Summary** statement
- ___ **Rationale** statements
- ___ **Procedure** statements
- ___ **Proposal** statement

Prompts

Once you articulate the problem, answer the following prompts to propose a solution to the problem:

checklist

1. What do you believe should change (what do you **propose**; 1 general statement)?
2. How can you describe or explain in great detail what you **propose** (3-5 very specific statements)?
3. How can you restate/summarize **in other words** what you are proposing (1 statement)?
4. **Why** should we do what you are proposing (3-5 rationale statements)?
5. **What steps** must you take to implement your proposal (3-5 procedure statements)?
6. How can you **restate/summarize** what you are proposing (1 statement)?

Below is an example/template for writing a proposal. The sentences answer the questions above. The words in **bold** are phrases that reflect the questions – you may use these phrases as a template.

Template/Draft

Template/Draft from Prompts:

Proposal

I believe that Newman **needs** a writing proficiency requirement for graduation. A writing proficiency requirement should not be a test, but should be a series of choices that students have while they are here to show they are proficient writers without having to be “tested.” If a student presents a paper, or qualifies for tutor in the Writing Center, for example, this indicates that he or she is proficient. If not accepted for these kinds of events, there should be a course offered as a choice. If a student passes this course, he or she is considered proficient.

In other words, Newman students should be able to participate in events or writing projects that will indicate that they are proficient enough in academic writing to graduate. Newman students should be able to participate in events or writing projects that will indicate that they are proficient enough in academic writing to graduate **because** there is no test that indicates proficiency – we simply have to see their writing. **Also**, writing is a way to learn other subjects, so should not be measured until the end of their careers rather than at the beginning or halfway through. They should have choices to meet the proficiency **so that** they can play to their strengths – writing in their majors – rather than some empty academic exercise. **The first step** towards implementing proficiency is for the university to create opportunities for students to present writing projects or show what they have done in writing. **The next step** is for individual faculty to identify what kinds of writing each student should include in these projects/opportunities. **Once** the faculty does this, students may apply these kinds of writing, as needed, to different projects. **Next**, the English department must create a course for those who do not participate in these projects. **Finally**,

for those who do not want to take a course or participate in a project, the English department will develop a comprehensive test. **I propose that** Newman University help students meet their writing proficiency by offering a number of writing project opportunities, along with a course and an exam, from which they may choose, any one of which may meet the proficiency requirement.

Tutorial

How to answer the prompts

Prompt 1 – General statement

What do you believe should change (what do you propose)? (1 statement)

An easy way to answer questions like these is to use words from the question in the answer, like this:

Q: What do you **believe** should change (what do you **propose**) in 1, general statement?

A: **I believe** that Newman needs a writing proficiency requirement for graduation.

OR: **I propose** a writing proficiency requirement for graduation from Newman.

Prompt 2 – Specific statements

How can you describe or explain in great detail what you propose? (3-5 very specific statements)

Here you go into as much detail as you can about what you *mean* in your general statement above. An easy way to “elaborate” upon your general statement is to explain – in your own words – what you mean by the key words or phrases in that statement.

In my opening, general statement, the word that is key to understanding what I mean is “proficiency.” I will limit my explanation to 5 statements at most, but devote at least 3 to showing the reader what I mean by this word, or by the phrase “writing proficiency.”

Example 3.4.1:

A writing proficiency requirement should not be a test, but should be a series of choices that students have while they are here to show they are proficient writers without having to be “tested.” If a student presents a paper, or qualifies for tutor in the Writing Center, for example, this indicates that he or she is proficient. If not accepted for these kinds of events, there should be a course offered as a choice. If a student passes this course, he or she is considered proficient.

Prompt 3 – Summary statement

How can you restate/summarize in other words what you are proposing? (1 statement)

Now, look back at what you have written so far. Restate or summarize what you propose to do in a single statement.

Example 3.4.2:

In other words, Newman students should be able to participate in events or writing projects that will indicate that they are proficient enough in academic writing to graduate.

Rule of Thumb

Whenever you summarize or restate what you have been talking about, alert the reader by using the universally recognized transition phrase that means “Here comes a summary”:

In other words, ... Always follow this phrase with a comma.

Prompt 4 – Rationale statements

Why should we do what you are proposing? (3-5 statements)

Your readers usually want to know why they should do something or accept a change or new idea. An easy way to start out answering this question (both for you and for the reader) is to restate part or all of the summary statement, followed by “because”:

*Newman students should be able to participate in events or writing projects that will indicate that they are proficient enough in academic writing to graduate **because** ...*

Then it is simply a matter of answering the question in 3-5 statements.

Example 3.4.3:

Newman students should be able to participate in events or writing projects that will indicate that they are proficient enough in academic writing to graduate **because** there is no test that indicates proficiency – we simply have to see their writing. **Also**, writing is a way to learn other subjects, so should not be measured until the end of their careers rather than at the beginning or halfway through. They should have choices to meet the proficiency **so that** they can play to their strengths – writing in their majors – rather than some empty academic exercise.

Prompt 5 – Procedure statements

What steps must you take to implement your proposal? (3-5 statements)

Your target audience will also want a summary of the **steps** needed to solve the problem or implement the proposal. The most difficult part of this answer is keeping the steps concrete and attainable.

The following step is **not** very attainable:

First, the laws need to be changed.

This may be true, but you, the writer, will not be able to change the laws.

A second problem with the example above is that it is written in the passive voice, which usually means that you do not give anyone the responsibility for taking the step. For example, if you say, “The laws need to be changed,” you do not say *who* needs to do the changing. If you say, “I need to change the laws,” it is now in the active voice. Unfortunately, you still cannot change the laws.

The easiest way to structure a series of procedural statements is to label them as “first,” “second,” or “first,” “then,” or something to that effect. Again, this is a signal to the reader, as well as a framework for you, that identifies this part of the Proposal as a procedure.

Rules of Thumb

- Make each step one that you can physically accomplish yourself.
- Put each of the procedure statements in the active voice.

Example 3.4.4:

The first step towards implementing proficiency is for the university to create opportunities for students to present writing projects or show what they have done in writing. **The next step** is for individual faculty to identify what kinds of writing each student should include in these projects/opportunities. **Once** the faculty does this, students may apply these kinds of writing, as needed, to different projects. **Next**, the English department must create a course for those who do not participate in these projects. **Finally**, for those who do not want to take a course or participate in a project, the English department will develop a comprehensive test.

Prompt 6 – Proposal statement

How can you restate/summarize what you are proposing? (1 statement)

Note

ALL OF THE OTHER SECTIONS OF YOUR PROJECT ARE BASED ON THIS STATEMENT

In other words, all of the writing in your project should be based on the proposal statement. It is the thesis statement of this project.

Example 3.4.5:

I propose that Newman University help students meet their writing proficiency by offering a number of writing project opportunities, along with a course and an exam, from which they may choose, any one of which may meet the proficiency requirement.

Mission Statement

A mission statement for a project like this is usually a single statement, though corporations, organizations, departments, and other groups may have more than one statement. Generally, the shorter the mission statement, the better.

Look at your proposal statement and ask yourself what should happen if your proposal is accepted. In other words, what do you hope to achieve **as a result of** your proposal?

Example 3.4.6: mission statement

The mission of the writing proficiency requirement **is** to promote and increase writing proficiency and research among undergraduates and foster collegiality between students and faculty.

Operating Principle

An operating principle is usually one to three statements that indicate what general principle underlies what you hope to achieve or change. It usually indicates what causes you to want to change things. A principle is a general idea that most people can accept as true and as something upon which you can **base** your proposed actions. An operating principle explains why anyone would want to do what you are proposing.

Look at your proposal statement and ask yourself the general reason or basis that drives your proposed action.

Example 3.4.7: Operating Principle

The driving principle behind organizing a writing proficiency requirement is the notion that writing proficiency informs all disciplines, and so all students improve other cognitive skills (like reading, thinking, speaking, listening) through writing.

Goals/Objectives

Where your mission statement is a general statement that indicates what you hope to achieve, the goals/objectives are a series of **specific statements** that indicate as concretely as possible what you hope to achieve or what changes you wish to bring about.

List, in bullet form, as many specific outcomes you predict for your proposal (at least three). Note the use of a verb at the beginning of each bullet; note, too, the punctuation.

Example 3.4.8: Objectives

The proficiency requirement has **the following objectives**:

- To open a dialogue about writing on campus;
- Help students see the value in writing as a way to learn outside their regular courses;
- Implement a project-based pedagogy for important student writings;
- Allow students more than one way to fulfill proficiency requirement;
- Add no new staff or faculty;
- Make the program self-sufficient (economically);
- Implement a Writing Across the Curriculum/Writing Intensive program without adding people, programs, or required courses;
- Implement without altering the core requirement;
- Implement without imposing objectives, methods of instruction, or methods for assessment upon or within individual courses, majors, programs, or core courses;
- Allow students as much time as possible to meet proficiency;

- Include transfer students.

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3.5: Executive Summary

The **Executive Summary** serves as a **context** for the Proposal and the rest of the project. It is usually a specific history of what has (or has not) been done to address the problem or need. In general, the Executive Summary gives a timeline of events, identifies people, and otherwise narrates the background for the project. It answers the question, “What has happened so far, and who has been included when, in relation to this proposal/problem?”

As a summary, this is a short section (1 page maximum) that tells the reader a little background or history of the problem.

Example 3.5.1: Executive Summary

In 2004, a Writing Center was established and a director for the Center was hired. Also in 2004, the university hired a composition specialist to coordinate the improvement of the program a little at a time. The Writing Center has aggressively sought to aid students and to advertise its offerings. After the Center was successfully established and the composition specialist was in place, a program was designed to stabilize the placement of incoming freshmen into writing classes. Two pilot systems were used: one was a “directed self-placement” process and the other was a sample writing system. We found that the sample writing worked well enough for the size of incoming classes, but the “directed self-placement” is better for larger incoming classes (above 200). The result of this placement adjustment was an increase in the number of sections of Fundamentals of Writing. The next step was to establish writing classrooms in computer rooms. This is now done with half of the College Writing 1 and Fundamentals of Writing classes. The English department then decided on a standard reader to help make those courses more consistent.

After an accreditation visit, a plan to assess learning across the university was created. This plan featured writing as one of three components that help assess student learning. It eventually came to be modeled after a national accreditation plan, which includes a pre-test/post-test pattern. The learning assessment plan also calls for a midlevel (sophomore) writing assessment.

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3.6: Review of the Literature

A Review of the Literature is a series of summaries. Each one summarizes a single outside source. Each source should directly address some idea in your proposal, or provide an example of how your proposal works for others, or provide an example of how your proposal should NOT work, or addresses your mission, operating principle, or goals, or in some way adds information about your proposal.

What kinds of sources may I use?

With the Rule of Thumb adjacent in mind, the format for each source may come from places like academic articles, magazine articles, book chapters, book reviews, news reports, government reports, organization web pages, blogs, encyclopedias, dictionaries, personal interviews (of authorities on the subject), abstracts, introductions, statistics, data, studies, cases, and so on.

Rule of Thumb

Each outside source should be by a different person or group. Each source should be one that is recognized as legitimate by the person/people to whom you intend to present your proposal.

How many should I use?

Use at least 5 different sources and different formats. For example, if you use 3 personal interviews, that counts as one format and you need at least 4 more sources or formats. In other words, do not use all of the same format or all of the same source for your 5 summaries.

Where do I find them?

For sources, start with those with which you are familiar and are appropriate to the context of the problem. For example, if you are proposing some sort of change in athletics policies at the university, sports magazines and articles, coaches, athletes, policy manuals, brochures, web sites, and blogs are OK as sources for your information (but you are not limited to these). However, those same kinds of sources may NOT be appropriate for, say, proposing a lawn business start-up, or designing an education web page, or suggesting software for use in a medical office, or organizing a local network or support group, and so on.

Once you use up familiar sources, go to search protocols, like Google or Google scholar, the library periodicals search, and simply asking others where they might find information about your proposal.

Rule of Thumb

Avoid long sources, like books or long articles. If you use these, look for shorter sections or chapters on which you can concentrate.

What do I do once I find something I want to use?

Be sure that you collect the following information from every source you use:

- Quotable words, phrases, sentences, or passages.

For anything online that you think you might use, copy all the text of the page or article into a blank document and save that document to read, print, and/or study. Later, you may copy and paste quotes – and you must use quotation marks around any material you copy – so that you do not make any mistakes transposing quoted material.

- Who – the person you got the information from.
For printed materials, that is the author or authors. For non-print sources, that may be a contact for an interview or the organization that put together a catalog, brochure, or web page.
- When – the date of publication or the date you accessed the information.
- Where – the publisher, the book, the web site that your particular web page is a part of, the name of the journal, and so on.
- What – the title of the work or source.

Rule of Thumb

Submit each summary to the instructor as you finish it, so that you know how format (and what mistakes to avoid) in the ones that you finish later.

What do I do after I collect the information above from a source?

Once you find a source you want to summarize, use the questions below to create a summary for each source.

Prompts

Here are the questions to answer in order to structure **each** of your summaries:

1. What is the **type** of source, the **title** of the source, the **author** of the source, and a one-phrase **description** of the entire work? (Web sources may not show author)
2. What is a detailed description/summary of **each part** of the source?
3. What are the **goals** or what is the **point** to the project or source you are summarizing?
4. How does your source accomplish the **goals** or make the **point**?
5. **Who** does the author seem to be speaking to, or who does he or she seek to help/inform?
6. **Where** does the goal seem to best apply (in what context or situation)?
7. **When** does the goal seem to apply best (at what point in life, or school, or some process, or some point in time)?
8. How do you assign a value to (**evaluate**) the main idea, goals, methods, and/or other information within the source?

Template/Draft

Example 3.6.1: Summary 1

On the **website** “NSU Undergraduate Research Day,” www.nsuok/urd, **the coordinators** lay out a series of requirements for submitting projects to Undergraduate Research Day. **One** webpage answers Frequently Asked Questions such as “When Is the Deadline for Submission?” and “How Do We Get Started?” **On another** page, there is a sample project, which is laid out in poster form. **Each part** of the poster is annotated with a visual (an arrow) indicating what that part should have. **There is also** a Registration page where we can send information or just request more information about that event. **The goal** for this event, as stated, is to “encourage guided undergraduate research and to share findings with the university community (“Research Day” home). **They accomplish this** by announcing the spring event at the beginning of the previous fall semester, giving the place to begin (their website), defining who is eligible, and listing awards and prizes. Submissions go to a committee for initial review, then to the various departments for a fuller review. Every entrant gets a bookmark, every accepted project’s author(s) get a book bag, and winners get first, second, honorable mention. The “Best of the Best” award goes to the most outstanding project from each School. All awards carry a 50- dollar stipend as well. **All of this seems to be aimed at** students who do well-researched projects by recognizing their efforts. **It seems appropriate for** adding undergraduates to the academic community and to the academic “discourse.” For some students, this event seems to come at a critical **time** in their university careers. The whole idea of a day where everyone finds out what others are researching and/or writing about **is valuable I think because** we find out that it is not that mysterious to do research, there is lots of help available, the recognition is good for resumes, it mirrors the kinds of things people in individual fields do anyway, and the lunch that day is free.

Tutorial

How to answer the prompts

Prompt 1

What is the **type** of source, the **title** of the source, the **author** of the source, and a one-phrase **description** of the entire work? (Web sources may not show author)

The first statement in each summary should answer the question above:

On the website “NSU Undergraduate Research Day,” the coordinators lay out a series of requirements for submitting projects to Undergraduate Research Day.

On the website	←	type of source	
“NSU Undergraduate Research Day,”	←	title	
the coordinators	←	author	
lay out a series of requirements for submitting projects to Undergraduate Research Day.	←	summary description	(3.6.1)

Prompt 2

What is a detailed description/summary of **each part** of the source?

The next few statements (3-5) should summarize or describe each section or part of the source:

Example 3.6.2:

One webpage answers Frequently Asked Questions such as “When Is the Deadline for Submission?” and “How Do We Get Started?” **On another** page there is a sample project, which is laid out in poster form. **Each part** of the poster **is** annotated with a visual (an arrow) indicating what that part should have. **There is also** a Registration page where we can send information or just request more information about that event.

Prompt 3

What are the **goals** or what is the **point** to the project or source you are summarizing?

Ask yourself what the point to the source/information is, or what goal or goals seem to be the aim of the selection, and answer in a single statement:

Example 3.6.3:

The goal for this event, as stated, **is** to “encourage guided undergraduate research and to share findings with the university community” (“Research Day” home).

Prompt 4

How does your source accomplish the goals or make the point?

Describe in at least 3 statements the steps or events that lead your source to the outcome or solution at which it arrives:

Example 3.6.4:

They accomplish this by announcing the spring event at the beginning of the previous fall semester, giving the place to begin (their website), defining who is eligible, and listing awards and prizes. Submissions go to a committee for initial review, then to the various departments for a fuller review. Every entrant gets a bookmark, every accepted project’s author(s) get a book bag, and winners get first, second, honorable mention. The “Best of the Best” award goes to the most outstanding project from each School. All awards carry a 50-dollar stipend as well.

Prompt 5

Who does the author seem to be speaking to, or who does he or she seek to help/inform?

In a single statement, identify the audience the author seems to be speaking to:

Example 3.6.5:

All of this seems to be aimed at students who do well-researched projects by recognizing their efforts.

Prompt 6

Where does the goal seem to best apply (in what context or situation)?

In a single statement, speculate as to where, or in what situation, or in what context, the goal seem to fit or apply:

Example 3.6.6:

It seems appropriate for adding undergraduates to the academic community and to the academic “discourse.”

Prompt 7

When does the goal seem to apply best (at what point in life, or school, or some process, or some point in time)?

In a single statement, try to place on a timeline when the goal seems most appropriate:

Example 3.6.7:

For some students, this event seems to come at a critical **time** in their university careers.

Prompt 8

How do you assign a value to (**evaluate**) the main idea, goals, methods, and/or other information within the source?

In a single statement, sum up what you think of, or what your reaction is to, the source or article as a whole. This is your chance to assign a value to what you just read. Is it helpful? Original? Flawed? Too short? Useful? Give it a value (that is, **evaluate** it) and explain why you think that is its value:

The whole idea of a day where everyone finds out what others are researching and/or writing about **is valuable I think because** we find out that it is not that mysterious to do research, there is lots of help available, the recognition is good for resumes, it mirrors the kinds of things people in individual fields do anyway, and the lunch that day is free.

Rule of Thumb

Include as many sources as you can find. A good guide for how many sources to use is the average number of sources each of your sources cites. **The minimum number for sources is 5.**

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3.7: Rationale

Overview

The Rationale is an explanation of **why** your proposal is necessary and useful, and for whom. A Rationale provides an evaluation of your proposal for the audience, in the sense that it **assigns value** to the proposal. In other words, it explains the good qualities and characteristics of the proposal.

checklist

Draft Checklist:

- ___ Reasons the proposal is needed
- ___ Who the proposal is for
- ___ Source for your information about who and why
- ___ Where the need comes from
- ___ Source for information about need
- ___ Cause for need
- ___ Source for information about cause
- ___ Outcomes of proposal
- ___ Source for information about outcomes
- ___ Reasons this is a good idea
- ___ Reasons this should be implemented
- ___ Proposal compared to other proposal for same need

Prompts

Prompts from Draft Checklist:

1. **Why** is the proposed solution needed?
2. **Who** will it impact or affect specifically (positively and negatively)?
3. **How do you know** it is needed and who it will affect?
4. **Where** does this need seem to come from?
5. **How do you know** this is where it seems to come from?
6. What **causes** this to be a need?
7. **How do you know** this is cause?
8. **What will change** if your proposal is accepted?
9. **How do you know** this will change?
10. Why is this a **good** idea (why is it important)?
11. Why should your proposal be **implemented**?
12. What is something this proposal **is better than**?

Template/Draft

Template/Draft from Prompts:

Rationale

Scholar's Day **is needed (because)** to respond to a general call from faculty that student writing needs to be improved. Implementing this event **will impact (who?)** those students who wish to submit a paper to Scholar's Day in order to avoid the

Proficiency Exam that is required for graduation. Even if their papers are not accepted, they may indicate proficiency. **This will also affect** faculty who are chosen by students who are submitting papers to sponsor them. Faculty will guide and help students develop papers or essays that are worthy of submission. **I know this will work because** many institutions successfully sponsor university-wide annual Research Days or other events designed to highlight student and faculty work across disciplines.

The need for this event seems to come from a tendency to see writing papers as an empty academic exercise, rather than a way to learn and to better make our research, activities, arguments, and observations known to the community. **This seems to be true** of students and faculty alike who see writing as a needless chore, which it is when artificially assigned in artificial situations in an academic setting. Probably any class we ask will admit that writing is too slow and of very little value, especially when there seems to be no new information in classes where writing is the central activity. **The cause for** this need for a proficiency exam is probably a lack of understanding about teaching and learning about composition in elementary and secondary school curricula. The focus is on interpretation and self-expression, which only applies to a few college-level classes. **We only have to** ask a science, business, or history professor **to find that** these ways to write do not seem to apply well to their disciplines.

If we implement a Scholar's Day-type activity university-wide, **some changes might include better writing across disciplines, more professor/student collaboration,** a shift in attitudes about why we write and what academic writing is, less plagiarism, more good ideas put into print, and so on. **I know this can happen because** it happens at many other universities and even junior colleges and high schools. **This is a good idea because** we cannot expect two semesters of college writing and a few writing-intensive courses to equal proficiency in any field. **This proposal should be implemented because** writing proficiency rises at those places that have already implemented similar programs. **This idea** – that student writing may be improved by working toward a “presentable” paper with a faculty mentor, teacher, or sponsor – **is better than** asking students to write empty, academic exercises in a way none of us do on a professional level.

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3.8: Action Steps

Overview

This section is **the plan** for implementing your proposal. It should be specific, tangible, and easily followed. The language you use should be simple and to the point. It is perfectly acceptable to use bullets, numbers, or any other form of organization to outline the steps. I have used a combination of narrative and bulleted list to outline my steps to implementing my proposal. This section addresses the following questions:

Example 3.8.1: Template/Draft

Action Steps

In order to achieve the stated objective of implementing a “seamless” writing program at Newman University, **we have taken the following steps.** **First**, in 2004, a Writing Center was established and a director for the Center was hired. Also in 2004, the university hired a composition specialist to coordinate the improvement of the program a little at a time. The Writing Center has aggressively sought to aid students and to advertise its offerings. **After** the Center was successfully established, **the next step was** to stabilize the placement of incoming freshmen into writing classes. Two pilot systems were used: one was a “directed self-placement” process and the other was a sample writing system. We found that the sample writing worked well enough for the size of incoming classes, but the “directed self-placement” is better for larger incoming classes (above 200). **The result of this** placement adjustment **was** an increase in the number of sections of Fundamentals of Writing. **The next step** was to establish writing classrooms in computer rooms. This is now done with half of the College Writing 1 and Fundamentals of Writing classes. The English department **then** decided on a standard reader to help make those courses more consistent.

From this point, we recommend the following steps. **First**, an assessment system should be put into place. This system should be based on student “outcomes,” which means we, as a department, should decide what students should be able to do when they leave a course. This should be divided into writing courses and courses in the English major. The assessment should be measurable and occur regularly. **Once** a system is **established**, data should be collected and assessed annually by the department to see where we can improve and what is working.

Secondly, a system for implementing, monitoring, assessing, and changing a Writing Across the Curriculum program should be articulated. We propose implementing a project-based system, in conjunction with a proficiency requirement, that insures that every student graduates from Newman with a minimal level of mastery in writing skills. **To do this**, we will have to work backwards from a list of “outcomes” (skills) that a graduate must have and create a proficiency exam from those skills. However, we do not want to test every student. We want the emphasis to be on student writing projects that will also meet the proficiency. **Once** the skills for graduation are identified, **they may be applied** to any project that a student develops in writing during his or her career at Newman. **They may also be** listed in a student handbook so that the requirements for proficiency are stated from the first day a student arrives. In other words, a student may do one of the following by the beginning of his or her senior year to meet the writing proficiency:

- Take the Writing Proficiency course and pass (pass/no pass; no pass take the course again)
- Submit an approved article-length project to an academic conference or publication (submission with sponsorship)
- Submit a portfolio with graded papers that show proficiency
- Take the Writing Proficiency Exam (pass/no pass; a “no pass” must enroll in proficiency course)

Once the guidelines for proficiency **are established and** the choices for students **are in place**, the outcomes should include:

- A closer faculty/student working relationship on projects for submission to conferences and publications
- An attitude of ownership and inquiry on the part of students
- A Writing Across the Curriculum program that occurs without any additional administrative responsibility
- A simpler method for assessing student mastery of academic writing prior to graduation.
- A greater interest in teaching writing (secondary education English majors)
- A framework for implementing a Masters in English (with graduate teaching assistants)

Implementing a Masters program **will make the** writing program “seamless” in the sense that all levels of writing are addressed, including placement, remediation, second-language acquisition, first-year writing, writing support systems, cross-curricular writing, co-authorship (with a faculty sponsor), writing across campus, pedagogy, teacher-training, and scholarship in writing.

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3.9: Data Analysis

Overview

This will likely be your largest section. Data is the information you collected in your Review of Literature that supports the details of your proposal. In this section, you arrange that information into easily digested presentations. This section should be in text (sentences and paragraphs), but it is important to provide charts, graphs, and illustrations for quick reference by your audience. These may be included in this section or in an Appendix at the end of the project.

Step 1 – Gathering Information

Use the prompts below to collect as much information as you can about your proposal. Too much is better than not enough. Start with the same sources as you used in your Review of Literature, but do not limit yourself. Any illustrations that you find in your search for information may be copied and pasted, as long as you identify the source.

Prompts

Cost Analysis prompts:

- How much do you estimate this project will cost?
- What are the initial costs?
- Where will the funding come from?
- How will it be sustained?
- Will you need a sponsor or underwriter?

Staffing Estimates prompts:

- Who will staff the project?
- Is this a new position or positions?
- Where will the staff fit into the flow chart?
- Will there be support staff needed?

Training Requirements prompts:

- With the new project, who will need training?
- Who will do that training?
- Will you need outside trainers or consultants?
- Are there training opportunities available?
- For what cost?

Staff Responsibilities prompts:

- Who will be responsible for what?
- What are the job descriptions for each new position?

Site Changes prompts:

- What changes in the site (office space, rooms, equipment, materials, etc.) will be necessary?

Timeline prompts:

- What is a timeline for implementing this project?

Assessment prompts:

- How will feedback, evaluations, or other assessment be collected and used?

Step 2 – Arranging Information

Arrange your information in visual ways. You may simply arrange some of it as a bulleted list, like the arrangement of the questions, above. Other ways to organize include charts and graphs, tables, flow charts, matrices, priority lists, timelines, slides, cluster diagrams, hierarchical diagrams, and so on. Your word processing program contains many graphics options built in.

Many people find it useful to arrange information initially in a planning **matrix**. Use the examples below to transfer information from the bulleted list to some other graphic.

If “costs,” for example, is the driving principle behind your proposal, list it first:

Matrix

	New Position	Who Responsible	Site Changes	Timeline
Costs	?	?	?	?
New position?	Job description	Who trains?	?	?
Source?	Hierarchy	?	?	?
Start up?	?	?	?	?
Income/profits?	?	?	?	?
How sustained?	?	?	?	?

List the bullet points from under “costs” down the left side of the matrix and the other categories of data along the top. Fill in the blanks as you can. A “costs-driven” matrix lends itself to graphs and charts:

Graph

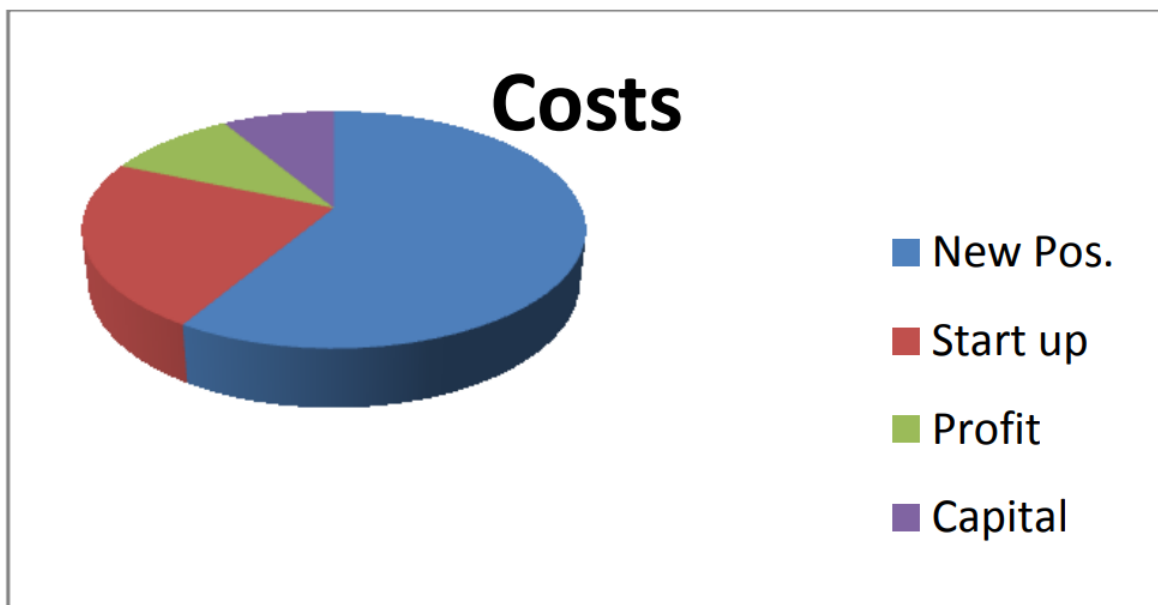


Figure 3.9.1

Your planning may be “event” driven, or driven by what has to happen in sequence before your proposal is accepted:

Event-Driven

What	Who	Where	When	How much
Hire new people	Boss	Main office	Within 6 weeks	Salary Job

A **flow chart** is one way to illustrate events:

Flow Chart



Figure 3.9.2

If your project is driven by a **timeline**, use “date” on the top, left and list dates down the side:

Date	What	Where	Who	How much
Dec 07	Blueprints		Lead contractor →	
Jan 15 08	6-7K		administration	
May	Contact schedule		Liaison	

A **timeline** is a good way to illustrate, well, time:

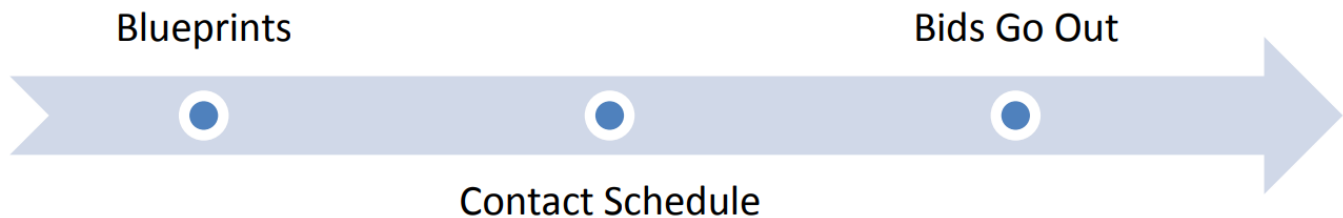


Figure 3.9.3 - Timeline

Step 3 – Put information into text

Provide explanations for whichever format you choose. Use at least one sentence for each horizontal line in your planning matrix. For example, if you choose the “Timeline” format, please provide something like the following:

Example 3.9.1:

In December of 2007, the lead contractor should provide the administration with a written, viable set of blueprints. The cost for this should be in the 6-7 thousand dollar range. The following January, the administration’s liaison meets to establish contact schedule.

[And so on, putting the Who, What, Where, and How Much into prose form for each When (date)]

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3.10: Conclusion

Prompts

- What do I see as a need for some local entity?
- Why is it important that this change?
- Why else is it important?
- Why is it important to be implemented in the way I (we) propose?
- What is the outcome (result) of implementing this proposal?

Example 3.10.1: Draft

Conclusion

I **believe** that Newman **needs** a writing proficiency requirement for graduation. A writing proficiency requirement **is important because**, in simple terms, we want to graduate students who are not only literate in academic writing skills but are well prepared for writing in the workplace. Establishing a proficiency **is also very important because** it forces the university to articulate what academic writing skills are important for all students to master before they graduate. Once skills are identified, all writing activities may be oriented toward these skills. **It is also important because** these same skills may be measured. However, because writing proficiency is extremely difficult to measure in a test, other activities that prove proficiency must be implemented. This gives students options outside of testing to prove they have mastered academic writing. Having proficiency outlined as a series of demonstrable skill also allows their mastery to be accelerated; they may be learned starting the first day a student attends the university. **This requirement is important also because** that fear that a majority of students seem to have for college writing is allayed to some degree because they know in advance what they have to learn, as well as what opportunities they have to show mastery, and that they have a number of chances to show it before they graduate.

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3.11: Additions to the Project

Appendices

If your project calls for any extensive documentation, or pages in a manual, or a questionnaire, or maps, or job descriptions, or resumes, detailed charts, or lesson/unit plans, or any material that seems lengthy or detailed for the proposal/project itself, then it should be in an **Appendix**. If you have one item, put the word **Appendix**, centered, at the top of a page by itself. Then put the item behind that page.

If you have more than one **Appendix**, format each in the same way, only listed by letter and followed by a short, descriptive title: **Appendix A: Sample Essays**; **Appendix B: Map of England**; and so on. Each should appear in the Table of Contents. The order of appendices should be in the order each item is first referenced in the project.

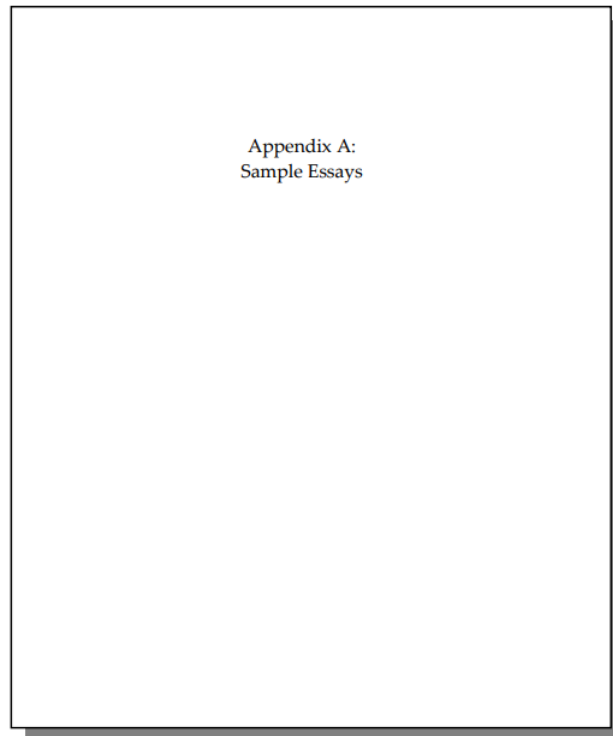


Figure 3.11.1

Annotated Bibliography

An **Annotated Bibliography** is simply a list of sources you have used (like a Bibliography or Works Cited), except that each source has a three- to five-sentence summary. The process for writing an **Annotated Bibliography** begins with the source you are reading, like an article or some other passage or text.

Rule of Thumb

Use the first two or three lines of each of your summaries from the Review of the Literature section for each entry in the Annotated Bibliography.

- Record the author, title, source (if it is in another, larger text, like an anthology, periodical, or journal), where published and by whom, and when published (see a good grammar handbook for specific rules).
- While reading the source, underline key passages and new terms.
- Summarize each section (break it into 3 to 5 sections) with a sentence.
- Quote key passages and define new terms in your sentences.

Repeat the process for each source. Here is an example of an Annotated Bibliography:

Template/Draft

Example 3.11.1:

Annotated Bibliography

Barnett, Jules. Reading and Writing in the Modes. New York: St. Martin's Press, 1995.

This book outlines the basic language structures (modes) that students recognize and learn to emulate when practicing writing. The author notes that most modes transfer from speaking to writing, but "... subtle manipulation is required of the print medium when aiming for particular effects ..." in readers (92). Also of note is the emphasis on transition phrases that make up the modes; the author asserts that learning these transition phrases is what is missing from language instruction in most school settings.

Garcia, Jerry. Not the One You are Thinking. Fort Worth: Harcourt Brace, 1994.

The author first relates his history as a celebrity double in a series of anecdotes that are noteworthy for their humor as well as their randomness. Next, he broadens his quasi-autobiography into a rambling narrative that reveals his philosophy of "ice-cream politics," which he describes as the "I scream, you scream" dichotomy of social interactions (63). The book seems to unravel near the end, turning to scientology as a way to deal with the world.

Malone, Lee V. "Along the Watchtower." College English 39 (1977): 449-61.

In this article, Malone compares the teaching of college writing to song lyrics of sixties musicians. He claims that the lyrics reflected a modernist style, with many of the same devices that T. S. Eliot used in his poetry. He postulates that modern students, who "... dig for the kernel of Meaning ..." in whatever they read, are disappointed when meaning is sacrificed for effect (452). The point seems to be that current writing instructors fall into the same trap when teaching analysis in a world that puts a premium on meaning over effect.

Glossary

A **Glossary** is like a mini-dictionary, and is arranged and formatted like a dictionary that lists **specialized terms that appear throughout your proposal**. It should be in alphabetical order with a short definition after each term or phrase.

If your proposal has a large number (10 or more) of highly specialized words, terms, or phrases that your audience may not understand, or that you are using in a specialized way, and that you use throughout the proposal, provide a **Glossary**.

Example 3.11.2: Template/Draft

Glossary

Directed Self-Placement: Students place themselves in Writing classes, but with specific directions.

Heuristics: Series of questions whose answers form a writing mode.

Institutionalization: The process of ad hoc or informal actions becoming formalized and appropriated by an institution.

Kairos: Being in the right place at the right time, and saying the right (effective) thing.

Presentation

This is where you place a hard copy, or an outline, or some other reproduction of the **Presentation** of your proposal into your project. If it is a PowerPoint (see below), then you may print it and insert it here.

Power Point (from eHow)

The **PowerPoint software program** allows you to create slide presentations that can be viewed on any computer. While some graphic artists specialize in developing compelling presentations, anyone can develop a PowerPoint slide presentation that is attractive and readable. Follow these steps to develop your own slide show.

General Steps (from eHow)

1. **Open your PowerPoint program.** When the dialog box opens, click on the "Blank Presentation" option.
2. **Choose an "AutoLayout" format.** Begin with the title slide layout, which is the first one on the left. Click "OK," and you will have a title slide to work with.
3. **Add text to your slide** by clicking in the title text box and typing a title. Do the same thing in the subtitle box.
4. **Create another slide** by clicking the "New Slide" button on the Common Tasks toolbar. When the AutoLayout dialog box appears, choose a layout for this slide. Keep adding new slides until your presentation is complete.
5. **Move from slide to slide** by clicking the button on the lower-right corner of the PowerPoint window. Clicking the button with the upward-pointing arrows will take you to the previous slide, and clicking the button with the downward-pointing arrows will take you to the next slide.
6. **Save your presentation.** Click the "File" menu and then click "Save As." A dialog box will appear, and you'll be able to type in a name for your presentation. The presentation will be saved to your hard drive

Use the following link for a detailed tutorial on PowerPoint: <http://office.microsoft.com/training...RC011298761033>

Design Principles

CREATING AN EFFECTIVE POWERPOINT PRESENTATION:

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Planning and creating a PowerPoint presentation needn't be difficult or stressful. Use these guidelines to improve the quality of your presentation.

Content is the most important part of your presentation.

1. **The quality of the research.** The topic should be thoroughly researched, with a number of different sources. Using visual images? Make sure they are appropriate to the point(s) you wish to make, and be certain that you know the specifics on each image (who? what? when? where? how?).
2. **Organization and transition.** There should be a logical flow from beginning to end, like in written work. Avoid jumping from one point to another, and be careful about adding information that is not directly related to the main theme. Strongly consider drawing up an outline before you begin assembling the actual slides.

Strengthen the visual part of your presentation.

1. **The "joy of six" is a helpful rule of thumb.** Use a maximum of six points per slide and six words per point.
2. **Use text sparingly.** Depending on the color and font size you select, text may be difficult to read. In addition, if your audience is concentrating on written text, they are most likely not giving you their complete attention.
3. **Select colors with care.** Experiment with color combinations, but make sure they work well on a screen--there is often a difference between how something looks on your computer screen and how it appears when projected onto a screen or wall. If possible, preview your presentation ahead of time.
4. **Keep unity of design from slide to slide.** Using one, or several, of the master slides provided in PowerPoint can help avoid problems of this nature.
5. **Font size is important--use the "floor test" for readability.** Print out a slide containing text, then place the page on the floor. Can you read the slide from a standing position? If yes, then your audience can likely read it from their seats. If no, then the font size needs to be increased. Previewing your presentation in the room you'll be using? Walk to the back of the room--if you can't easily read the slides, your audience won't be able to either.
6. **Minimize or avoid animated texts, sounds, and fancy transitions.** These can be effective in certain situations, but often distract your audience from the main points you are making.
7. **Avoid switching between programs (such as calling up a Web page).** This takes extra time and can make it difficult for your audience to remain focused on your presentation.
8. **Do you want people to take notes during your presentation?** Leave them sufficient time to do so.
9. **Timing.** Use three slides per minute as a maximum.

10. **Visual images can be great**, but they need to be selected carefully and be appropriate to the point(s) you want to make. Watch size, too--images too small are not helpful. And if formatting visual images to fit a slide, be sure to keep the dimensions of the original!

FOCUS – PLAN – PRACTICE

FOCUS on the main point(s) you want to make.

PLAN the layout of your presentation. This means carefully considering each slide, as well as the presentation as a whole. Does everything fit together?

PRACTICE your entire presentation at least once before you present it to your audience. Most helpful is projecting your presentation onto a screen, in order to see exactly how your audience will view it. If possible, have someone watch and listen, then ask questions about anything that they find unclear--rather face a difficult question from one person than in front of an audience!

Letter

Letter, Memo, and email format

Whether you are writing a letter or email to invite someone to your presentation, or writing a letter or email to the editor, or a complaint letter or email, or a memo to other students or colleagues, or any other formal writing to a group or someone you do not know personally, the format is essentially the same:

Template/Prompts

Date

Salutation,

Why am I writing to you?

What do you need to know in particular about the reason I am writing?

Where and when will this take place? Who else will be involved? How can you reach me if you need more information?

Thank you.

Your Name

Example 3.11.3: Draft

September 16, 2007

Dear Dr. Hane,

I am writing to invite you to a presentation about proposing an Annual Writing Day for Newman University.

This is a project aimed at improving writing across the curriculum for all Newman students. To get the process started and invite discussion, I have a short (10-minute) PowerPoint presentation that outlines the main points of my proposal. I have spent the last year researching, conducting focus groups, and brainstorming with faculty and students in order to offer some suggestions that fit Newman uniquely.

I have scheduled the presentation for Friday, November 17th, at 3 pm in DeMattias Hall, room 242. I don't think it will take more than an hour, unless additional discussion is necessary. I have invited a few other faculty and several students to attend as well. Please let me know if you can be there or if you want more information. You can reach me at this email address or 316-942-4291.

Thank you.

Steve Poulter

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

4: Critical and Literary Analysis

Critical Analysis is sometimes also called Expository writing, Interpretation, Reader Response, and Critical Analysis

- [4.1: Overview](#)
- [4.2: Introduction](#)
- [4.3: Body of a Critical Analysis](#)
- [4.4: Reader Analysis](#)
- [4.5: Text Analysis](#)
- [4.6: Author Analysis](#)
- [4.7: Context Analysis](#)
- [4.8: Conclusion](#)

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4.1: Overview

What is a Critical Analysis?

A “critical analysis” is a writing that seeks to more deeply understand a text, particularly a literary writing, by examining it from different perspectives. We will accomplish this by writing one paper, one step at a time, until it is perfect. Fortunately, the steps are laid out explicitly in the pages that follow, and in this order:

1. Close Reading (Summary) followed by the critical perspectives:
2. Reader Analysis
3. Text Analysis
4. Author Analysis
5. Context Analysis
6. Conclusion

Here “Critical” means “from a particular perspective” and “Analysis” means “looking at parts.”

What is a Close Reading?

A “close reading” means essentially **answering the questions** in the Summary/Introduction section below. In other words, if we are able to answer the Summary/Introduction questions, then we have accomplished a close reading, as well as an introduction to our paper.

Sections of a Critical Analysis

Note

These sections represent a cross-section of critical analysis and typically do not appear all together in the same analysis.

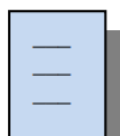
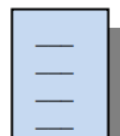
Introduction →		Summary (Close Reading) of the text(s) or subject under review
Reader Analysis →		First Impression Favorite Lines Different Perspectives Selective Reading
Text Analysis →		<i>(requires familiarity with terminology)</i> Text Strategies Patterns Literary Perspectives
Author Analysis →		<i>(requires research)</i> Biographical Social Gendered Psychoanalytical
Context Analysis →		<i>(requires research)</i> Historical
Conclusion →		Conclusion to your Critical Analysis
Works Cited →		

Figure 4.1.1 - Sections of a Critical Analysis

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4.2: Introduction

Overview

The **Introduction** to a Critical Analysis can be written any number of ways. However, unless you are told otherwise by your instructor, a good way to construct an Introduction is in the same way you construct a **Summary**. This is true because the last sentence of a Summary (as directed in this book) is a **Thesis** statement and so can serve to introduce the reader to your topic or claim.

To begin a Summary/Introduction, read the selection you choose once through. Make one or two-word notes in your textbook margins to remind you what the paragraphs or sections or your whole selection seem to be saying. Underline words you do not recognize or seem to be used in a way with which you are not familiar. In order to start writing, you will have to decide what kind of writing your selection is primarily (is it primarily a narrative? Is it a description? Is it an argument? Is it an article? Is it a speech? Is it a historical account? – until you are sure, just use the word “selection”).

Checklist

Draft Checklist

- ___ Title, author, summary statement
- ___ Summary of each part of text
- ___ Point or main idea of text
- ___ Quote from text
- ___ Paraphrase of quote
- ___ Audience for text
- ___ Where point of text best applies
- ___ When point of ext best applies
- ___ What you believe to be true (or important, or striking, etc.) about the point

Prompts

checklist

Prompts from Draft Checklist:

1. **In the selection** (what is the title?), the author (who is the author?) **seems to be** saying, suggesting, doing, or calling for what (in the whole reading)?
2. **In the first part** of the selection (out of three to five sections), the author says or does what?
3. **In the next part**, the author says or does what?
4. **Finally**, the author says or does what?
5. What seems to be **the point** or main idea of the selection?
6. What is one phrase, passage, or sentence quoted from the selection that **best sums up this point**?
7. How can I **paraphrase** the passage(s) where the point or main idea is expressed?
8. The point seems to be **for, about, or aimed at whom**?
9. **Where** does the point seem to apply most (in what context or situations)?
10. **When** does the point seem to apply best?
11. In the selection as a whole, you (the student) **believe** what to be true about the point? (Note: this can be your **Thesis** statement).

Template/Draft from Prompts

Introduction

In the short speech “I Am Tired of Fighting,” Chief Joseph **seems to be** lamenting **that** his people have been annihilated and he declares his intention to stop fighting. **In the opening** statement, Chief Joseph declares his weariness with fighting. **He continues by** listing by name all the people he has lost to death or hardship. **Finally**, Chief Joseph repeats his lamentation that he is tired and “will fight no more forever.” **The point that** Chief Joseph **seems to be making in this** surrender speech is that fighting has destroyed his world and will destroy anyone’s world who must be involved in war.

This point is best summed up when he says, “From where the sun stands I will fight no more forever.” “From where the sun stands” **seems to be saying** from this moment in time, everywhere, and for all people, **which indicates** the “universality” of his statement. “I will fight no more” **states plainly** his desire to give up the battle. **It is with** the last word in the passage, “I will fight no more forever,” **that he reveals** the depths of his despondency. **The point seems to be** both for his chiefs (“Hear me, my chiefs, I am tired”) and for any leader anywhere who chooses the path of war over the path to peace and the possible and terrible consequences of such a choice. Such decision-making should not be taken lightly where the loss of a people or a culture or a nation is at stake. **Anytime** the leadership of a nation considers the option of war over other means for settling problems, that **is when** such a declaration as Chief Joseph’s becomes a warning for that leadership. **I think that** Chief Joseph reinforced the finality of his retreat and the futility of fighting any more by speaking shortly and directly, yet very eloquently.

Tutorial

How to answer the prompts.

Open your word processing program to a blank document. Put a heading at the top of the document. Center the words Self Evaluation for the title.

Answer **all** the above questions with at least one complete sentence each (the more the better). Put your sentences together in a paragraph or two. Do not include the questions in your writing.

Read the Selection You Choose

To begin an Introduction, read the selection you choose thoroughly. Here is an example selection of a short reading

Example 4.2.1: Sample Reading

I Am Tired of Fighting

(Surrender Speech – Chief Joseph of the Nez Perce)

I am tired of fighting. Our chiefs are killed. Looking Glass is dead. Toohoolhoolzote is dead. The old men are all dead. It is the young men who say yes and no. He who led on the young men is dead. It is cold and we have no blankets. The little children are freezing to death. My people, some of them, have run away to the hills and have no blankets, no food. No one knows where they are – perhaps some are freezing to death. I want to have time to look for my children and see how many I can find. Maybe I shall find them among the dead. Hear me, my chiefs, I am tired. My heart is sick and sad. From where the sun stands I will fight no more forever.

Then answer each prompt below about the reading.

Prompt 1

(1 sentence, indented)

In the selection (what is the title?), **the author** (who is the author?) **seems to be saying**, suggesting, doing, or calling for what (in the whole reading)?

The answer to this question forms the opening statement to your Introduction. Use the pattern below to get started. A template for an opening statement to your Introduction:

In the *[insert the kind of writing or the word “selection”] [insert the title of the selection], [insert the author’s name] seems to be [saying, suggesting, etc.] that [insert a sentence-length summary].*

Example 4.2.2: Opening Statement

In the short speech “I Am Tired of Fighting,” Chief Joseph **seems to be** lamenting **that** his people have been annihilated and he declares his intention to stop fighting.

Prompt 2

(at least 1 sentence for each part)

How can I **summarize each section**, part, or structural element of the selection?

For summarizing “the section, part, or structural element” of a selection (a whole reading), you may divide it in any number of ways:

1. First, see if your selection fits into any of particular patterns (or structural elements). Then answer this question using those terms. I called my selection here a “speech,” but its primary structural element seems to be “listing.” This works best for short selections.
2. A second way to summarize parts in a selection is to summarize by paragraph or paragraph groupings. You simply use one sentence for every long paragraph or every group of short paragraphs. This works best for medium-length selections (1 – 4 pages)
3. You may also get lucky and get a selection that is already divided into sections (like sections in the chapter of a textbook). They may even be set off by headings or numbers. In this case, you simply summarize what is said in each section with a sentence or two for each section. If there are no headings, you will have to divide the selection into about 5 – 7 parts yourself. This works best for long selections (5 pages or more).

A **template** for Summary of Parts Statements

In the opening *[insert the section, part, or structural element], [insert last name of author] [does or says what? (insert here)]. He [or she] continues by [insert a summary of the next section, part, or structural element here]. Finally, [insert author’s last name] [insert a summary of the last section, part, or structural element here].*

Prompt 3

(1 sentence)

What seems to be **the point** or main idea of the selection?

Read the whole selection again. Articulate the “message” or “point” that the author seems to be making.

A **template** for Summarizing the Point:

The point that *[insert author’s last name] seems to be making in this [insert type of selection] is [insert what you think the message or point is here].*

Example 4.2.3: Statement for Summarizing the Point

The point that Chief Joseph **seems to be making in this** surrender speech **is** that fighting has destroyed his world and will destroy anyone’s world who must be involved in war

Prompt 4

(1 sentence, with phrase, passage, or sentence quoted)

What is one phrase, passage, or **sentence from the selection** that best sums up this point?

Example 4.2.4:

This point is best summed up when he says, “From where the sun stands I will fight no more forever.”

Prompt 5

(same number of sentences as the passage)

How can I **paraphrase** the passage(s) where the point or main idea is expressed?

A “paraphrase” is a nearly word-for-word summary – in your own words – of a statement or of a series of statements.

Example 4.2.5:

“From where the sun stands” **seems to be saying** “from this moment in time, everywhere, and for all people,” **which indicates** the “universality” of his statement. “I will fight no more” **states plainly** his desire to give up the battle. **It is with** the last word in the passage, “I will fight no more forever,” that he reveals the depths of his despondency.

Prompt 6

(1 sentence)

Who does the point seem to be for or about?

Example 4.2.6:

The point seems to be both **for** his chiefs (“Hear me, my chiefs, I am tired.”) **and for** any leader anywhere who chooses the path of war over the path to peace and the possible and terrible consequences of such a choice.

Prompt 7

(1 sentence)

Where does the point seem to apply most (in what context or situations)?

Example 4.2.7:

The point seems to be both **for** his chiefs (“Hear me, my chiefs, I am tired.”) **and for** any leader anywhere who chooses the path of war over the path to peace and the possible and terrible consequences of such a choice.

Prompt 7

(1 sentence)

Where does the point seem to apply most (in what context or situations)?

Example 4.2.8:

Such decision-making should not be taken lightly **where** the loss of a people or a culture or a nation is at stake.

Prompt 8

(1 sentence)

When does the point seem to apply best?

Example 4.2.9:

Anytime the leadership of a nation considers the option of war over other means for settling problems, that **is when** such a declaration as Chief Joseph’s becomes a warning for that leadership.

Prompt 9

(1 or 2 sentences) (Thesis Statement)How can I summarize the entire selection (as a “thesis”)?

A “**thesis**” is a statement that summarizes what you observe generally to be true about the whole selection as you understand it so far. It should be more specific than your Opening Statement and involve your observation(s) about the selection. This is one way (answering summary questions) to arrive at (or “form”) a thesis statement for an analysis.

Note

You may change your thesis statement at any time; in fact, you should plan on changing this last statement in your summary/introduction many times during the writing of your analysis.

A **template** for a Thesis Statement:

I think that [insert author’s last name] [insert what you observe to be true about the selection in general].

Example 4.2.10:

I think that Chief Joseph reinforced the finality of his retreat and the futility of fighting any more by speaking shortly and directly, yet very eloquently.

Most Common Question: “Why does this ‘thesis’ not look like the thesis sentence in a 5-paragraph essay?”

This does not look like a thesis sentence because it is a thesis statement, which indicates that it is not orthographically determined (determined by printers’ conventions like sentences and paragraphs) but rhetorically determined (determined by the **function** it serves in a larger rhetorical pattern).

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4.3: Body of a Critical Analysis

The Body of a Critical Analysis can be made up of one or more of the Critical Perspectives. What are the Critical Perspectives?

Critical Perspectives

There are generally four ways (or perspectives) for analyzing a text: writing from the perspective of a reader, writing as if the text is an object of study, writing about or from the perspective of an author, and writing about where a text fits into a particular context.

Assuming you want to use all four of the Critical Perspectives in your essay, the body will have these four major sections:

Reader Analysis: A Reader's Perspective

Writing from a reader's perspective means that we seek to understand a text through our own experience, yet we try also to understand how others who may be very different from us seek to understand the same writing through their experience. We will explore this perspective by writing a **first impression**, writing about **favorite lines**, as well as writing **from different perspectives** and through **selective reading**.

Text Analysis: Text as Object

Writing about the text as an object is a perspective that highlights what makes up that text. We will construct this part of our paper by identifying the **patterns**, **segments**, and **strategies** (devices) in the writing you choose to analyze.

Author Analysis: Understanding Text through Author

Examining whatever we can about an author sometimes gives us another perspective with which to deepen our understanding of the writing we choose. We may look at his or her **life**, **thought processes**, **behaviors**, **beliefs**, and so on, in order to further understand his or her work.

Context: Text's Place in History

The fourth perspective from which to view a work has to do with how it fits into a context. This context usually has to do with how a text compares to other texts and works and its effect upon history or society.

Patterns

The Body of a Critical Analysis is further constructed with **patterns** in sections under each Perspective:

Reader Analysis patterns:

- First Impression
- Favorite Lines
- Different Perspectives
- Selective Reading

Text Analysis patterns:

- Text Strategies
- Patterns
- Literary Perspectives

Author Analysis patterns:

- Biographical Information
- Social Information
- Literary Information

Context pattern:

- Historical Information

Note that your instructor may, for example, want only a Reader Response (Reader Analysis) paper, or he or she may want some patterns and not others. However, we will go section-by-section and pattern-by-pattern to create a thorough and complete analysis

of a work.

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4.4: Reader Analysis

Writing from a reader's perspective means that we seek to understand a writing through our own experience, yet we try also to understand how others who may be very different from us seek to understand the same writing through their experience. We will explore this perspective by writing the following sections/paragraphs:

Pattern 1: First Impression

Pattern 2: Favorite Lines

Pattern 3: Different Perspectives

Pattern 4: Selective Reading

First Impression

What is my "First Impression?"

Read the work through carefully one time. Try to get an overall sense of what the work seems to be saying. Answer all the questions below with at least one complete sentence each (the more the better). Put your sentences together in a paragraph or two (or as many as you need). Do not include the questions in your writing. Please put a heading on your document according to MLA conventions. Maximum length: 2 pages.

Prompts

1. What seems to be the (or a) "gist" or **main idea** of the work?
2. What seems to be the (or a) **subject**?
3. What does the author or narrator seem to be saying **literally**?
4. What does the author or narrator seem to be saying if I "**read between the lines**?"
5. What seem to be some "**meaningful**" words?
6. What seems to be a **primary emotion evoked** by the work?
7. What does anything in the work **remind me of**?
8. **Overall**, I find this work _____ (use a descriptive word that seems to describe the whole work.)

Most Common Question: "Why can't I ever figure out what a selection or work of literature means?"

One answer is because many writers try to make you react to a reading and meaning is only secondary to them. For this reason, don't try to "figure out" what a poem, story, article, etc., "means," at least at first. Authors generally don't write by trying to "get a meaning across." Describe what a work is **doing**, or what it **does** to you, or **the effect** the work has on you. Authors generally try to bring about some kind of effect in a reader.

For the same reason, don't "look up" what someone else has said about the work. In general, professional interpreters have very narrow perspectives, and their experience (in life as well as in reading) is usually much different from yours. Their interpretations may seem strange because they are trained in one of those narrow perspectives.

Don't worry about "being right" in your explanation of the work's effect. It will affect everyone differently, sometimes extremely differently. Be honest. Thoughtful and reflective, but honest.

Expect your impressions to change as you read the work throughout the semester.

Template

First Impression

The "gist" of this selection seems to be [insert what you think is the main idea]. **This falls into the subject area of** [insert a broad category that the main idea falls into]. **Literally, the author is saying** [insert a literal paraphrase of the main idea]. **However, if I read between the lines, the author seems to imply** [insert whatever you think the author might be implying]. **The author uses words like** "[insert a word or phrase that seems particularly meaningful to the author in this selection]" **and** "[insert other meaningful words or phrases]." **This work wants me to feel** [insert an emotion, like "angry," or "more aware"]

because [insert the reasons you think the author wants you to feel this way]. **This reminds me of** [insert an experience, another reading, a movie, a situation, or any time you feel or have felt the same way]. **Overall, I find this work** [insert a descriptive word for the whole work].

Draft

Example 4.4.1:

First Impression

The “gist” of this selection seems to be that Chief Joseph is defeated and his proud history and heritage are gone. **This falls into the subject area of** inhumanity and how it can be so eloquently expressed. **Literally, the author is saying** he is surrendering. **However, if I read between the lines, the author seems to imply** that a much greater and terrible deed had taken place. **The author uses words like** “forever,” “dead,” death,” “killed,” “cold,” “we have no blankets,” and “I shall find them among the dead.” **This work wants me to feel** the weariness he feels (he says “I am tired” once at the beginning and once at the end of this very short speech) and the desperation that a leader and a father and a brother feels when one has been overwhelmed by misfortune **because** most of us have some idea about how it feels to be desperate, responsible for helpless people, or related to people we love for whom we can do nothing to help. **This reminds me of** times when I have been overwhelmed by responsibilities that I could do nothing to change or improve, like having a family but not a job. **Overall, I find this work** desperate and hopeless.

Favorite Lines

What are my “Favorite Lines?”

Most readings contain a phrase, a line, a sentence, a short paragraph or some other group of words that we tend to remember, particularly if the work had some kind of impact on us. This line, etc., could be the statement that you quoted in your summary/introduction.

Remembering favorite lines gives us something of great depth to allude to in future writings (as well as in our future lives). This is similar to stating a “famous” line from a play, song, movie, or even a commercial, in order to make a point by alluding to that line.

Here is a line I (sort of) remember:

“Some men look around at the way things are, and ask, ‘Why?’ – I dream about the way things might be, and ask, ‘Why not?’”

If you have never heard that line, it still might have some kind of meaning to you. However, in the context of the play it is (roughly) taken from, it has several more layers of meaning to me. Add to that context the fact that it was roughly quoted by Bobby Kennedy’s brother at Bobby’s funeral, after he and John F. Kennedy had both been assassinated, and that all of those events occurred in my lifetime, and the words have still more dimensions and layers of meaning for me.

How do I choose “Favorite Lines?”

Read the work all the way through once again, or skim the prose in your favorite part or the work. Look and listen for a particular group of words that seem to have the greatest impact upon you. Answer all the questions below with at least one complete sentence each (the more the better). Put your sentences together in a paragraph or two (or as many as you need). Do not include the questions in your writing.

Prompts

1. What line (or group of words or **phrases**) **particularly strike me** personally?
2. In what **context** are these words placed?
3. Of what **situations** in my life do these words remind me?
4. Of what **people** in my life do these words remind me?
5. Of what **places** in my life do these words remind me? Of what **emotions** in my life do these words remind me?
6. Of what events in my life do these words remind me?
7. To what kind of **people in general** do I think these words might have particular meaning?

8. To what **people in particular** (people I know) do I think these words might have particular meaning?

Template

Favorite Lines

Something that strikes me about this reading is when the author says, “[insert a phrase or statement quoted from the selection].” **These words fit into the context of** [insert a setting, background, or context for the quoted words]. **These lines remind me of** [insert a situation from your life that these words remind you of]. **They also remind me of** [insert people of whom these lines remind you in your life]. **They also remind me of** [insert places that these lines remind you of in your life]. **They remind me of when I felt** [insert emotions you are reminded of with this selection]. **These lines also remind me of** [insert events or experiences that these lines remind you of]. **These lines might have a deeper meaning for** [insert the kind of people who you think might find these lines meaningful]. **They might also have special meaning for** [insert people in particular who might find these lines meaningful].

Draft

Example 4.4.2:

Favorite Lines

Something that strikes me about this reading is when the author says, “Hear me, my chiefs, I am tired. My heart is sick and sad. From where the sun stands I will fight no more forever.” **These words fit into the context of** literally losing the battle and the war for a life that this man had known for decades and his people had known far into the past. **These lines remind me of** once when my father’s death seemed imminent, even though he later pulled through. **They also remind me of** people like the Pope and Mother Teresa, who seem to fight against human nature itself. **They also remind me of** places like Zimbabwe – and the United States for that matter – where whole populations have been wiped out. **They remind me of when I felt** hopeless and helpless as a teenager. **These lines also remind me of** when I finished writing a dissertation – in a silly way; I thought to myself that I would write no more forever. **These lines might have a deeper meaning for** those who have known the quiet desperation in their lives of losing a loved one to cancer or some other prolonged illness against which they had little to fight. **They might also have special meaning for** parents who have lost a child in similar circumstances.

Different Perspectives

What is writing from Different Perspectives?

Reading and writing from different perspectives means changing your perspective. You do this by “putting yourself into someone else’s shoes.” In other words, you imagine yourself as someone completely different, but who might still have some connection with your work. You then argue for or against, or analyze, whatever point you think the work is making. The first step is to think about a point the work makes (see writings above). Then think about how you responded to the point.

Ask yourself how you might respond differently to the same point, if you were somehow a different person. For example, when I first read the poem “Prufrock” I was in high school. One point to the poem seemed to be that part of being middle-aged was worrying about your own mortality and the life you have lived. As an adolescent middle-class male who valued action over self-contemplation, I thought the point was pretty whiny. I thought the speaker was a simpering weakling, whose fears had overtaken him (how I wish I could have said so then!). As an actual middle-aged dude, however, I have much more sympathy with the poem’s speaker now, since I have had some of the same thoughts lately. The two perspectives from me here are “young” and “old.” Other variations on perspectives might be caused by gender (what would his wife have thought?), social class (what would a manual laborer think?), cultural background (what would someone from a different part of the country say?), values (what would a politician say?), religious beliefs, economic status, experience, and so on.

Prompts

1. What seems to be the **point** to this work? (you may have to repeat it).
2. How might someone with a *different or **contradictory** perspective respond?

3. How might someone of a *different **gender** respond?
4. How might someone of a *different **age** or time respond?
5. How might someone from another country respond?
6. How might someone from a *different social, political, or economic **background** respond?
7. If I had to **argue against** whatever conclusions I have drawn from this work so far, what might I say?

*different from you, and/or different from the speaker(s).

Template

Different Perspectives

The whole point to this selection seems to be [insert point again – only in different words]. **In contrast**, [insert a person who might disagree with the point] **might argue that** [insert what that person might say to disagree]. **In terms of gender**, [insert the effect gender might have on how one sees the point]. A person's age might change the way we see this point by [insert how you think age might affect the point, or stage of life, or history might see the same point]. **Cultural background will change the way people see this idea by** [insert a perspective you imagine someone from a different country or culture might take towards this point]. **A person from** [insert a social, political, or economic background that you think might affect a person's way of thinking] **might react to this point by saying that** [insert what he or she might say]. **If I had to argue against this point, I might say** [insert what you feel is a statement that contradicts the main idea].

Draft

Example 4.4.3:

The whole point to this selection seems to be that the human spirit is magnificent, even in defeat. **In contrast**, Machiavelli **might argue that** some people want to be controlled, even oppressed, if it means security. **In terms of gender**, I suppose some women might argue that wars and oppression are merely outward manifestations of many males' need for dominance. **A person's age might change the way we see this point by** what experience with success and failure he or she may have had; older people may better understand the utter desperation in personal defeats in their lives, whereas young people may tend to be much more hopeful. **Cultural background will change the way people see this idea by** how they see conflict. I imagine some will be far more willing to accept change than say Israelis or Palestinians, who seem ready to fight about anything according to the media. **A person from** a poor family **might react to this point by saying that** it reflects the daily, grinding poverty that they are used to already. **If I had to argue against this point, I might say** people might sometimes be very easily intimidated by power, or the perception of power, and they give up easily.

Tutorial

How to answer the Prompts

How do I start?

This time, read and respond the way you think someone else might respond to such a point or points. One way to get started is to ask someone who you know is very different in his or her way of thinking about the world, and different from you in other major ways, to read the poem and tell you what they think. Another class member, or your roommate, won't cut it.

What do I write?

Answer all the questions with at least one complete sentence each (the more the better). Put your sentences together in a paragraph or two (or as many as you need). Do not include the questions in your writing. Maximum length: 2 pages.

Note

Be specific with your answers above. "A girl might say..." is pretty non-specific, wouldn't you say? "A poor single mother without a car, but who is earning a degree while working part time at an office might say..." is a little more specific. Remember, the perspectives you write from should have some connection to the poem or work (see example, above).

Selective Reading

What is Selective Reading?

Has anyone ever said to you, "You pretty much hear whatever you want to hear, don't you?" Me, too! That is how selective reading works. You hear certain words in a conversation, or commercial, or lecture, and decide, based on some connections among those words, what the conversation is about.

For example, there is a long-running commercial about men's suits that always ends the same way: "I guarantee it." Unless you listen closely, you might get the idea that the suits are guaranteed. They aren't. Right before "I guarantee it" the handsome bearded guy says something that has nothing to do with guaranteeing suits, like "You'll leave happy. I guarantee it." or "We will do our best. I guarantee it." What you "perceive" is based on selected words.

In poems and prose, it is not that easy. Many words are **ambiguous**, which means they can **mean more than one thing at the same time**. Writers know this, and make some works ambiguous purposely. The point is this: If you think a work is saying something, you should be able to point out the words that make you think that.

Prompts

1. What words, phrases, lines, images, passages, and so on, **stand out** or are most noticeable to you in this work?
2. How do these words, etc., **reinforce what you think** the author/narrator is trying to say?
3. What is the **general attitude** that these words suggest on the part of the author/narrator?
4. What do these words, etc., seem to be saying **by themselves**?

Template

Selective Reading

Some words [or phrases or passages or images] **that seem to stand out in this selection include** [insert particularly meaningful words or phrases, etc., from your selection]. **Taken together, these words indicate that the author** [or narrator] **is trying to say** [insert what the words seem to be saying if you only look at those words]. **They also show that the author's** [or narrator's] **attitude is** [insert the attitude these words suggest to you]. **Within the context of the whole selection, these words seem to be saying** [insert what you think these words might mean within the selection].

Draft

Example 4.4.4:

Selective Reading

Some words that seem to stand out in this selection include the "death" and "dying" words and the words that show Chief Joseph is full of worry ("No one knows where they are...maybe I shall find them among the dead"). **Taken together, these words indicate that the author is trying to say** something about the worth of struggle, especially the struggle of a whole people faced with insurmountable odds. **They also show that the author's attitude is** hopeless, indeed utterly hopeless. **Within the context of the whole selection, these words seem to be saying** that some struggles, though they seem worthwhile, ultimately may not be worth the price.

Tutorial

How to answer the questions

Extended Practice in Selective Reading

Try the following exercise for practice with a group of other readers:

Read the poem "My Papa's Waltz" (below). When you are finished, write down what you think it is saying. Then list the key words in the poem that support what you think. (Do this individually so you can compare answers).

Example 4.4.5:**My Papa's Waltz**

by Theodore Roethke

The whiskey on your breath
Could make a small boy dizzy;
But I hung on like death:
Such waltzing was not easy.

We romped until the pans
Slid from the kitchen shelf;
My mother's countenance
Could not unfrown itself.

The hand that held my wrist
Was battered on one knuckle;
At every step you missed
My right ear scraped a buckle.

You beat time on my head
With a palm caked hard by dirt,
Then waltzed me off to bed
Still clinging to your shirt.

As a group:

Compare what you wrote for the poem above. You should find some differences. Contact the instructor when you have finished this exercise and tell him what differences you found.

Now go back to your original work and apply what you learned about Selective Reading to it. You have finished the first section of your analysis essay!

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4.5: Text Analysis

This is the second section of a long critical analysis. This section of your analysis will be much shorter, but will require two things that the first section did not: the use of new terms in your writing and some searching to find out what each term means.

The first and most important resource will be your **dictionary**. Look up terms that are new to you here, and look up any words in your reading selection that are not clear to you. Your instructor will provide alternative sources for information you may need in addition to your dictionary.

This section includes three patterns:

Pattern 1: Text Strategies

Pattern 2: Patterns

Pattern 3: Literary Perspectives

Text Strategies

What are Text Strategies?

Text strategies are those word combinations, repetitions, references, and so on, that an author uses to affect the way a reader responds to the work. You might know them as "**literary devices**" or "**poetic devices**." Most text strategies involve **figurative** language (*metaphor, personification, allusion, imagery, alliteration, irony, juxtaposition, paradox, ellipsis, simile, synecdoche* – look each of these words up), **word order** (*syntax*), **sounds**, **visual spaces**, and **repetition**. The reason they are used is to cause you to react somehow to what is said, or how it is said.

Prompts

1. What are the major text **strategies used in this work**?
2. What is an **example** of each one (from the selection or work you chose)?
3. What **effect** does **each** seem to have on my understanding of the work?

Template

Text Strategies

[Insert author's last name] **uses** [insert a list of text strategies that the author uses from the list below] **in this selection. For example, he refers to** [something or someone] **figuratively as** [whatever he compares or describes in figurative language]. **He also uses** [insert a particular text strategy term] **when he says**, "[insert a quoted example]." **Next, he uses** [same pattern as above]. **Finally, he uses** [same pattern as above]. **I think he uses these particular strategies because** [insert your best guess as to why he or she seems to use these text strategies].

Tutorial

How to answer the prompts

This is a two-step process:

First, look up each of the figurative language terms and devices below and make sure you understand what each is (your instructor should present a lesson of some kind on these terms).

Second, go through the whole reading/selection you chose to analyze and underline as many examples of the strategies as you can. Label and circle as many example strategies in your selection as you can find.

Step 1: Look up terms

Work in groups to find and record in your own words what each term below means (with an example) in the spaces provided:

Write a definition after each term below. Write an example (from the work you are analyzing if possible) of each term in the space provided:

Figurative language

Definition:

Example:

Literal language

Definition:

Example:

Metaphor

Definition:

Example:

Personification

Definition:

Example:

Allusion

Definition:

Example:

Imagery

Definition:

Example:

Alliteration

Definition:

Example:

Irony

Definition:

Example:

Juxtaposition

Definition:

Example:

Paradox

Definition:

Example:

Ellipsis

Definition:

Example:

Simile

Definition:

Example:

Synecdoche

Definition:

Example:

Syntax

Definition:

Example:

Sounds

Definition:

Example:

Visual spaces

Definition:

Example:

Repetition

Definition:

Example:

Step 2: Find examples in your selection

Now, go through the whole reading/selection you chose to analyze and underline as many examples of the above strategies as you can. Label and circle as many example strategies in your selection as you can find.

Seeing Patterns

What are Patterns?

One of the primary features of literature is that it takes advantage of the tendency of speakers of English to see patterns and to hear rhythm in language. Sometimes authors try to shake up our expectations of what "good" or "natural" patterns/rhythms should be, and other times they match our expectations.

Prompts

1. How can I **describe** the way my selection is composed or divided, using the terms below?
2. What seems to be **the reason(s)** the selection is divided this way?
3. How many **paragraphs** in the selection, and how large and small are they by sections?

4. What seems to be the **reason(s)** for length and size variations?
5. How are the **patterns** in sections repeated?
6. How are **words or phrases** repeated in each section?
7. How are words, phrases, and/or patterns **repeated throughout the selection**?
8. What is **particularly striking**, unexpected, or unusual about any of the patterns in the selection?

Template

Patterns

The larger pattern that [insert author's last name] **uses includes** [list as many from the list above as you can see]. **For example, he** [insert an example, like **he describes** and then tell what he describes]. **He also uses** [insert another pattern name and tell how it is used]. **He also uses** [insert another pattern name and tell how it is used]. **I think he chooses these particular patterns because** [insert why you think he uses these patterns – remember, this is speculation based on what you have read and written about this selection so far].

Draft

Example 4.5.1:

Patterns

The larger pattern that Chief Joseph **uses includes** repetition, description, and listing. **For example, he** repeats words for death at the end of 8 sentences, and there are only 16 sentences altogether. **He also uses** description details to differentiate “our” chiefs, the “old” men, the “young” men, the “little” children, “he who led on” the young men, “my” people, and so on. **He also uses** listing to emphasize the completeness of his despondency. **I think he chooses these particular patterns because** the contrast between the repetition, listing, and description of the first 15 sentences and the sweep and scope of the 16th and final sentence is utterly dramatic.

Tutorial

How to answer the prompts

How do I write about Patterns?

Read your work all the way through again. This time, pay attention to patterns (description, dialogue, explanations, information, examples, support, evidence, critiques, anecdotes, scenes, for example, and so on). Note how these kinds of patterns are arranged in the whole work. Note, too, what kind of overall framework or structure is established by what kinds of patterns are used.

One of the primary features of **poetry** is that it takes advantage of the tendency of speakers of English to see patterns and to hear rhythm in language. Sometimes authors try to shake up our expectations of what “good” or “natural” patterns/rhythms should be, and other times they match our expectations. The primary concept or strategy an author uses for patterns/rhythm is repetition.

If you are analyzing a poem, pay attention to other patterns (number of lines per section, number of sections, number of words per line, location of key words - beginning or end of lines, for example, and so on). Note how these kinds of patterns are arranged in the whole poem. Note too what kind of rhythm is established by what kind of repetition is used: words that sound alike, long/short words or lines, syllables, pauses, spaces, other sounds, and so on. Also please note the word order; poems are notorious for using unusual word order.

What steps do I take?

First, work in groups to define each of the following pattern terms in your own words and create an example for each:

Second, answer the above questions – use the **prose** questions for a work of prose **or** the **poetry** questions with a poem – with at least one complete sentence each (the more the better).

Note

Describe patterns in your own words, but **use the terms below** in your answers.

Description

Definition:

Example:

Dialogue

Definition:

Example:

Explanations

Definition:

Example:

Information

Definition:

Example:

Examples

Definition:

Example:

Support

Definition:

Example:

Evidence

Definition:

Example:

Critiques

Definition:

Example:

Anecdotes

Definition:

Example:

Scenes

Definition:

Example:

Claims

Definition:

Example:

Archetype

Definition:

Example:

Themes

Definition:

Example:

Polarities

Definition:

Example:

Characters

Definition:

Example:

Symbols

Definition:

Example:

Literary Perspectives

Writing from Literary Perspectives

Literary analysis of a text is looking at a selection from a perspective that assumes the text is an object of study. For perspectives that assume a text to be an object of study (a very common perspective), analysis requires that we look “in” the text for specific features, forms, or patterns. These features include (but are not limited to) **archetypes**, which are situations, characters, images, and the like that are patterned after ones with which most of us are familiar (damsel in distress, good guy, villain, etc.) and tend to cut across cultures and time; **structure**, which is how patterns are deployed and arranged in a text; **connections** among the words in a text and among other texts; **relationships** among the devices and other patterns (that help a text “hang together” as a complete work); “underlying” **ideas** in a given text; and so on.

Answer all the following prompts with at least one complete sentence each (the more the better). Put your sentences together in a paragraph or two (or as many as you need).

Prompts

1. What are the **archetypal images** manifested in the selection?
2. How do they relate to a particular **culture and environment**?
3. What are **reoccurring themes** within the selection?
4. What are **polarities** within the selection?
5. What are reoccurring **situations or patterns** within the selection?
6. What are **symbols** within the selection?
7. What are **characters** within the selection?
8. Do themes, polarities, characters, or symbols **exist**; are they **real**?
9. What **words in the selection give clues** to when, where, how, and why the selection was written?
10. What **underlying messages or ideas** are suggested by the construction of the words, sentences, ideas, etc.?

Template

Literary Perspectives

The primary archetypal image in this selection is [insert a statement indicating what you believe is the main image (or character type that everyone will recognize) from this selection]. **This image reminds me of** [insert a statement indicating how these images relate to a particular culture and environment]. **This image also reminds me of the theme** [insert a statement indicating what themes this image brings to mind]. **The image of** [insert the character type or archetype that you stated originally] **also contrasts with** [insert a phrase that indicates something opposite to the archetypal image] **as a polarity or opposite idea. The same image connects to the image of** [insert a similar or connecting image or character from the selection] **in this selection. This image might also symbolize or stand for** [insert a statement that indicates what you think this archetype symbolizes]. **The person or character in this selection who embodies this idea is** [insert a statement that indicates who you think this archetype symbolizes – if different – from the selection]. **I think these ideas, images, and themes exist mainly** [where? in the author’s mind? in history? in certain people? (who?)]. **The underlying ideas suggested by the archetypal image in this selection include** [insert a statement that indicates what underlying or unstated messages the author is trying to “push” towards the reader].

Draft

Example 4.5.2:

Literary Perspectives

The primary archetypal image in this selection is that of a valiant warrior who has lost his battles, his war, his culture, his people, and life as he knows it. **This image reminds me of** the way Native Americans have been portrayed as “Noble Savages.” **This image also reminds me of the theme** of struggle among people for the dominance of their own way of life. **The image of** the valiant warrior who loses everything in spite of his goodness **also contrasts with** the notion most of us have that good overcomes evil **as a polarity or opposite idea. The same image connects to the image of** the people of Chief Joseph who “have run away to the hills” **in this selection. This image might also symbolize or stand for** the idea that life just is not fair. **The person or character in this selection who embodies this idea is** of course Chief Joseph. **I think these ideas, images, and themes exist mainly** in the everyday existence and struggle that we all have to endure in order to survive. **The underlying ideas suggested by the archetypal image in this selection include** the notion that fighting until the “bitter end” may not be worth it, even though it is a very romantic idea. Chief Joseph lost his entire world and everything in it.

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4.6: Author Analysis

This is the third section of a long critical analysis. Writing about the author will include these patterns:

Pattern 1: Biographical Information

Pattern 2: Social Information

Pattern 3: Literary Information

First, read the prompts on the following pages. Notice that most of them call for information that you can't possibly know. **You will have to look for that information in outside sources.** Start with some links. Remember, most authors have web pages devoted to their work (some living have their own actual page). The following statement is critical:

Note

Record all sources, and you must get all of the following that is available for that source: **who** said it, **where** (in what source) it was said, and **when** it was said (see MLA documenting sources).

Biographical Information

Answer as many of the following prompts about your author as possible:

Prompts

1. How did the author's childhood and family interactions affect his writing?
2. What in the author's life created or contributed to the author's opinion?
3. How did the author's education affect his or her beliefs?
4. How did the author's life experiences affect his or her beliefs?
5. Did the author practice what he or she preached?
6. How does the author define an issue?
7. What was the author's background?
8. Who or what does the author compare the central issue with?
9. How does the author classify events, things, or issues?
10. What were the author's opinions on related and unrelated topics?

Generally, you will find much information about authors. Ask your instructor, a librarian, or writing center personnel about where to find such information if you need some help.

Social Information

Answer as many of the following prompts about your author as possible:

Prompts

1. What social situations does this work describe or address?
2. What is the author's attitude toward men and women?
3. What social events in childhood affected the author's thinking?
4. What types or type of group did he or she belong to?
5. What was acceptable and unacceptable in the society?
6. What effects do social institutions have on the writing? (marriage, children, parenting, government, church)
7. What specific social areas did he or she address?
8. Should society act like this? And why do we?
9. Are we a product of our social surroundings?
10. What solutions are suggested?

Literary Information

Note

The following prompts apply primarily to authors of **LITERARY** selections; these questions do NOT generally apply to non-fiction or academic articles.

Answer as many of the following prompts about your author as possible:

Prompts

1. Who is the author's audience?
2. Who is being written for?
3. What is the author's attitude toward men?
4. What is the author's attitude toward women?
5. Did the gender of the author have an effect on this work?
6. Is the author's attitude toward the "non-audience" gender-biased?
7. What male conventions exist in the text?
8. What activities, emotions, values are privileged in this text?
9. Does the reader react to the work depending on the gender of the author?
10. Does the author condescend?
11. Does the author feel it is necessary to "explain" his or her more profound thoughts?
12. Does the author assume his or her reader will automatically disagree?
13. Does the author pretend to a relevance, an attitude, or an awareness he or she does not possess?
14. Is there pressure from the author for the reader to conform to the author's social standards?
15. Does the writer feel he or she is excluded justly or unjustly because of social, racial, or ethical discrimination?
16. Is there a physical, emotional, or intellectual deviation from the normal severe enough to have colored the author's view?
17. Are the deviations severe enough to have made the author's viewpoint distinctively different from others?
18. Has an emotional or physical trauma resulted in an altered viewpoint?
19. Does the presence of physical or emotional trauma-oriented disturbance validate or invalidate the author's work for the general public?

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4.7: Context Analysis

This is the last section of the body of a long critical analysis. First read the questions below. Notice that most of them call for information that you can't possibly know. **You will have to look for that information in outside sources.** Start with some links, or ask your instructor or reference librarian about other resources, like literary journals, specialized dictionaries, glossaries, encyclopedias, and so on. Remember, too, that most authors have web pages devoted to their work (some living have their own actual page).

Note

Record all sources; you must get all of the following that is available for that source: **who** said it, **where** (in what source) it was said, and **when** it was said (see MLA documenting sources).

Find an answer to as many of the following prompts about your work as possible:

Prompts

1. How is the work related to other works during the same period?
2. Is there a particular historical event (or events) that contributed to or influenced the work?
3. What were the prevailing social, intellectual, religious, political, and economic attitudes that may have impacted the work?
4. What literary period does this work fall into?
5. Is this work representative of or contradictory to the literary period?
6. Was this work part of a tradition (literary or otherwise), or the beginning or end of one?
7. Does this work still have an effect on us?
8. How does the work fit into the overall historical period?

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4.8: Conclusion

Prompts

- What do I find to be true from my analysis of this selection?
- What else do I find to be true?
- Why is what I find to be true important?
- When I first read this selection, what did I think about the topic in the selection?
- After my analysis, what do I think?
- What might some people say after reading my selection?
- What might other people say?
- How do I feel overall about this selection and what it has to say?

Template

Conclusion

From this analysis, I find that [something is true; insert what you have found to be true from your analysis of the selection]. **I also find** [insert other things you discovered from analyzing your selection]. **This is important because** [insert why you believe that what you discovered to be true is important]. **When I first read this selection, I thought** [insert your impressions of the topic when you first read the selection]. **Now I think** [insert some thoughts about the topic that you have now]. **Some might read this selection and say** [insert what you think some people might say about your selection]. **Others might say** [insert what you think other people might say about your selection]. **I feel that** [insert how you feel overall about this selection and what it has to say].

Draft

Example 4.8.1:

Conclusion

From this analysis, I find that the shortness of the speech, the short sentences, the simplicity of the words, and the juxtaposition of direct, literal language for most of the selection with the finality of the figurative “forever” at the end emphasizes the sudden, sharp, and bitter realization Chief Joseph has about his utter annihilation. **I also find** that the last line is strangely poetic. **This is important because** instead of getting some sort of “poetic justice” the speaker seems to get poetic injustice. **When I first read this selection, I thought** it seemed sad but romantic. **Now I think** all of the elements work together to emphasize the sorrow of the speaker. **Some might read this selection and say** that leadership is risky and someone must lose. **Others might say** that the surrender itself highlights the brutality of early American conflicts with native cultures. **I feel that** it reflects one utterly lonely, utterly defeated man’s wish that he could take back the past and adopt principles that did not romanticize fighting

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

5: Personal Writing

5.1: Overview

5.2: Pre-Writing – Choosing a Topic

5.3: Narrative

5.4: Description

5.5: Comparison

5.6: Definition

5.7: Cause and Effect

5.8: History

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5.1: Overview

This section of the book is about personal writing. Many writing programs **begin** with personal writing. There are a number of reasons for this, but most of them rest on a few basic assumptions. For example, personal writing seems a little more accessible to most beginning writers because we are very familiar with the subject (which is ourselves, what we think, how we feel, our experiences, etc.). We are also very familiar with the narrative form. There is a long tradition, originating in our culture with the ancient Greeks, that begins language training with storytelling and forms of narrative – with “us” as the central focus. It also seems natural to begin with personal narrative because almost anyone, starting at a very young age, can tell stories about himself or herself. Because of these and other assumptions, it is thought that practicing with personal writing and “progressing” to analytical and argumentative writing helps writers acclimate themselves to an academic writing environment.

You might have noticed that this book **ends** with personal writing rather than the other way around. This is because our assumptions are different. First of all, many academic writing communities do not place as high a value on personal writing as they do on non-personal writing. Instead, they value analysis and argument and those ancillary skills that come with these kinds of writing. Many students ask questions like, “If we are supposed to write differently for the rest of the school, why are we practicing personal writing in this class?” This is a good question. We feel you should practice the kinds of writing most valued from the beginning. Secondly, we do not believe that you necessarily know more about yourself than any other subject, or that you are necessarily more interested in yourself than any other subject. We think that you are able to value the same subjects as the university, that you are just as interested in those subjects as the university, and that you can learn about them and about writing at the same time – otherwise you would not be here.

We also believe that those patterns that appear most frequently in personal writing are not necessarily more accessible than other kinds of writing. Narrative and other patterns in personal writing can be very difficult to pull off **in writing**, which can frustrate writers who are able to pull it off beautifully in speech. This frustration can sometimes lead us to think, “If this is the simple stuff, I won’t have much luck with the hard stuff!” Rest assured that personal writing can be very valuable (much literature is made up of the same patterns as personal writing) and very difficult. We once heard a teacher say that children’s parables are simple and easy to understand, and so beginning writers should start with parables. Have you ever been able to create a parable? We challenge you to go to a nearby street corner and begin creating parables and telling them (you don’t even have to write them down!) and see how long you can sustain the presentation. We only know of one person who ever did that consistently, and he is held in extremely high esteem in Christian cultures. For these reasons, we wait until you have had practice in writing that tends to be more highly valued in academic environments and might even be easier to learn before we help you create what is commonly called personal writing.

Many people also assume that personal writing is simply “what comes from inside.” This may or may not be true, but some writing **conventions** must be present so the reader can understand what you are saying. There is also a common idea that what comes out of us “naturally” is somehow purer or more indicative of us as humans. Again, this may be true to some extent, but, as former parents of young children, we have seen firsthand that some of what comes out of us “naturally” may indeed be pure and human, but not necessarily attractive.

Something to note about personal writing: you will have to change your perspective completely from analysis and argument. You will not be analyzing an object, which requires an “objective” perspective, nor will you be arguing, which requires making a claim. You will not analyze or argue for the patterns in this section; you will create them and arrange them.

“Effective” Personal Writing

As writers, we always have control over the degree to which we share what is inside us with others. For academic purposes, **personal writing should appeal to something personal in the reader** as well in the writer. In other words, if we want to share some emotion like anger or anxiety, then that should be the **effect** of our writing. We should write in such a way that our readers feel what we feel. Look at the following:

| *I am thrilled and excited by her cobalt blue eyes.*

This is good in the sense that it reveals how the writer feels about a woman’s blue eyes. Better, however, is writing that **involves the reader** and allows the reader to draw his or her own conclusions about blue eyes:

| *I see the cobalt sky reflected in your eyes.*

Notice in the second example that we, as readers, are not being “told” how to feel by a third party; we are instead looking through the eyes of the writer and speaking directly to the object of our vision. As a result of reporting literally what both the reader and the writer see – rather than only how the writer feels – readers may put themselves in the writer’s place – and so feel something the writer feels. In other words, the **effect** of the second statement (thrill and excitement) is only described in the first statement.

Be careful of the trap in thinking that says something like, “Since my writing all comes from inside me, and I am a good person, it must all be good.” Remember parenthood; it is not necessarily all good. Instead, you should probably think more along the lines of “How can I make the reader feel the same way I feel?” In that way, practicing patterns – patterns that at first may seem disconnected from feelings and the effects of revealing our “selves” – will eventually become tools with which to put the reader right where we want him or her.

Here is the way this section is laid out. First, you will declare a topic, but it must follow the criteria in “Topic.” Once you have the topic more or less identified, you will then practice personal writing “patterns” that help you express what you want to say, but in a way that brings about some desired **effect** in your readers. Once you perfect these patterns, you will then arrange your patterns – or parts of your patterns – in a way that further heightens that effect. The arrangement process is controlled by the writer using design principles.

Most Common Question: “How will I connect different patterns; how will I make them flow without transitions between patterns?”

Assuming you WANT to make your essay “flow” (you will not know this until you develop design or arrangement principles at the end), more often than not you will not need transitions between elements. The reason for this is because it is the transition words and phrases within a pattern that gives us clues how to read it. We generally know when someone is telling us a story or arguing with us because the transition words already inside those patterns give it away. Also, we generally don’t need to be told in so many words that “I have been discussing this by describing it. I am about to switch over to an analogy.” Most hearers or readers recognize these patterns, at least subconsciously, without needing transitions between them.

Think about transitions as markers for the pattern you are using rather than a “bridge” between patterns.

In the following pages, you **will practice developing the patterns** for a long personal writing. You will begin with a pre-planning writing, a **topic writing**, which will not be a part of the essay but will be a guide for the other patterns. You will then construct the following patterns:

- Narrative
- Description
- Comparison
- Definition
- Cause and Effect
- History
- Analogy

Once all of the patterns are constructed, you will then **arrange** the patterns according to a **design principle**.

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5.2: Pre-Writing – Choosing a Topic

It seems that the most difficult part of writing an essay for many writers is choosing and narrowing down a topic about which to write. Many of us, too, like to know how the essay will end, how long it will be, how long it will take to write, and so on. It is rather scary to just start writing without knowing where we are going. We have been trained to “have a purpose” in our writing and to plan our writings with outlines and other devices. We like the familiar Pick a topic, Make a thesis, Write an outline, Fill in the blanks. It is counter to our training not to do it this way.

However, personal writing, in order to be effective, must be developed slowly and carefully. The first step, then, is to choose a topic without the preconditions that planning and purpose carry. We will begin writing without knowing what the ending will be. The statements with which you answer these questions are ones you will refer to over and over later in writing your essay.

Most Common Question: “How can I choose a topic without making an outline?”

A topic writing is a way to arrive at something specific to write about. It will take the place of an outline, since this kind of essay writing is designed to perfect the “elements” of an essay first, and arrange them later. Don't worry about how this will be shaped, or how it will be structured, or even how it will end. Think of it as writing first, structuring later. If you have trouble with this method, just remember that it is designed to teach about elements first.

The process is actually very highly structured. The difference between writing to find a topic and writing an outline is that answering questions to find a topic assumes planning a writing has to do with patterns like narrative and description rather than with patterns like sentence and paragraph.

Think about the prompts below. Write an answer to each one, and try to limit your answers to one sentence per question. Put your completed answers in complete sentences. Put your sentences together in a paragraph or two. Do not include the prompts in your writing.

Note

Please note: this is a planning writing, and will not become part of your essay. You will refer to this writing in order to plan each of the elements in Personal Writing.

Prompts

1. What is an object or place I will center my essay on?
2. How is it connected to me in a personal way?
3. How is it “insignificant” to others who might see it or know about it?
4. Is it contradictory in some way?
5. What are its physical characteristics?
6. What are its qualities?
7. What point do I want to make with this essay?
8. What effect do I want this essay to have on my readers?

Tutorial

How to answer the prompts

Some students will rush through this list of questions and answer just to answer. You may do that as well, but sooner or later each question must be given sincere and honest thought in order to help develop the patterns that follow this introduction. Also be aware that each question may change the choice you make initially. That is perfectly normal because we should not make decisions like this lightly.

Take your time. Remember that this is personal writing, so answer each from a personal perspective rather than the perspective of a student fulfilling an assignment.

Prompt 1: Choose an object

What is an object or place I will focus my essay on?

When asked to “choose a topic,” most of us are inclined to choose a subject that interests us, like “life” or “relationships” or “football” or “clowns.” However, it is frequently much more effective to write about the subject indirectly, through an object or place, than to write about the subject directly.

So, rather than choose a “subject” for an essay, we will choose an object or place. We will write about that object or place and a subject will emerge for the reader as we describe, define, and otherwise explore the object or place. You may start with a subject and choose some sort of object associated with the subject, but avoid direct mention of the subject in personal writing.

For example, many writers like to write about something they feel strongly about, like “family.” If this is the case, we might choose some object that connects us to “family” in the way we want our reader to be connected. If we want to explore “family” as a subject we might choose the kitchen table as an object (or kitchen as a place) because that is where many of us gather (or gathered) as a family. Others might choose a porch swing, the front seat of a car, the sofa, or anywhere else that “family” interactions seem to take place.

Most Common Question: “Which is better, an object or place?”

Usually it is easier to write about an object. It is fine to choose a place to focus on, but writers sometimes find a place more difficult to write about. You may choose either, but plan to work slightly harder to write about a place.

checklist

- _____ Is it tangible (can it be touched; not a concept)?
- _____ Is it observable (can we see it)?
- _____ Is it non-living (no pets or children)?
- _____ Is it believable?
- _____ Is my answer in one, simple statement?
- _____ Is it a complete sentence?

Check the examples below to see how they conform to the checklist above.

Example 5.2.1:

I wish to focus my essay on a pecan tree in front of an old house at a camp where I used to live.

(or)

This essay will revolve around a candle that I got as a gift.

Prompt 2: Make it personal

How is the object/place connected to me in a personal way?

What is your personal connection to this object or place (“I own it” is not very personal)? By “personal,” I mean “emotionally attached” more so than “it belongs to me.” Some people might be personally connected in this way to things that do not belong to them (a tree on campus, a park bench, a public sidewalk) but with which they associate something personal anyway.

When students are having trouble writing about objects, I frequently ask them how this object is personal. I can tell right away that, if they shrug and say, “I don’t know,” they probably have not answered this question properly.

Example 5.2.2:

Many important events happened under that tree, including staff meetings, lazy conversations with camp counselors and kids, meeting my wife, and encounters with various unexpected animals.

(or)

The candle was given to me by my best friend for no apparent occasion, but it reminds me of her (she died a few years ago).

Prompt 3: Make it insignificant

How is the object "insignificant" to others who might see it or know about it?

Many of us are at first inclined to choose something that is obviously significant, like a wedding ring, a cross, a trophy, and so on. Choose an object or place that only has significance for you but not for anyone else. In fact, the more insignificant it is, the better.

checklist

- ☐ The object is not a symbol
- ☐ No obvious connotations for others
- ☐ No crosses, chapels, rings, photos, or other obviously symbolic things or places

Example 5.2.3:

The tree stood in the front yard of the house; people did not seem to notice it, passing under it constantly without ever seeing it.

(or)

There is nothing special about the candle; it has no marks or perfume, and it sits on a dusty shelf in the kitchen.

Prompt 4: Make it contradictory

Is the object contradictory in some way?

Look for something contradictory about the object or place: a sign that says "Up With Trees!" that is made out of wood; a pond named "Devil's Pool" at a church camp; a watch that does not tell time; an empty drawer; plastic fruit; and so on.

It might or might not be valuable to your essay for your choice of object or place to contain some contradictory element. You really do not know that at this point; you will find out later. However, find something contradictory and you will have the option to ignore or use it later.

Most Common Question: "What if I can't find anything contradictory about my object or place?"

You have a couple of choices if you find this impossible. Try asking someone else if he or she sees anything contradictory about the object/place, or know of a similar object/place that is contradictory in some way. Or, you could choose a different object.

My favorite option is to simply make up something contradictory. If I want to write about the tree in my example and there is absolutely nothing that seems contradictory or ironic about this tree, I will imagine it as if it does indeed have some contradictory element. We are not dealing with facts; we are dealing with images and the effect they have on the reader. If I have to "bend the truth" a little about the actual object I choose, I doubt if anyone will be able to verify it. In this case, the effect is more important than accuracy.

checklist

- ☐ Can the object be ironic, or seen in an ironic way?
- ☐ Is there some contradictory characteristic or element about it?
- ☐ If there is nothing obviously contradictory about it, can I add something to it to make it contradictory?

Example 5.2.4:

There was a "no trespassing" sign on the tree, yet it was a central meeting place at camp.

(or)

The candle never seems to burn for more than five minutes before it goes out.

Prompt 5: Describe physical characteristics

What are the object's physical characteristics?

Describe your object or place in one statement if possible. This description should describe only its physical characteristics (color, size, shape, its environment, parts, textures, etc.). Keep it simple and to the point.

checklist

_____ Describe at least three physical things about the object (things you can see or touch).

Example 5.2.5:

Under the tree was the most beautiful carpet of grass; the branches were high and widespread with thick foliage, and there was always a dappled shade.

(or)

It is white and squat, with a short, off-center wick, and sits in a plain saucer.

Prompt 6: Qualities

What are the object's qualities?

These are things that are not seen or noticed, but rather intrinsic to the thing or place, and they should be as specific to that thing as possible. A quality is something good or bad about it, or something intangible.

checklist

_____ Name at least three things about the object that are good, or bad, or somewhere in between.

Example 5.2.6:

The tree seemed almost friendly because it has overseen the start of many friendships, and trustworthy because it couldn't share any secrets that have been passed beneath it, and full of life, with squirrels, cicadas, blue jays, and sometimes 8-year-old boys.

(or)

The candle is reluctant to burn, and when it does, it seems weak and anemic, and so never seems to change after I light it.

Prompt 7: Make a point

What point do I want to make with this essay?

What point do I want to make with this essay? Simply state a point you want to make with the whole essay.

Example 5.2.7:

I want the point to my essay to be that life is fleeting, and things change constantly, but some places are important for their personal historical value.

(or)

The point is that some friendships are so important that even death cannot change them.

Prompt 8: Effect on the Reader

What effect do I want this essay to have on my readers?

What effect do I want this essay to have on my readers? State what you wish to happen to a reader who reads your essay.

Example 5.2.8:

I want a reader to come away with a sense of place and the importance of memories.

(or)

I hope whoever reads this will feel the same sense of loss that I feel.

By answering the prompts above slowly, carefully, and thoughtfully, you may arrive at a place to start an effective essay (one that has an effect on the reader). The rest of this process is similar in the sense that you will not really know how well you have done until you do it. This section, the topic writing, will serve as a reference for each element that follows.

Note

Use the object or place from this topic writing as the object or place in ALL the elements that follow. Do not use this topic writing as part of your essay. This writing is simply a way to find a suitable topic.

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5.3: Narrative

This is your first large element or pattern for personal writing. This pattern, like all the patterns you will craft, will potentially fit somewhere in your personal essay.

Your **narrative** will be in the form of an **anecdote**. An **anecdote** is a short, personal **narrative** about something that has happened to you in your past. It also has a point in telling it. In this case, it should involve, allude to, or otherwise include your object or place; however, it does not have to be "about" your object or place.

Elements of an Anecdote

1. Who, Where, When

Have you ever wondered why children's stories begin something like this?

| *Once upon a time, in a galaxy far, far away, the teachers were revolting ...*

It is the start of a simple narrative. It also contains all the elements of a beginning to any narrative: when, where, and who. An anecdote, because it is short, will begin similarly:

| *One day, while I was sitting at a stop sign waiting for the light to change...*

This little particle of an anecdote tells when, who, and where before the first sentence even ends.

Note

An anecdote sets up a particular incident; it does not tell about a long period of time.

2. What Happened (Sequence of Events)

Any narrative also includes a sequence of events. You should be able to read an anecdote and tell what happens first, what happens next, and so on. In the following anecdote, the bolded words suggest each event in the sequence:

3. Implied Point

Most of us want to make sure that we "get the point across" to whatever story we are telling, assuming it has a point. To do this, we tend to explain what we are telling. It is sometimes very difficult to stop. However, stopping in a timely way allows the reader to draw his or her own conclusions.

Example 5.3.1: Anecdote

[Who, Where, When] My first day of college **I** parked **in** the "South Forty," which is what everyone called the huge parking lot on the edge of the campus. It was **seven forty-five in the morning**, hazy and cool. [Sequence of events] **I walked** across the parking lot, **crossed** a busy street, **walked** over a creek, through a "faculty" parking lot, **crossed** another street, and **came to** the first row of campus buildings. **I walked** between buildings, past the library and the student mall. **I passed** many quiet, nervous-looking students along the way. Many of them **smiled** at me. One trio of young girls was even **chuckling** softly among themselves when **they all smiled and said** "Hi" to me at once. By the time I got to my classroom, far on the other side of campus from the parking lot, **I was smiling** and boldly **saying** "Hi" to everyone, too, particularly the girls. Every single one of them **smiled or responded** with a "Hi" or made a friendly comment or even chuckled happily. It was my first day of college.

When I found the building I was looking for, a friend from high school appeared. She was in my first class! I smiled at her and said, "Hi!" She looked at me. She smiled. Then she laughed. [Implied point] She said, "Why are you wearing a sock on your shirt?" I looked down. A sock had come out of the dryer clinging to my shirt.

Show, don't tell

In the anecdote above, I am very tempted to tell the reader what I felt at the moment I realized that everyone was laughing AT me rather than just being friendly. For the ending, where the point is in this case, it is best to let the reader infer (draw conclusions, fill in the blanks) what happens implicitly rather than to state explicitly what the point is, or what the narrator felt, or anything else.

Note

The more indirect you are about your object or place the better. In the anecdote above, it might be obvious that my object is a sock or my place is a parking lot. The point is, it is not an anecdote “about” a sock; it is referred to indirectly.

How do we show rather than tell? First, describe what you see (I don’t really see anything with “I was SO embarrassed...”) or what you smell, hear, or taste, but NOT what you feel. An easy way to check whether you are showing or telling is to go through your anecdote and underline the verbs. If the verbs are “be”-verbs (is, was, were, etc.) or verbs that describe actions we cannot see (“I thought...” “I believed...” “I imagined...” “it made me upset...” and so on) then you are probably telling. In the sentence above I used “walked,” “lecturing,” “ripped,” and “said.”

Most Common Question: “What makes stories or anecdotes interesting and something I can relate to?”

Actually, it is a simple principle, even though it may not be obvious. Here is the principle: We “relate” or “connect” most easily to situations we recognize and so fill in the blanks. If you “tell” me, for example, “I was SO embarrassed ...” then you have not let me fill in MY embarrassment. On the other hand, if you “show” me a scene, it allows me to fit my own experience into it:

“I walked past the corner of the aluminum whiteboard tray while lecturing to a class. It ripped my pants. After a moment I said, ‘Class dismissed.’”

As the writer of those statements, I hope you fill in some similarly embarrassing moment without my telling you that that is what you are supposed to do. The connection, the act of “filling in,” is what people tend to refer to as “relating to.”

Interestingly, it does not even matter whether or not readers fill in what I intend for them to fill in, as I noted above; it is the act of filling in our own experiences that makes us “relate” to an incident. From a writer’s perspective, that means we should show rather than tell.

Second, resist the temptation to “explain.” Let me fill in the blanks! It is so much more personal when I realize it is an embarrassing situation than when I am told it is an embarrassing situation.

Assignment: Write an anecdote that contains who, where, when, and what happens (a sequence of events). Think about an anecdote that **involves, alludes to, or otherwise includes your object** or place; it does not have to be “about” your place. It also does not have to be “true” in the strict sense of the word; we will not be able to verify any believable details if they add to the effect of the anecdote. Type it out. Keep it simple and to the point.

Most Common Question: “What if the reader does not draw the same conclusion or fill in the blanks the way I want him or her to do?”

It doesn’t matter! What matters more than anything else is that the reader fills in the blanks – even if it is not what you intend. It is the process of filling in blanks that draws in a reader. If it is a little off, it does not matter – the reader is still hooked.

checklist

After you finish writing your anecdote, revise it according to these specific structure and style notes and writing principles:

1. Look to make sure that you have the following information near the beginning:

___ *Who is involved?*

Who is involved - name names, be specific about ages and relationships but not overly wordy:

Right: “...my eight-year-old sister, Bovina...”

Wrong: “...the uncle of my step-mom on her father’s side, George “I Told You So” Johnson, who will be 32 on August 6th, 2001, at 7:03 pm...”

___ *When did it take place?*

When your anecdote took place - this should be a moment in time, or at least should have happened over the course of a short period of time:

Right: "one morning when I was in the seventh grade"

Wrong: "...during my seventh-grade year..."

___ *Where did it take place?*

Where your anecdote took place - again, be fairly specific, but without any physical description of the place unless the details are important to point of the anecdote:

Right: "...under the pecan tree outside the house where I lived at the camp..."

Wrong: "...at a camp..."

2. The rest of the anecdote should show what happened as a sequence of events (what happened first? then what happened? and so on).

___ *Sequence of events*

There should be at least 3 events in the sequence of events. If your anecdote is very short, each event should be in a sentence of its own:

Wrong: "We went to the store, bought the earwax remover, then went home and rubbed it on the cat."

Each of those events should be in a separate sentence.

3. Make your ending or point implied.

___ *Implied point*

Your ending or point should not be stated explicitly; you should give me just enough information within the anecdote itself so that I can draw my own conclusions (even if they are not exactly what you want me to conclude).

Wrong: "It was the best birthday I ever had."

Right: " " (leave it off)

4. Show rather than tell.

___ *Show; don't tell*

Pay careful attention to this and check every sentence. With verbs and adjectives in particular, make sure you "show" me something that I can see happening, a scene. If you use phrases or words like "I thought," "he wanted," "it made me sad," "it was terrible," "I was so embarrassed," and so on, they are "telling" (telling me what to think or feel) instead of "showing" (showing me what you want me to see). Eliminate "telling" words, phrases, or sentences. If they are important to the point of the anecdote, replace them with "showing" words:

Wrong: "...it must have hurt when he caught the ball..."

Right: "...the ball shot into his glove with a loud 'pop;' he grimaced, dropped the ball and glove, and thrust his hand into the ice chest..."

Clichés

What are 'clichés' and why can't we use them?:

Clichés are figurative phrases and expressions that you have probably heard a million times. For our purposes, there are two kinds of clichés: the ones that jump out at you and the ones that we use without thinking.

If you are paying attention, you will notice that the two sentences above contain at least 3 clichés. You might also notice that clichés are best suited to spoken language, because they are readily available and sometimes when we speak, we don't have time to replace a common expression with a unique one. However, we DO have time to replace clichés while we are writing.

The problem with clichés in writing is that they are too general when we should be much more specific. They also tend to tell rather than show. In the first sentence above, we have most likely heard the phrase, “have probably heard a million times.” In speech, that expression works. In writing, it should be literal rather than figurative. The first sentence is better this way:

Clichés are figurative phrases and expressions that we have heard so many times that we all share some understanding of what they mean.

Not exactly what you thought when you read it at the beginning of this answer, is it? That is why being *literal and specific* in writing is better than *figurative and vague* as a rule.

Here is a re-write of the second sentence at the start of this answer:

For our purposes, there are two kinds of clichés: the ones that are obvious expressions (like “You can lead a horse to water ...”) and the ones that are not part of expressions but seem to “go” easily into a group of words (like “we use without thinking”).

The second type is more difficult to identify and eradicate. Usually it is a group of words we have heard before that doesn’t add anything to a statement. For example, instead of “We watched the donuts roll down the street every night,” you might be tempted to add to it this way: “We watched the donuts roll down the street each and every night.” Don’t.

Avoid clichés in your writing

Example 5.3.2: draft

Anecdote

One day during the summer before high school, I was alone at home. It was typically hot for summer in Texas and I was inside the house watching TV. The doorbell rang. I walked to the front door and opened it. There was no one there. I stood for a moment, then closed the door and walked back to the TV room.

A few minutes later, the doorbell rang again. This time, I sprang from the chair and sprinted to the front door, and pulled it open violently. Again, no one there. I stepped outside and looked up and down the block. No one. While standing in the open doorway, I heard a knock on the back door. I hustled back through the house and yanked the back door open. No one there, either. Then, the doorbell rang again.

There was a basement window on one side of this house that looked out at ground level. I moved to that window and waited. After a minute, a small neighbor boy ran past the window from the front of the house to the back, then from the back to the front.

I filled a pitcher with water. I tip-toed to the back door and waited. When the doorbell rang at the front door, I counted to myself, with my hand on the backdoor knob. Before there was a knock, I flung open the door. The boy had his hand raised to knock. I threw the water in his face. He was drenched. His hand was still raised to knock. I closed the door.

I never saw him again.

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5.4: Description

At its most basic, **description** deals with the details, both physical characteristics and intangible qualities, of your object or place. It is also trickier than it looks because more is involved than “painting a picture” with words. It is much more effective to allow the reader to experience the object or place in the same way we do. Fortunately, there are steps to take to do both.

1. Draft a description

Write a description of your object or place (just to get started):

My sock is fuzzy and black. It is flat and slightly stretched out around the ankle. It is faded on the heel and ball.

If for some reason your object or place is very small and there is not much to describe, start with as many physical characteristics you can and describe them; then “move” to a description of surrounding objects or environment:

It is stuck to my shirt, which is fuzzy and green. The shirt is made out of the same material towels are made from. It has little “epaulets” on the shoulders like military uniforms. They are attached to the shirt and button down.

2. List physical characteristics

Now make a separate list of at least twenty words that describe the physical characteristics of your object/place (list these on scratch paper or separately in a document – you may use ones you already have), like:

I already have:

- fuzzy
- black
- flat
- stretched out
- faded
- green
- stuck
- epaulets
- military uniforms
- button down

Here are some new ones:

- soft
- crumpled
- worn out
- thin
- ribbed top
- cylindrical
- shabby
- laundered
- fresh
- clingy

3. Put into categories

Notice that the list above, and likely your list as well, contains descriptive words that fall into different categories, like “epaulets” (the name of the part of a shirt that attaches to the shoulder) and “black” (obviously a color). Again, on scratch paper, make the following category column headings:

Parts	Color	Size	Shape	Texture	Other senses	Function
Now place the words on your first list under each appropriate category:						
Parts ↓	Color ↓	Size ↓	Shape ↓	Texture ↓	Other senses ↓	Function ↓
- epaulets - ribbed top	- green - faded - black	cylindrical	- military uniforms - stretched out - flat - crumpled	- clingy - shabby - thin - worn out - soft - fuzzy	- fresh - laundered - stuck	button down

Make sure that you have at least three words from each category on your list:

- at least 3 size words
- at least 3 shape words
- at least 3 color words
- at least 3 texture words
- at least 3 words that describe its parts
- at least 3 words that describe its functions
- at least 1 words each that describes other sensory characteristics (smell, sound, taste, touch)

Note that I will have to add descriptive words to my Parts, Size, and Function categories to add up to 3 for each.

4. Specific Subcategories

Working from your list that now includes at least 3 words from the categories above, list alternate words from at least two possible subcategories (that is, words that are much more specific). For example, if a "size" category word on your list is "large," a more specific word or words might be "six feet deep" and "two inches tall;" for a category color like "red," try "magenta" and "crimson;" for a category part like "top" try "capital" and "finial;" and so on.

The color words from the list above:

green ↓	faded ↓	black ↓
More specific subcategories:		
- emerald - sage - jade	- bleached - dull - pale	- ebony - charcoal - sooty

Do this with as many words in each category as possible.

Adjectives

Can I just add adjectives, like ‘grassy green’ and ‘jet black’ to the words I already have?

Yes. However, for this exercise, try replacing general categories with specific categories and sometimes your descriptions become much more effective. The reason for this is the tendency of English words to move from one functional category to another functional category. For example:

Example 5.4.1:

The clown dropped an **emerald** into his pocket. (“emerald” functions as a noun)

He wore an **emerald** blouse with pink polka-dots. (“emerald” functions as an adjective)

You can say “emerald-green blouse,” but you have to ask yourself whether adding the general category word to the specific is worth the redundancy or not. It could be that you want to emphasize the “green-ness” of something, in which case the addition of “green” to “emerald” is justified. Try both.

5. Rewrite with subcategory and additional words

Now put all of your subcategory (specific) words into a series of complete sentences. Experiment with mixing different categories in the same sentence. Add into your original description:

Example 5.4.2:

My sock is **cylindrical**, **dull**, **bleached**, and **sooty**. It is **flat** and slightly **stretched out** around the **crumpled** ankle. Even though **fresh** and **laundered**, it is **faded charcoal** on the **shabby** heel and **worn-out** ball. It is stuck to my **emerald** shirt, which has **diminutive**, **sage** and **jade-splotched** “epaulets” on the shoulders like the ones on military uniforms. They are attached to the shirt and button down.

6. Descriptive verbs

One characteristic of description is that it uses the most powerful (in grammatical terms) words to express images. Usually we think of adjectives when we describe something. However, **verbs carry more information than adjectives, adverbs, or any other part of speech**. Adjectives “modify” or change slightly nouns; verbs carry raw information. That means that we must try to shift as much meaning to verbs as we can from adjectives. Here is how we do this:

Underline all the verbs in your description.

Look for forms of the verbs “to be” (is, was, were, been, being, is, am, are, will be) and “to have” (have, had, has, will have), even if they are auxiliary verbs.

Change them to action verbs (you may have to rewrite the sentence). Try to look at what the adjectives are trying to say.

Here is my description from above with the verbs highlighted:

*My sock **is** cylindrical, dull, bleached, and sooty. It **is** flat and slightly stretched out around the crumpled ankle. Even though fresh and laundered, it **is** faded charcoal on the shabby heel and worn-out ball. It **is** stuck to my emerald shirt, which **has** diminutive, sage and jade-splotched “epaulets” on the shoulders like the ones on military uniforms. They **are** attached to the shirt and button down.*

Notice that every verb except one is some form of the verb “to be.” I want to change the “beverbs” to verbs that somehow reflect or indicate something about the sock, or reflect or indicate what the sock does or is doing. Here is the first sentence:

*My sock **is** cylindrical, dull, bleached, and sooty.*

I want to somehow show what the sock does as opposed to what it is. What can it do? It can hang from my shirt. It can cover or protect my foot. It can wrap around my ankle. It can complement my other attire. It can stretch over my foot. Let me try one of those:

Example 5.4.3:

My sock **hangs** cylindrical, dull, bleached, and sooty **across the front of my shirt**.

Notice how we have put some characteristic of the sock into the verb as well as in the adjectives. Note, too, the difference.

Let's try another sentence:

Example 5.4.4:

It **is** flat and slightly stretched out around the crumpled ankle.

Can be changed to:

Example 5.4.5:

It **lies** flat and slightly stretched out around the crumpled ankle.

Continue with your sentences until you have eliminated all "be-verbs."

Can I change the sentences while I go along?

Yes. In fact, if you don't find yourself making lots of changes, you are probably not taking all of this seriously.

7. Long sentences

Have you ever been assigned a long reading, like a novel, and gotten a little behind? You probably noticed that "description" is made up of long sentences in longer paragraphs, which you skipped. You might have skipped over to the dialogue or action because the sentences were shorter.

There is a reason for this frustration with description – if you are in a hurry. One of the characteristics of description is that it slows the reader down somewhat, so he or she can "smell the roses," so to speak. It accomplishes this by long, flowing sentences that are full of words that are rich in sounds and experiences and meanings. These long, meaning-rich sentences and paragraphs slow you down purposefully; if you are in a hurry, you miss many meaningful details, much like speeding down the highway without noticing what is around you. You want your reader to slow down for description. Long sentences slow the reader down.

You should now have a number of sentences. Look at your sentences and combine some of them so that your sentences are long and flowing. At this point, there should be few, if any, short ones.

Example 5.4.6:

My sock hangs cylindrical, dull, bleached, and sooty from the front of my favorite, most comfortable shirt and lies flat and slightly stretched out, though tighter and pale around the crumpled ankle. Even though fresh and laundered, it sits faded and charcoal, with the shabby heel and worn-out ball on my emerald shirt, which sports diminutive, sage and jade-splotched epaulets on the shoulders like the ones on military uniforms. These epaulets rest atop the shoulders of the shirt and button down.

It may not be literary genius, but it conforms to basic rules of description. Compare the first description of the sock (number 1) with the one above. Combine sentences to make your description slow the reader down.

Now make a list of five **intangible qualities** that describes your object/place. Follow the process above to develop four of these qualities (refer to your Topic Writing). Put them into a series of sentences and add to the rest of the description. Save one of the qualities for the next step.

8. Negative description

A principle in the graphic arts is the control of "negative space." This is the space in a painting, for example, where nothing is present except the space itself. The idea is that space, even though it appears "empty," still exercises control over a composition. An easy example is the "negative space" (which we would simply call "spaces") on this page. It is necessary to separate each word with a space, and each paragraph with space, and so on.

We can apply this principle to description in one way by describing what something is not. One way to do this is by simply adding three new sentences to the end of our description. Each sentence should contain the words (or words to the effect of) "is not" (they can break the "beverb" rule). In other words, each sentence should roughly be structured like this:

_____ is not _____.
_____ is not _____.
_____ is not _____.

To do this, read through your entire description and decide what your reader might misunderstand or mistake about your object or place, based on your description. Try to anticipate what "blanks" or "spaces" of meaning he or she might fill in. Then describe what your object/place is not, based on what you read. Put into separate sentences, use the formula above, and do not use contractions.

A final sentence should be added to the end of your negative description to reaffirm what your object is. Use a quality from the list of intangible qualities that you made in the previous section:

It is _____.

Now try putting into three sentences separate negative space descriptions and one final sentence that contains an intangible quality.

Right: The tree is not necessarily something I think about much anymore, except when I happen to be sitting under a pecan on a hot day. It is not my tree; it does not belong to me. It is not as special to anyone else as it is to me whenever I think about it, or at least I don't think so. It is, however, one more reminder of the importance of "place" in our lives.

Wrong: The tree is not a spaceship, it is not a cigar, and it is not my aunt; it's just a tree for crying out loud.

That is a lousy sentence that breaks all of the above rules.

Example 5.4.7: A Correct Example

That sock is no longer wearable. I do not think about the sock much anymore, except when I see someone driving along with a coffee-mug or briefcase on top of the car or someone lecturing a class with a mis-buttoned shirt or tripping wildly while crossing the street. No longer do I rush out late to important "firsts" without first checking the mirror for errant socks. However, whenever I come across a single faded black sock clinging to an article of clothing in the closet, I think about how seriously we sometimes take ourselves.

Add these sentences to your description.

9. Tropes

Tropes are sometimes called figures of speech. These are sentence-level patterns that add a three-dimensional quality to a description. This is accomplished by repeating the same principle in both what is being said and how it is being said. The purpose of tropes is to emphasize something in your description. This is accomplished in many ways, but here are some of the most effective:

Onomatopoeia

Onomatopoeia is the principle that sounds made by an object or in a place, or sounds you wish associated somehow with an object or place, are reflected in the language being used. This can be accomplished in several ways.

For example, I want to describe something about the tree used in an example above. I think about what sort of sounds might be associated with trees and decide that the sound made by a breeze blowing through a tree's branches and leaves is something I want to emphasize. I come to the conclusion that words with consonant "s" and "sh" sounds in them most closely resemble the sound I want the reader to hear while describing a tree or a breeze blowing through its branches.

Repeating the same sound (not necessarily the same letter) at the beginning of three or more words (technically words with at least two syllables) in the same phrase or sentence is called **alliteration**.

Example 5.4.8:

Softly the wind sighs through supple young saplings.

I want to further emphasize the sounds of wind with vowel sounds like "oo" and "ah" rather than harsher-sounding long vowels.

Assonance is repeating similar vowel sounds in three or more words in the same phrase or sentence.

Example 5.4.9:

Softly the **cool** wind sighs **through** supple young saplings.

Simile

Another way to emphasize both what is being said and how it is being said is through implicit and explicit comparisons.

“Comparing” one thing to another should conjure up for most readers a side-by-side image of two similar (or dissimilar) things. In simile, this is exactly the case, but it is emphasized in the explicitly side-by-side pattern of simile itself:

_____ is like _____.

The images on either side of “is like” are reinforced by the explicit image on the page of the simile itself.

Example 5.4.10:

Softly the cool wind sighs through supple young saplings **like** whispers of frightened children.

Remember that you may use such comparison techniques for emphasis, and so you should use them sparingly for maximum impact. Comparison in general works better if you compare something familiar to the reader (in this case the whispers of frightened children) to the object you are describing.

Metaphor

When asked what a metaphor is, most people say “a comparison without using ‘like’ or ‘as,’” which is correct. Unfortunately, that description does not help us construct a metaphor. A better description, at least for a writer, is the expression of one thing in terms of another. The effect is not side-by-side, like it is for simile, but more “one on top of the other,” or “at the same time,” or “one within the other,” and so on.

To achieve this effect, we must still reinforce the “side-by-side-ness” of comparison by looking at the two main functions of statements: to tell us what the subject is and to tell us what that subject does or did; in other words, we may use the built-in two-part system of subject/verb that we expect in most statements:

Subject	Verb	
↓	↓	
<u>That cat</u>	<u>purrs and nuzzles</u>	me while I am reading

However, this statement is not a metaphor, because it expresses one thing (a cat) in terms of the same thing (what a cat does or how a cat is). We are familiar with what a cat is and what a cat does.

Using the subject/verb pattern, I can build a metaphor by beginning with a simile that describes something unfamiliar by putting it next to something familiar:

Unfamiliar		Familiar
↓		↓
<u>My thoughts</u>	are all jumbled up like	<u>the clothes in a dryer.</u>

This is a perfectly acceptable simile. However, I want to make it a metaphor by expressing one thing in terms of another – in this case my thoughts in terms of clothes in a dryer or laundry. In other words, how can I express the subject “thoughts” using verbs that describe “clothes in a dryer”:

Example 5.4.11:

My thoughts **tumbled** in my head, gently **easing wrinkles** from problems past, **warmed** by memories of you, **evaporating** slowly, one into another, until they **pile** out into daydreams that I **fold** and **stack** away for another day.

Perhaps a little overdone (no pun intended), but you should see from this process the ease with which to construct a metaphor in this way.

Personification

Once we master the construction of a metaphor, we may construct a personification, which is expressing a thing (that is not a person) in terms of a person or a living thing, in the same way.

What is expressed, and in what terms, below?

The trees stood guard along the water, at rapt attention and silent, sentries on lookout duty for the spirit of the lake.

In this case, all we have to do is separate the subject from the verb and the words used to clarify the verb, and we see that “trees” are expressed in terms of “standing guard,” “at rapt attention,” and “on lookout duty.”

Add one of each of these tropes to your description. Your description may sound overdone in places, but you should practice each of these for use later on, perhaps in different places, in your essay.

You may describe any object or place this way. When you have a description constructed, you may add it to the other elements in your personal writing. When you finish ALL the elements, you may then arrange elements for greatest effect.

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5.5: Comparison

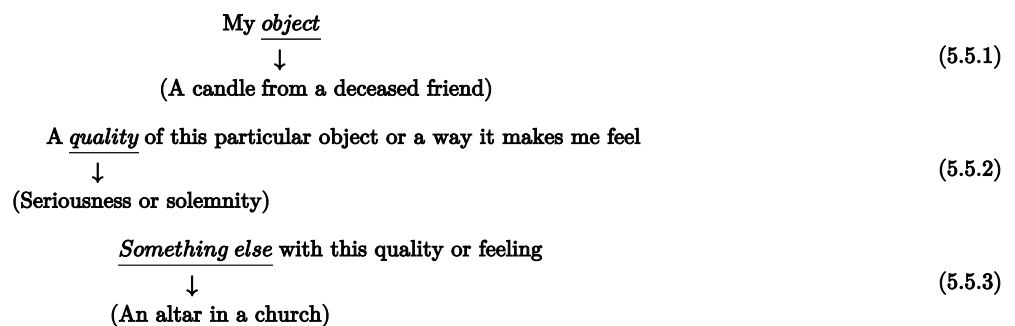
Comparison, like most of these modes of thought and writing, is something we seem to do naturally. Anytime we can name something, we almost automatically categorize it according to its similarities and differences with other things. We understand many things based on “where it fits in” to the world, and we can only understand those relationships based on similarities and differences (or perceived similarities and differences).

In your essay, you can help place something in the world (in this case the same object or place from your Topic writing) by comparing it to other things. Authors do this in a number of ways. One is to point out explicit similarities and differences. Another is to report various ways something is perceived. We will practice both. These are not the usual kinds of comparison; they are intended to add to what you are already used to doing.

1. Choose something to compare to your object

Read the Description of your object/place.

Think of a quality or feeling that you want me to associate with your description of your object/place. Using the candle from the Narrative section as an example, perhaps I want to emphasize the seriousness and solemnity with which I regard that candle, which after all reminds me of a deceased friend. What else (what other object) might emphasize “seriousness and solemnity?” Perhaps something from a church or similar place might accomplish this. I think of my candle in the same way some churches regard candles, either as representing the seriousness of an event or the importance of some part of it. What can I compare it to? Perhaps the altar. Or maybe something on top of the altar, like a book or other sacred object. Or maybe the candle that stays lit perpetually.



I can also express it as a simile:

Example 5.5.1:

The candle from a deceased friend is **like** an altar in a church.

Once I choose something with similar qualities to compare to my object, I can go to the next step.

2. Write a description of the new object

Write a description of the new object/place, in the same way you wrote your description of your object/place, using the same rules and techniques you used then. When you finish what amounts to your second description (of an object/place similar to yours), you place it directly after your first description, and begin it with “Similarly,” to tie the two together. (You can copy and paste your first description).

| [A description of **your** object or place]

Similarly,

| [A description of a **similar** object or place]

3. Range of perspectives (people)

Once you finish comparing by a second description of a similar object, think about comparison from a “**range of perspectives**.” This means simply comparing how others see your object.

Example 5.5.2:

My mother saw the candle, for instance, as a dust-collecting nick-knack on my shelf [I would then explain why she thought of it that way, and how I know this, and so on]. **One of my friends** thought I was too sentimental about the whole thing, so to him the candle was a sort of symbol of wishy-washy, wimpy thinking that was a waste of time [then explain, and so on]. [I then explain] **my own feelings** [about the candle].

This is called a “range of perspectives”; you choose at least two perspectives about your object and describe them, then describe your own perspective.

Notice there are at least three: **mother, friend, me**. It could be more general (some people, other people, me), but the more specific the better (make the people as different as possible – mom (older, female, related, etc.) vs. friend (male, younger, not related, etc.).

Note that I save **my** perspective for the 3rd one.

Example 5.5.3:

Some people look at the candle and ...

Other people ask me why it ...

I think about it as ...

Write a range of perspectives comparison for your object/place. It should include 3 sets of perspectives (the mom, friend, me example above is one set; I need 2 more to complete a range of perspectives). Add this to the end of the description/comparison you completed above. The range of perspectives should look something like this:

Example 5.5.4:

Some people look at the candle and ...

Other people ask me why it ...

I think about it as ...

My mother dusts it regularly but never gives it ...

My roommate teased me about ...

I don't let this bother me because ...

We once had a cleaning service that threw it away ...

My deceased friend would have been appalled ...

I am happy now as I ...

4. Range of perspective (from time)

Another kind of comparison by perspective is based on **time**. Instead of perspectives from different people, these are **perspectives from different points in time**.

Example 5.5.5:

For example, when I **first** got the candle, it was a sort of token friendship thing [explain, etc.]. **When she died**, it became more important. **Now** I think of her whenever I see it. I don't ever plan to get rid of it.

Notice how my perspective on the candle changes at different points in the past, now, and in the future. Write another range of perspectives comparison based on different points in time, using at least three sets of perspectives. It should look something like this:

Example 5.5.6:

When I **first** got the candle and ...

One day I realized how much it meant to me when ...

Now it sits on my dresser ...

Sometimes I look at the candle and wonder ...

At other times I wish ...

Occasionally I take it down...

It used to be that I ...

Someday maybe I'll be able to ...

Now I find myself wishing that ...

Add your range of perspective from time to your range of perspective from people. Add to the rest of your comparison. Your complete comparison should look like this:

[A description of your object or place]

Similarly, [A description of a similar object or place]

Range of perspectives (people):

[person]

[person]

[me]

[person]

[person]

[me]

[person]

[person]

[me]

Range of perspectives (time):

[time]

[time]

[time]

[time]

[time]

[time]

[time]

[time]

[time]

You may compare any two objects or places this way. When you have a comparison constructed, you may add it to the other elements in your personal writing. When you finish ALL the elements, you may then arrange elements for greatest effect.

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5.6: Definition

We are used to thinking of definition in terms of the dictionary or some other resource. If we are asked to define something, we usually “look it up.” For the definition you are about to write, however, **you** are the authority. You do not look anything up. You define according to principles of definition, but you are the author of the definition.

Parts of a definition:

- Formal re-definition
- History
- Context
- Sounds
- Similar things
- Function
- Meaning

1. A Formal Re-definition

This will be the first sentence of your definition.

The first thing to do is decide how to “formally” define (actually, **re-define**) your object (remember, this is a definition of your object as you see it). When we call this part of your definition “formal” it does not refer to its level of formality; rather, it is formal in the sense that it has a consistent “form.” A formal definition is one that contains three specific parts: the *name* of the object, what *category* of things it belongs in, and how your object is *different* from other things in that same category. In other words, a formal definition has specific parts:

1. the term itself
2. the class of things that the term falls into
3. how that term is different from other things in the same class

A simple example of this formula is this:

1. term	1. a "sandal"
2. class	2. is a type of "shoe"
3. differences in class	3. that "has open toes and straps"

You can also write a formal definition pattern this way:

A _____ is a type of _____ that _____.

OR

A sandal is a type of shoe that has open toes and straps.

In other words, “sandal” falls into the class “shoe,” but is different from other shoes in that it “has open toes and straps.”

Re-define your object:

Notice, however, the above definition of "sandal" is the definition you would expect to find in the dictionary. Remember that you have the authority to define your terms. To do this, you simply put the term into a different class and tell how the term differs from items in THAT class. For example, I could say that a “sandal” is a type of "weapon" that "may be used on insects." I could also say that a "sandal" is a type of "accessory" that is "worn in the summer." Note that I can choose the class that I want the term to fall into. Just remember that the class you put the term into should be credible to the reader.

Note too that the **transitions** I use are consistent:

_____ is a type of _____ that _____.

The transition phrases are not confined to these exact words, but they are useful in staying focused on the parts of a formal definition. What we are really doing is re-defining.

Using this formula, I may define "candle" (my object) by answering the following questions:

1. What kind of thing or place is it?
2. To what larger class of things does it belong?
3. How is it different from other things in that class? (Or what parts can it be divided into?)

1. What kind of thing or place is it?

Use the name of your object or place as the "term" to be defined. I will define (actually redefine) the word candle.

2. To what larger class of things does it belong?

Classify your object or place in the way you think about it for this essay. How do I classify my candle? I do not classify it as a "type of lighting device made of wax with a wick in it." That is the definition I would find in a dictionary.

How do I think of my candle? I think of it as a reminder of my friend; that is what makes it special to me. So I will classify the candle as a reminder.

3. How is it different from other things in that class? (Or what parts can it be divided into?)

In other words, how is my candle different from other kinds of reminders? I rarely take a match to any of the reminders I can think of. It has a connection to the person who gave it to me and so I think of her. No other reminder lights my room when I think of her. This is how it is different.

Example 5.6.1:

Put together with transitions, here is my example formal definition for "candle:"

The candle is **a kind of reminder** **that** not only lets me think of my friend when I see it, but also lights my room when I think of her.

2. History

In one to three statements, what is a history of your place or object **as reclassified**? In other words, what is **your** history with the object as you have reclassified it? To use my example, the question/ answer could be:

Example 5.6.2:

What is **my history** with the candle (as a reminder)?

Every time I clean my room, or get dressed, or pass by, or go to bed, or wake up in the morning, I see the candle and think of my friend. **At times**, I just light it for a few minutes, and I am *reminded* of her presence.

3. Context

In one to three statements, what is the context of my object **as reclassified**? In other words, how does the object fit into the world, or my world, as reclassified? For me:

Example 5.6.3:

How does the candle **fit in** (as a reminder)?

I am bombarded with meeting reminders, "to do" lists, alarms, sticky notes, deadlines, requests, and on and on. My candle is the only reminder I have that slows me down and lets me think of her.

4. Sounds

What sounds are *associated* with the object as reclassified?

Example 5.6.4:

As a reminder of my friend, what **sounds are associated** with the candle?

The **silent** burning of the candle reminds me of her **quiet** demeanor, the long **silences** that followed our fights, and the suddenness with which her life was snuffed out.

5. Similar Things

What are some things that have *similar characteristics* to my object as reclassified?

Example 5.6.5:

As a reminder of my friend, what are some **similar things**?

Like an old photograph, or stories told by friends, or places we met, or the smell of barberry and cinnamon, my candle **reminds me of** the time we were together.

6. Function

As reclassified, how does my object *function* (what does it do as reclassified)?

Example 5.6.6:

As a reminder of my friend, what does the candle **do**?

The candle only burns when I light it once a year – on the day I lost her.

7. Meaning

As reclassified, what *meaning* do I give the object?

Example 5.6.7:

As a reminder of my friend, what does the candle **mean** to me?

To me, the candle **signifies** a life lived quietly, resolutely, but with a burning passion for living in the moment.

Here are the example sentences from above, put together:

Example 5.6.8: draft

The candle is **a kind of** reminder **that** not only lets me think of my friend when I see it, but also lights my room when I think of her. **Every time** I clean my room, or get dressed, or pass by, or go to bed, or wake up in the morning, I see the candle and think of my friend. **At times**, I just light it for a few minutes, and I am reminded of her presence. I am bombarded with meeting reminders, “to do” lists, alarms, sticky notes, deadlines, requests, and on and on. My candle is the only reminder I have that slows me down and lets me think of her. The **silent** burning of the candle reminds me of her **quiet** demeanor, the long **silences** that followed our fights, and the suddenness with which her life was snuffed out. **Like** an old photograph, or stories told by friends, or places we met, or the smell of barberry and cinnamon, my candle **reminds me of** the time we were together. The candle only burns when I light it once a year – on the day I lost her. **To me**, the candle **signifies** a life lived quietly, resolutely, but with a burning passion for living in the moment.

You may define any object or place this way. When you have a definition constructed, you may add it to the other elements in your personal writing. When you finish ALL the elements, you may then arrange elements for greatest effect.

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5.7: Cause and Effect

Have you ever noticed that when something happens, we like to know what “caused” it? And have you ever noticed that people don’t always agree on what causes something to happen? The fact that people can’t always seem to agree indicates that “cause and effect” may be as much a concept as it is a reality.

For example, a huge boulder rolls down a hill suddenly, without anyone around to push it. It lands on a church full of worshippers, on a Sunday morning, and kills everyone. Now, there may be more than one “cause” for this event, depending on who is doing the explaining. Was the boulder “caused” to roll down the hill at that instant after thousands of years of wind and rain and erosion, with one last wind gust the final push? That is a sort of scientific explanation. Some people might say that such an occurrence is a little too coincidental, and maybe “the devil” caused it to kill all those nice people. Others might say “the Lord” did it to punish those evil people. Some might say it was just “sheer coincidence.” The point is that saying what the cause of something is, or what the effects of something are, is under our control as authors.

It is the same for your object or place. You can determine what causes you to feel the way you do about it, what causes you to see it or think of it as you do. Or, if it was a gift, what caused the giver to give it? If it is broken, what caused it to break? And so on.

1. “Cause” statements

What are at least 3 different **causes** for the ways I see, feel about, or think about my object/place, or for the way it came to me, or why it is the way it is?

Write at least 3 sentences that describe “causes” for your object or place, and at least 3 sentences that describe “effects” of your object/place. These causes may be causes for the way you feel, etc., about the object, or what causes it to be different, or what causes others to see it in a different way than you do, and so on. The same for effects. In other words:

*My fondness for the candle **comes from** the laughs we had together. I remember the fun **because** she was especially silly when she gave the candle to me. I think she gave it to me **because** she loved giving more than she liked the candle itself.*

2. “Effect” statements

What are at least 3 different **effects** my object/place has on me?

In the same way, what are its effects on you? What are its effects on others? What are some unexpected effects? And so on.

*The candle **makes me** sad at the same time. **It reminds me** of the last time I saw her. It **makes me** smile through my tears.*

3. “If/Then” Statements

What are at least 3 ways to say something about your object or place using **if/then** sentence constructions?

Another way to write cause and effect is to make sure that the sentences are structured in cause/effect language. One of the best forms of this language is “if/then” sentences. All parents are familiar with this sentence form, and its power:

***If** you ever do that again young man, **then** you will be grounded for the rest of your life.*

I am *still* grounded. For a writer, “if/then” sentences reinforce the idea of cause and effect in the sentence structure.

Write at least 3 sentences that are “if/then” sentences. They don’t have to have the words “if” and “then” in them, but they should be implied. For example:

Example 5.7.1:

Do that again and I’ll break your favorite glass.

The “if” and “then” are implied in this example.

Add these 3 sentences to the first six or so from above.

3. “Because” statements

What are at least 10 ways to complete a statement like “[My object] is special **because** _____”?

One other way to express cause and effect in sentence structure is to use a word or phrase to link causes and effects, like “because” or “as a result of” or some similar device: I like to write because it makes people react. People react to my writing because of the little style devices that I use.

Write at least 10 sentences using a cause/effect linking device like “because.” Start with one or two beginning phrases and repeat them 10 times, like

The candle is special to me **because** _____. (x 10)

Fill in the blank 10 times. Add these 10 sentences to the end of your cause/effect writing.

You may show cause and effect for any object or place this way. When you have a cause and effect constructed, you may add it to the other elements in your personal writing. When you finish ALL the elements, you may then arrange elements for greatest effect.

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5.8: History

People tend to take **history** rather seriously (which is why we are adding it to our essay), but from a writer's perspective, history is essentially a narrative that thinks of itself as fact. In other words, history is structured like narrative: a beginning, middle, and end (we are always at the end in history), and a sequence of events. It tends to cover larger chunks of time, however, than narrative. Remember how your narrative (anecdote) was written about a single time (one day, for example). History is simply a series of single times. History is more or less a series of anecdotes that cover 3 or more single times.

Most Common Question: "How do I 'connect' 3 separate anecdotes or make 3 separate anecdotes 'flow'?"

The answer to this question is found in the way people "fill in the blanks" when reading narrative. If I tell you three (or more) stories about myself, you draw conclusions about me. Choosing anecdotes about an object or place may seem random (it may even BE random), but readers generally see connections implicit in narratives grouped together. Transitions between your anecdotes are not necessary, unless you later think adding transitions adds to the effect of the entire essay.

To accomplish a history as it is defined above, our task is simple. Create 3 new anecdotes. These will follow the same rules as narratives (see Narrative section). Be careful and make sure that you tell 3 **new** anecdotes; these new anecdotes need only have your place/object in common. Do not consciously connect them otherwise (as a reader, I will connect them automatically). The additional rules will be

1. That the new anecdotes are in chronological order and,
2. That they should be limited to no more than half a page or so each.

Later, you may insert your original anecdote at the appropriate place in the history, if you so wish.

These new anecdotes should not have any "transition" phrases; they should each be in one paragraph (don't worry if each paragraph seems long; that is the nature of history in some cases – long winded). Think of "the first time" you were associated with the object/place to help you get started on the first anecdote.

Picturing History as anecdotes:

$$\text{History} = \text{Anecdote 1} + \text{Anecdote 2} + \text{Anecdote 3} \quad (5.8.1)$$

You may tell a history about any object or place this way. When you have a history constructed, you may add it to the other elements in your personal writing. When you finish ALL the elements, you may then arrange elements for greatest effect.

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5.9: Analogy

An **analogy** is a **simile** that is extended as far as you can extend it. A simile is when you say that one thing “is like” something else. In other words, it compares an idea or situation, which is new or unfamiliar to the reader, to something concrete or familiar to that reader.

It helps the reader see the unfamiliar in terms of the familiar. Using analogy in the middle of an essay is like holding up the Mona Lisa in the middle of a lecture on painting portraits; it illustrates the way you see your subject or idea in an efficient and graphic way, it simplifies complex ideas by showing us something familiar, and it helps us remember an image by associating it with something else that we can remember. (The previous sentence is a short, simple example of an analogy).

Constructing a simile

| *The candle **is like** a church pew.*

A simile emphasizes how your idea and a concrete object familiar to the reader are alike or similar:

[your idea or subject] **is like** [object familiar to the reader].

Note

Even though I write “The candle,” I am thinking of the characteristics I associate with the candle and with a pew that are similar.

Construct a Simile

Create a simile comparing your object/place to something similar and familiar to the reader. Remember that the way you see your object/place is probably conceptual in nature, so make the comparison to something concrete. Use this formula to get started:

[my subject (the way I see it)] **is like** [something concrete and familiar to many readers, and is similar in some way to the way I see my subject].

In other words,

_____ **is like** _____.

Most Common Question: “What is the difference between a comparison and a simile?”

In a comparison, the reader generally understands how the two objects are connected without any additional explanation from the writer:

A typewriter is like a computer.

This is a comparison for two reasons: the two objects and the characteristics they share are familiar to most readers, and the objects are not different enough to need explaining (they are both tangible and have some similar characteristics). In a simile, the two sides of the simile/analogy are as different as possible but still connected:

A typewriter is like a rookie first-baseman’s glove.

A “typewriter” and a “rookie first-baseman’s glove” should be different enough that you are asking yourself, “What? How in the world is a typewriter like a rookie first-baseman’s glove?” However, if you can answer that question (How are these two things alike?) with at least 3 characteristics that the compared objects share, then you are on your way to an analogy:

A typewriter is like a rookie first-baseman’s glove; it causes my hands to hurt, it makes many mistakes, and no one wants to use it.

Obviously, this is not a literary gem. However, it does make connections to characteristics shared by these two objects that are not immediately apparent, and so qualifies as a simile.

Grammar is important

When filling in these blanks, try to fill each with similar grammatical constructions. For example, in the simile “life is like a highway,” the first part (life) is a noun and the thing compared (a highway) is also a noun. Notice too that “life” is conceptual in nature, as well as the thing we are trying to describe. It is also the unfamiliar side of the equation. On the other side of the equation, “a highway” is both concrete (no pun intended) and familiar. So we are trying to understand “life” (unfamiliar concept) in terms of “a highway” (familiar and tangible), and both are nouns.

However, if we begin the left side of the equation with something like a gerund phrase (an “- ing” construction) we should also use a gerund phrase in the right side of the equation. For example, if I take the above simile “life is like a highway” and begin it “living life,” followed by “is like,” then I should finish it with a similar construction, like “driving down a highway.” Instead of comparing two things (“life” and “highway”), we are now comparing two processes (“living” and “driving”). Whichever the case, keep both sides of the equation the same construction.

Here are these two ways illustrated:

Noun to noun comparison: This candle is like a crucifix.

Gerund to gerund comparison: Lighting my candle is like going to church on Easter.

Notice that I am trying to make my reader understand my object in the same way I understand it by analogy. He or she does not think of a decorative candle in my living room as a ritual object like a crucifix, or lighting it as performing some kind of ritual; I have to compare it to one to make him or her understand this. If I were writing this analogy for an essay, I would probably try to think of a specific ritual and use the second sentence:

Lighting my candle **is like** going to church on Easter.

Again, note that the process is compared to a process in this example.

Find more specific similarities between the characteristics of your object (or the way you THINK of your object) and the object you are comparing. You do this by asking “How?” after your simile, and then answering that question as thoroughly as possible. For the simile “life is like a highway,” I simply ask “How [is life like a highway]?” I find similarities by answering that question, using a formula like this:

[How is life like a highway]?

They both _____.

They both _____.

They both _____.

Example 5.9.1:

[How is life like a highway]?

They both have detours, obstacles, turns, and accidents.

They both take me to places I did not expect.

They both leave me feeling run over at times.

Please note that I answer the question “How?” at least three times.

[**How** is lighting my candle like going to church on Easter?]

It is something I do once a year to remember a death. It commemorates the death of an important person in my life. It gives me a chance to reflect on my life.

Note that the word “it” refers to “lighting my candle” and “going to church” at the same time. In other words, “it” is ambiguous.

Now put all these elements together and you have the skeleton of an analogy:

*Lighting my candle **is like** going to church on Easter; **it** is something I do once a year to remember a death, **it** commemorates the death of an important person in my life, and **it** gives me a chance to reflect on my life.*

Notice that I put them into one sentence with a semicolon before the list of answers to the question “How?”

Elaborate

I can now elaborate on each one of these (see full example below). Put into a prose paragraph or paragraphs, elaborating on each one with at least one sentence per answer to the “**How?**” question.

Note

Each elaboration sentence is also **ambiguous**, which means each has at least two meanings at the same time. Each elaboration, in other words, can be applied to the ritual of lighting the candle and going to church *at the same time*. If possible, make your elaboration sentences ambiguous, too.

Refer to original simile

Conclude with a statement that refers to or reflects the simile. I end my analogy below, for example, with a sentence that connects to the original simile at the beginning of the analogy.

Example 5.9.2: draft

Analogy

Lighting my candle **is like** going to church on Easter; **it** is something I do once a year to remember a death, **it** commemorates the death of an important person in my life, and **it** gives me a chance to reflect on my life. Performing such a ritual at least once a year insures that I do not ever forget my connections with a person who in turn connects me to a personal, spiritual world. Each year, it lets me remember in my own way how short life can be for those who are important to us, especially in our own short lives. I look forward to the yearly ritual because, although it is terribly sad, it is at the same time renewing and strengthening, and it gives me a chance to reflect on all the important things in life that living day to day sometimes lets us forget.

Lighting the candle once a year for my friend is a ritual that fulfills and satisfies me in the same way that the spiritual ritual of Easter fulfills and satisfies me.

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5.10: Arrangement Principles

Putting Together Your Elements for a Desired Effect

You should have before you now a series of completed elements or modes that address your object or place. If you have not already, get these edited by your instructor until they are each perfected. The next step is the key to understanding personal writing, composing, and arranging. It is a simple idea that we borrow from art, architecture, music, and other design arts. It is, however, much different from way we are used to writing.

Most Common Question: "How do I organize my elements?"

The best way to "compose" or "arrange" your elements is according to some kind of **design principle** or principles.

A **design principle is what organizes the essay for you**. In fact, any question that you have about which words to use, which sections to use, which elements to use, what spacing to use, what format to use, what order to use, what to omit, how to make it flow, how to keep it from flowing, how long it should be, or practically any other question, should be answered by the design principle you develop.

Effect

What effect do I want to have on my reader?

The first and probably most important point in a design process is determining the **effect** we want to have on the reader (you answered this in your topic writing). Once you decide what effect you wish to have on the reader, many other design decisions are easy to make. In other words, **how we arrange and change the elements in an essay is based on what effect we want it to have**. One object I have used in this program is the candle. I must first decide what effect I want to have on my reader.

What effect does my object have on me?

The candle represents to me a person who was very important in my life. I want the reader to feel that. How do I act out that importance?

I light the candle every year on the day she died. Doing that every year has the effect of not forgetting her.

How can this object have the same or similar effect on my reader?

How do I get you to feel what I feel about this candle? I remember my friend when I light it once a year. In other words, I **repeat** the act of lighting the candle once every year, and the effect of doing that helps me remember her.

Design/Organizational Principles

What organizational principle can I use to reinforce, mirror, or reproduce this effect?

Once I decide what effect I want to have, then I decide what kinds of organizational principles reinforce, highlight, suggest, or otherwise support that effect. Some **basic organizational principles** include the following:

Organizational Principles:

- Repetition (and Non-repetition)
- Symmetry (and Asymmetry)
- Balance (and Imbalance)
- Structure (and Non-structure)
- Order (and Disorder)

Please note that each of these has an **opposite** that is just as much a choice as the basic principle; for example, for "balance," you may choose to make "imbalance" the principle around which you organize your essay. There is also asymmetry, non-repetition,

unstructured, and disorder. The point is that **whatever principle or principles reinforce the effect, those are the ones you should use to organize the elements of your already written essay draft.**

In my example, I want to use **repetition** as an organizing principle, because I **repeat the act** of lighting the candle. I also **repeat** this act at regular intervals (yearly). It is also a simple act. Therefore, what I want to **repeat** is “lighting the candle.” A very simple way to reinforce the effect of **repeating** the act of lighting the candle is to **repeat** a single, simple sentence at regular intervals.

Here is a simple sentence:

I light a candle every year to remember my friend.

In order to employ **repetition** as an organizing principle, I can repeat the same simple sentence, or a variation of it, at the end of every one of my elements, or at least at regular intervals – in the same way I repeat the act of lighting the candle at regular intervals as a simple act of remembering my friend. I hope the repetition will trigger a similar reaction (effect) in you (the reader).

I might also use the principle of **symmetry** to make the amount of writing approximately the same between the repeated sentences. For longer elements, I may have to insert the sentence halfway through, and for shorter elements, I may have to combine 2 or more in order to keep the spacing between the repeated sentences more or less even.

Another principle I might use is **order**. How do I put these elements in order? Again, I check my effect. I want this to reflect the amount of time that has passed since my friend passed away. Therefore, I want the elements to go in some sort of *chronological* order.

Arrangement

How do I arrange (compose) my elements?

The next step is to look at your elements (your written draft) and try to arrange, delete, add to, and otherwise change them to have the effect (based on some organizational principle) that you want it to have on your readers. The point here is that **all our arrangement decisions are governed by that principle or principles**, which in turn are governed by the effect. Since my most obvious time-related elements are my anecdote and history, I want to make sure they are in chronological order. Then I just insert other elements to make the spacing proper for the symmetry principle above.

An Essay Schematic

Here is a possible arrangement of my elements **according to the design principle I have sketched out above:**

Example 5.10.1:

Anecdote

[I have looked at my Anecdote and the anecdotes in my History and put the earliest one – earliest anecdote in the chronology of my life – first. Next, I add the sentence that I constructed above to the end of the first element (Anecdote)]: **I light a candle every year to remember my friend.**

Description

[Here I insert my entire description of the candle, and then add the repeated sentence to the end of the element]: **I light a candle every year to remember my friend.**

Another Anecdote

[Here I borrow one of the anecdotes from the History element, and add the repeated sentence]: **I light a candle every year to remember my friend.**

Definition

[This element helps the reader understand how I look at (define) the candle – then I add the sentence]: **I light a candle every year to remember my friend.**

Another Anecdote

[From the History element.] Plus, **I light a candle every year to remember my friend.**

Comparison

[I put the second half of the Comparison element – the part that describes a similar object – here.] I then add: **I light a candle every year to remember my friend.**

Another Anecdote

[The last one from my History element.] + **I light a candle every year to remember my friend.**

Most Common Question: “Don’t I need transitions between elements, or don’t I need to make them flow?”

The answer to this question is the same as the answer to almost all formatting, usage, punctuation, arrangement, and even grammatical questions about this kind of essay: **it depends upon your design principle!**

If “making my essay flow” somehow intensifies the effect, and so is compatible with your design principles, then you need transitions. However, if part of the effect involves moving abruptly from one thing to another, then you do not want transitions.

Other Examples of Arrangement

Please note that these are not the only principles we may use. Use whatever principle(s) your object/place suggests.

For example, I might choose a creek to focus on in this essay. I might choose to talk about this creek as a place where I played as a kid. What I want to emphasize might be how it **meanders** across the fields where we played. In other words, I want the effect on the reader to be “meandering.” How can I make that idea reflect in my writing (in other words, **how can I organize my writing so that the reader gets the effect of “meandering?”**)?

There are several things I can do. I can choose the most “meandering” writing elements that I have. “Description” comes to mind, because of its long, flowing sentences. There are other places (comparison, definition, parts of narrative, history) where I used some description, or at least long, flowing sentences. I can, for example, be sure my essay begins and ends with meandering, flowing sentences.

Another way I can organize with the effect “meandering” might be with a sort of **randomness**. That is, my stories and analysis, for example, may not come where the reader expects them, or they may not have much of a point, or they may be interrupted unexpectedly by parts of other elements, and so on.

All of these “principles of organizing” (or in this case, “disorganizing”) support the effect I want to have on the reader (in this case, random, meandering, flowing, and slightly disorganized writing).

Once again, **the point is to let the effect you want for your object or place dictate the principles around which you will organize** the elements that you have already written.

Articulate a Design Principle

You are now ready to write a design principle statement. This is what helps you decide how to arrange your essay.

Please note the following: **What you write down for this section does not go in your essay.** It will go in your portfolio ahead of your completed final essay on a separate page. On a separate sheet of paper, write down the effect you want your essay to have, what principles of arrangement or organization you plan to use to achieve this effect, and how you carry this out in arranging your essay. In other words:

What **effect** do I **want** to have on my reader?

What **organizational principle(s)** do I wish to use to **reinforce** the effect?

How can I **arrange the elements** in this essay to reflect the organizational principle(s)?

Here are some example design principle statements (I have highlighted the words that answer the 3 questions above):

Example 5.10.2:

I want the reader to feel the ritual I perform every year when I light this candle. **I will reinforce this** regular yearly ritual by **repeating** the idea of lighting the candle. **I will do this** by repeating the same sentence four times at regular intervals at the end of anecdotes. **I will arrange the essay** in chronological order **by beginning and ending** with an anecdote, **splitting** the history anecdotes and **ending** with the latest, and **inserting** other elements to make the spacing between that repeated sentence about the same.

Or

I want the reader to feel the unstructured freedom of play when we were kids, especially the way I felt playing along the creek, which meandered all along the valley. **I will reinforce** this sense of aimless, unstructured meandering by making my essay loosely structured and somewhat unorganized. **To make it reflect this** I will **arrange the essay by** starting and ending with the long flowing sentences of my description element, **and by** starting and ending every element with the part of that element that describes, or at least has the longest, most flowing sentences. Some will be short, but most will be very long. **I will** combine the short ones into longer ones so that most sections seem longer than they have to be.

Or

I want the reader to feel the jarring, unnerving irritation of the air horn that kept bowing behind me at the basketball game. **I will reinforce this idea** of irritation by irritating and frustrating the reader at every turn. I will do this by using disorder and chaos. **Maybe I will** randomly throw in the words AIR HORN 2 or 3 times each paragraph. **I will arrange the essay by** splitting and interrupting and just ending each element at places that make no sense to the reader. **I will randomly** use punctuation. I will stop in mid sentence. I will break every rule I know about printing I can think of to irritate the reader. It will be difficult to read, **but the reader will still be able to understand** that all this is about an irritating air horn.

Composing (arrangement)

Now arrange (compose) the elements in your essay according to your design principle statement. Have fun with this and be creative. **Remember that it is the effect on the reader that is the most important idea here.** And the fact that you tell me in a design statement what you are doing (and why) allows you to do whatever you want to accomplish the effect you are after.

Add phrase/statement level patterns

Here are some **sentence patterns** that further emphasize both the effect and the meaning of what you have written. They are used to emphasize a point or for a desired effect. Remember, they are used for emphasis. Use these patterns sparingly in an essay or speech.

Repetition Patterns

Asyndeton (Omitting conjunctions)

He has learned to change, to live, to love. *[No “and” before final element in a list]*

Polysyndeton (Adding conjunctions)

She learns, **and** what she learns she cherishes, **and** what she cherishes she changes, **and** what she changes she learns to live with.

Anaphora (Same initial words/phrases in series)

Life is **learning to change** our minds, **learning to change** those things we find changeable, and **learning to change** from what we are to what we must become.

Epistrophe (Same ending words/phrases in series)

We are taught to change; society accepts **it**, survival demands **it**, learning depends upon **it**, and life progresses through **it**.

Alliteration (Repeated sounds in series)

A little love makes learning a lifelong ambition.

Question Patterns

Rhetorical question (Tag)

Is life not made up of changing, learning, and changing some more?

Change is the only thing that is always constant, **is it not?**

Rhetorical question (Commonly understood)

When will it all change? [Answer implied or unstated]

Simple Question + Answer

What do we learn from change? We learn flexibility.

Interruption Patterns

Interrupted syntax

All of us – **learner or teacher, giver or taker, meddler or preacher** – bend to the forces of change.

Aside (Parenthetical)

Life (**at least one that is full of love and full of learning**) is constantly changing.

Balance Patterns

Symmetry (Similar number/size elements before and after linking verb)

Life **means** change.

A bird in the hand **is worth** two in the bush.

Balanced elements

He who **enters the arena of change** also **loves the game of life**.

Antithesis (Opposite balanced elements)

Some **look around** at the way things **are** and ask, “**Why?**” –

I **dream about** the way things **might be** and ask, “**Why not?**”

Chiasmus (Reversed balanced elements)

In order to **live** with change we must **change** the way we **live**.

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CHAPTER OVERVIEW

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6.1: Annotated Persuasion Paper – MLA Format

Appendix A

In the following student's draft, the words highlighted in **bold** are the words that indicate which kind of statement(s) the writer is making. You **do not** make your words bold.

Heading	Jenny Smith Dr. Poulter Composition II 10 May 2000
Title	On That Note: Why All Schools Need A Music Education Program
→ General issue statement	Generally , music education is a valuable program that should receive more attention in public schools. Music education includes both applied music classes and book based music classes. Applied
→ Specific statements describing key terms in issue statement	music classes are classes where students have a "hands-on" approach to music. These classes include band, orchestra, jazz band, individual lessons, and choir. The second category included in music education is book based music classes . These are classes that teach students about important music figures and periods in which these figures were composing. Music programs deserve more attention from many different areas. More attention from the government will result in more funding and improve implementation of more programs in public schools. Attention from the State Regents will help to require all students to take one year of music based classes. Attention from the school itself will help improve the condition of an existing program or
→ Summary statement	implement a new program. Public schools include all state-funded schools that are responsible for education students from kindergarten through twelfth grade.
→ Theoretical statements	Music classes are incredibly important to students throughout the educational process, and because of the significance of learning music principles, whether it be making music or learning about key individuals in history that were composing music, these programs need more funding from the government and need to be implemented into the core curriculum of all public schools. Theoretically , music programs need more attention because by improving these programs students will have sufficient exposure to this important aspect of history and culture. Also, schools supported by tax dollars are supposed to train everyone, and music skills help other areas (both mentioned above). Additionally, children that are exposed to music gain sharper math and other "non-art" skills as well, and by giving more attention to music programs, all students become even better versed in other aspects in addition to learning about music.
→ Procedure statements	An easy first step to improving local music programs is to ask local community members to find unused musical instruments. The community member can then donate these instruments to the local music program. In turn , a student who may have not been able to afford an instrument can have an equal chance to study applied music. The music program, as a result on one person's donation, will consequently be able to teach one additional child the value of applied music. Another more dynamic step is for school administrators to realize that music is just as important as English, math, and science. In

	turn, music classes should be required just as these more recognized classes are required in the core curriculum of high school students.
Purpose in the form of an anecdote	→ One day I was speaking to a distant relative who was my age. We were both in high school, and we were discussing what different clubs and activities we were active in. I was telling her how active I was in my school's music program, and how much this activity had helped me in different areas. I was then startled to learn that she was not ever given the choice to be active in a music program in her school. She said it was not offered, and additionally, her school failed to offer any other music appreciation classes. She had never been exposed to music or anything dealing with music in her educational experience. For this reason, I believe all students should have the opportunity to be
Claim statement	→ involved in a well-developed music program in public schools, and those who choose not to be a part of a musical ensemble should be required to take a music class that teaches valuable information and
Evaluation of claim statement	skills that pertain to music.
Who the claim affects	→ Music education in public schools affects all students who are hoping to attain an education. If I surveyed any five high school students and asked them what musical period Beethoven wrote in, a vast majority could not answer the question. This is an important aspect of the history of music as well as human culture in general. Students should be exposed to this information.
How I know	→ Leaving music education out of the core curriculum started because of the large amount of information students are expected to learn in their educational career. Students are required to learn so many other subjects, and music education was seen as the most expendable
Origin of issue	→

How I know	→ subject. We can clearly see this by looking at any high school curriculum schedule and see that more emphasis is placed on English, math, and science, and music education classes are clearly left out or not given enough attention. The idea of having to prioritize and rate the value of a certain subject caused this lack of attention. Music education simply did not rate as high as other subjects in value.
Cause of issue	→ This idea can be illustrated by simply asking any English, math, or science teacher what the most important subject in the education system is. I am sure music education will be left out of the short list.
How I know	→ Allowing students the opportunity to either perform in musical ensembles or learn vital information pertaining to music history will better develop their knowledge of composition and other aspects of culture. By studying this important subject, students will attain a more rounded education including other information besides English, math, and science. I know this because I have been exposed to music education thoroughly both in high school and college, but many students do not get this exposure to the subject. I was lucky to attend a high school that had a very successful music education program, and I was amazed when I learned that this is not the case in some schools.
What will change	→ This issue is important because many students are not having adequate, and some not any, contact with music education. Introducing music education into the core curriculum of high schools will prove to be valuable to the overall learning process of high school students. Music education is far too important to ignore in the classroom. Underestimating the value of music education is not acceptable . Administrators, government leaders, and community members must
Value statements	→

	start looking at music education as just as important as English, math, and science.
→ <i>Definition of key terms in claim</i>	I want to clarify what I mean by " music program ." This term is very familiar to music educators and to those who actively participate in music oriented classes. According to Jeff Bright, Director of Bands
→ <i>Specialized term</i>	at Northeastern State University, a "music program" implies that the scope of classes offered should be comprehensive in nature. This would include classes involving instrumental music (band or orchestra), choral music, general music (theory, appreciation, history), and the chamber groups associated with each (solo, small ensembles). Additionally, the
→ <i>Authoritative definitions</i>	Oxford English Dictionary further defines a "program" as a "definite plan or scheme of any intended proceedings or an outline or abstract of something to be done (whether in writing or not)." It further defines it as "a planned series of activities or events" (1302).
→ <i>Common term</i>	"Information" is a common word used by all types of people and refers to many different types of information. The Oxford English
→ <i>OED definition</i>	Dictionary defines information as "knowledge communicated concerning some particular fact, subject, or event" (986). Thus, information pertaining to music includes facts that relate to areas such as history, composition, theory, appreciation, all of which are valuable subjects that are linked to music.
→ <i>Formal definitions ("re-defining" terms in claim statement)</i>	I define a well-developed music program as a program that is operating successfully in the education system . By operating successfully, the program must be meeting guidelines set up by the school system, teaching all students information pertaining to music, both applied and classroom based learning, and must be able to provide

	adequate materials such as instruments, sheet music, stands, audio equipment, books, and other learning materials for the students. Additionally, students involved in the applied music classes such as band and choir, should have the opportunity to be competitive with other students in their area. In order for this to happen, the music program should be developed enough to have the funds and experience necessary for providing transportation to other venues. This allows the students the opportunity to compete with other students. A well-developed program is not a program that is merely offered to students. It is a program that is operating at its full potential and is providing students with valuable information that adds to their overall knowledge intake.
	Additionally, a music program does not merely allude to only band class. Courses included in a well-developed music program include traditional book-based learning classes as well. A well-developed music program is a type of curriculum that allows students the opportunity to attain valuable information in two different ways. If they choose not to be part of a music ensemble, they have the opportunity to learn about music in another type of learning setting.
→ <i>Procedure for implementing claim</i>	As I previously stated, an easy first step to improving local music programs is to ask local community members to find and donate unused musical instruments. Many people store unused musical instruments in attics or tuck them away in closets and forget about
→ <i>Steps one and two</i>	them. It is easy to assume that the instruments are too old, or that they are beyond repair. No instrument is beyond repair, and every instrument could be put in the hands of a student who is eager to learn

→
Steps three and four

how to play it. **The next step** is to get the community member to donate this instrument to a local music program. This is as easy as it sounds. By merely bringing an old used instrument to the local music program, that program, with necessary funding, can clean, repair, and place it in the hands of a student whose family may have not had the income to finance the purchase of a new instrument.

Another way to improve local music programs is to educate administrators and teachers on the importance of music education. In order for music programs to receive attention, school administrators and teachers need to realize that music education is just as important as English, math, and science. There are many studies that prove this, and these administrators need to be exposed to these statistics so that they can see what a substantial impact music education can have students' lives. **This can lead to the next step, which is** requiring music classes in the core curriculum, just as English, math, and science classes are. By offering these classes and requiring high school students to take them, the public school system is allowing each student to be exposed to this valuable aspect of education.

Every student enrolled in public schools **should** be allowed the opportunity to be active in a well-developed music program, and if they choose not to be in a musical ensemble, the student **should** still be required to take a traditional "book-based" class that teaches the history, theory, and appreciation of music. **In order for** music programs to be well developed in public schools, **they need to have** proper funding. This funding alludes to all levels of government, including federal, state, and local. Additionally, the community itself **needs to**

→
What has to happen for the claim to work

take part by supporting the music program. By merely attending a concert, a community member has shown support, and **this allows** more attention to come to the program. Funding is an integral ingredient in this issue. **In order for** students to receive proper instruction, sheet music, instruments, equipment, books, and other learning supplies, funding **must be** allotted. Along with four years of English, three years of math, and three years of science, public schools **need to** require at least one year of music education to the required core curriculum for graduation. However, for any of this to happen, school administrators, as well as the governmental bodies, need to grasp the evidence that music is very important to the overall education of students. **The results of this change** would be beneficial to all students.

→
How the world will change

They would be exposed to an entire new and important aspect of education. By implementing music into the core curriculum, the student receives a more well-rounded and balanced education. They would receive valuable knowledge pertaining to music as well as hold other benefits that research has shown to be a product of music education. Students are allowed the opportunity for musical growth, and additionally, by exposing them to music, their musical talent can be discovered. The next Stravinsky or Beethoven may be sitting in the corner of a chemistry class waiting for the opportunity to showcase his or her talents. It is scary to think that their talents could never surface because of the lack of opportunity.

→
Refuting the claim

→
An objection in one statement

One of the objections to requiring students to take at least one year of music classes is that students currently have too many classes to take. This argument usually comes from the students themselves, but I

→ <i>Refutation in many statements</i>	think they need to admit to themselves that the requirements are not as tremendous as they think. Even if they are active in sports activities, there is ample time in the daily schedule to take one year of music appreciation. Many students find time to take as many as six to eight classes of music performance classes in their high school career. It can be fitted into their schedule easily. The truth behind this objection is that the students do not want the extra requirement to cut in on their "blow-off" or "easy" classes they get to take in order to rack up the elective credits they must have. A more plausible answer is to require one less hour of electives, and in turn, require them to take one hour of music instead.
→ <i>An objection in one statement</i>	Another objection involved in improving music education programs is that the programs do not require as much funding as proposed. Merely looking at the expenses of music programs can easily
→ <i>Refutation in many statements</i>	prove that the funding is necessary. Most instruments cost over \$1,000 dollars. The baritones, tubas, trombones, percussion, and other instruments are far too expensive to expect the average family to provide. Each music program has to purchase these, as well as other instruments, to loan out to the students. This is common practice in all music programs. Repair of these instruments is extremely costly, but essential. Additionally, chairs and stands must be purchased. Risers for choirs to stand on are required. Sheet music is surprisingly very expensive. A complete score and parts for one piece of music is usually over one hundred dollars, and a music department must have a substantial library of sheet music. Additionally, each competition requires entrance fees from \$50-\$300, as well as money for

	transportation. Concerts require adequate decorations as well as printed programs and a functioning PA system. These costs are fundamental to the performance section of the music program. The "book-based" learning classes require teachers, textbooks, sound recordings, sound equipment and many other expenses. By closely looking at all of the expenses of an average music program, it is clearly evident that proper funding is needed and not exaggerated.
→ <i>An objection in one statement</i>	Parents argue that we cannot force a child to play an instrument, but by implementing the "book-based" classes, the child is not required to learn how to play any instruments. These classes would be
→ <i>Refutation in many statements</i>	traditional in nature. The students would be learning about the important figures in music and what important musical pieces these musical figures wrote. Students would also learn key characteristics in the different periods of music, as well as overall music appreciation. This information is important, and students should be exposed to it.
→ <i>An objection in one statement</i>	Another problem administrators contend about this issue is that there is already a required hour of the arts required for high school students. This requirement can be met by the student enrolling in any
→ <i>Refutation in many statements</i>	performance ensemble, including band and choir, or by taking a general humanities course. At first glance this seems to be a valid answer to the issue of music education in high school, but a closer look will reveal certain loopholes. Many students meet this requirement by merely taking an art or humanities course that is offered. Many times these courses do not even include a section on music education. For example, the humanities course I took in high school covered Greek mythology for a majority of the semester. Some other humanities courses only

*Argument
(conclusion)*
→
*Repeated claim
statement*

→
*Warrants
(underlying
assumptions
about claim
statement)*

→
Examples

cover art. Though both of these subjects are important as well, there needs to be a class that covers music history, theory, and appreciation as well. If a student chooses to learn more about art history to meet this requirement that is his choice, but the student does need the opportunity to choose to learn about music as well. Music classes need to be implemented into the class schedule.

Each student enrolled in public schools should have the opportunity to take part in a well-developed music program in high school, and those who choose not to be a part of a performance based class should be required to take at least one hour of music education that pertains to theory, history, and appreciation. By making the claim that students need to be required to take music education classes in high school, **I am assuming that** administrators and other educators do not realize that they are suppressing this important subject, and in turn, not exposing students to this valuable information. **I also am assuming that** they have not been exposed to the studies that prove the value of music education in public schools. **Additionally, I am assuming that** these students will benefit from taking this music education requirement.

As studies have shown, students benefit in many different areas as a result of being exposed to music education. Additionally, merely studying the history of music allows the student to gain valuable facts that are very important and should be included in the curriculum of their educational career. Being able to participate in a well-developed music program and being required to take one hour of music education can greatly benefit students. **For example,** I have spoken to many

→
Analogy

→
Comparison

→
Cause/effect

students who were part of an under funded and developed music program. These students felt as though they did not reach their full potential because the program in their school was not meeting their needs. They were not able to travel to other locations to compete against other students, as well as other constraints. **Additionally,** I have talked to other students who have stated that they found a passion for music by taking general music classes in high school. Some of these students went on to major or minor in music related fields such as music studies or humanities.

Not being able to participate in a well-developed music program or taking any music classes is **like** walking into to a library that only has one category of books. **They are both** institutions that have the main objective to educate others, but **they both** fail to offer enough information and materials to ensure that their patrons are meeting their full academic potential. **They are both** government funded, and the quality of materials and information is dependent upon ample funding.

Additionally, **they are both** failing to provide the necessary information to provide a well-balanced education. By merely having one category of books, the library is limiting the amount of research that is available.

Consequently, those who go to that library are only getting a limited amount of information. **Similarly,** public schools that fail to offer music classes are denying students the exposure to this valuable subject. **Both of these** institutions are failing to meet the expectations of those whom they serve. **If** administrators and teachers will realize the importance of music education, **then** more music classes can be implemented. **If** the government will see the need for sufficient funding for music programs,

then more programs will be able to fit the needs of students that desire to be active in a well-developed, performance based program. **If** students are required to take at least one hour of music education, **then** they will receive a better-rounded education in the public school system.

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6.2: Revising Steps

Appendix C

Inserting Evidence for Your Claim

Proof for what you have written

Inserting Evidence

Once you have completed your draft, insert evidence to highlight or support (or contrast) what you have written.

What is Evidence?

Evidence is what others have said, shown, or argued relating to your claim. In this section, you finish gathering evidence for your claim and inserting it into your writing. You began to collect evidence for your claim when you read your articles and other texts. There are four basic forms of evidence: **testimony**, **data**, **examples**, and **analogies**.

The difference between the testimony, data, examples, and analogies that you have already given in your essay and these is simply the source: so far, the source has been primarily you; from now on, the source will be other people.

What do I do with the Evidence?

You will insert evidence where you can to show me that someone else also says what you are saying at any point in your essay. Remember, this is a revision step. Mostly what you will do now is read, and where you find people saying things that back up what you are saying, you may use as quotes. Some things you find may contradict what you are saying. You should either explain why you differ with so many people (and still quote them) or revise your essay to account for this evidence.

Note

These outside references (quotes, references, summaries, data, etc.) must be scattered throughout your essay, not only in an Argument.

Most Common Question: "How many Sources do I use?"

You should have the same number of sources as the articles you use for research, with a minimum of around 10. Most of these should be the same types of sources (like journal articles, books, etc.) that are used by the articles you use for research.

For suggestions and guidance on researching and collecting evidence, see any good research handbook. Once you have some outside evidence collected, answer the questions below.

Checklist for Evidence

___ Testimony

Look for **testimony**, **what authorities say about your claim**, good or bad, and list/copy/quote all that might be useful. Look in the materials you have been collecting/reading all during the course.

Has anyone ever said something like this to you: "Well, according to [so and so], [such and such] is true."? This is a statement whose claim ("such and such is true") rests on something an expert or other authority ("so and so") has said is true. Using the testimony of authorities as proof for your claim means using the statements of experts or other assumed authorities as basis or support. In a sense, this is very careful name-dropping. In another sense, it is a way to align yourself with people who have proven that they are, indeed, "experts" on one or another topic. More commonly, an authority may say in general the same thing you are saying. If this is so, simply look for such testimony in your research and allude to it, paraphrase it, and quote it in your essay.

Some key words in using testimony: **according to**, **says**, **reports**, **has found that**.

Check for the authority of your testimony. In other words, if you are quoting someone, and you are treating that person as an authority on the subject, make sure he or she is. Check in bibliographies and works cited in books and articles for that

name. You may also check with someone in person in that field who may know who is or is not an authority.

Use written testimony. The bulk of your quotes should come from sources that are available to me as a researcher (not so I can check on your sources, but so I can conduct follow-up or continuing research in that area). The harder they are to find, the more suspicious I may be of your sources.

Get all required information. When you collect written testimony, the point is to allow me to follow up (see your handbook for exactly what to do with quotes and references). Facilitate a fellow researcher by including author, title, place of publication, and date of publication. If these are not available, see your handbook for what to do.

Use other testimony. You may also conduct interviews, surveys, and similar activities that collect testimony from other people on the subject at hand. This is important because it brings the audience "up to the present" rather than relying on things that were said years ago, as in some written testimony. However, the bulk of your testimony should not be from these sources because I can only rely on what you say they said, rather than "looking it up," unless I plan to make phone calls and conduct my own surveys. All the rules that apply to written testimony apply to spoken testimony as well.

—Data

Look for **data** that supports or refutes your claim, like statistics, case studies, other long-term studies, *empirical evidence, and studies based on the rules of evidence gathering.

*Empirical evidence is evidence based on observation, with conclusions drawn from these observations. This should come from outside sources. Data sometimes comes in **charts, graphs**, and other sorts of "visual aids" that may not come in the form of usable quotes. In cases like these, consider creating an Appendix for this kind of information. See MLA handbook for how to do this.

—Examples

Many times what you are claiming has already been accomplished, though in another setting, a different time, with other people or in different disciplines, with similar effects or outcomes. If you find something similar or the same for what you claim, use it as an example. Examples may frequently be paraphrased or alluded to. Check your MLA handbook for instructions of paraphrasing, alluding to, and referring to different works.

—Analogy

Look for analogies for your claim. You have created an analogy for your Conclusion section, so you know it can be effective. Others have probably gone through the same process in order to argue a similar claim. When you see a good analogy, quote it or refer to it in order to provide evidence in the form of an outside source. One word of caution: one good analogy goes a long way. Limit your outside analogies to one or two good ones.

When you have collected your evidence, insert each pertinent piece where it best fits in your essay. Check with your MLA or APA handbook for details on quoting, paraphrasing, and documenting your evidence.

Addressing the Audience

Details that win over the audience

This is a re-reading and revising section. Here you must carefully re-read your essay, and make changes by asking each of the following questions and their parts.

Do not skip this step. When a reader finds "little things" that indicate the writer does not pay attention to details, then that writer's credibility is questioned. Don't let a detail ruin your "presentation." Consider this section a sort of "detail checklist." This checklist is in sections: **Ethos** (your credibility as a writer), **Pathos** (how your language appeals to the reader), **Fallacies** ("mistakes" in logic), and **Documentation** (checking your style manual).

1. Ethos

Ethos is building credibility by the way you present yourself. Remember when your mother used to say, "always make a good first impression?" She was only interested in your ethos, of course. In writing, like life, we never get a second chance to make a first

impression. The point is, if you wish to be taken seriously, you should present yourself as someone who should be taken seriously. Review all you have written so far for each of the following questions. Make changes for each question as you find places to change.

Checklist for Ethos:

___Appropriate Terms

Do I demonstrate a thorough knowledge of my subject by using terms and expressions appropriate to the audience?

This is where you have to imagine your audience. If you are writing for a group of people with a specialized vocabulary (a “jargon”), be sure that you use that jargon. Be careful to use it, however, in the way it is understood by that group. Most jargons have glossaries; ask someone in that profession or a librarian where you might find such a glossary.

If you are not sure what your audience expects in terms of vocabulary and expressions, keep yours as simple as possible. It is better to say as simply (but specifically) as possible what you want to say than to misuse terms or completely lose even the most interested or expert reader with difficult or obscure terms.

Take out general terms like “society” or “aspects” or “kinds of” or “types of.”

Ask yourself what terms and expressions are used in the works you have read on your subject.

When you finish rereading your essay and making changes in your terms and expressions, go to the next question.

___Establishing Authority

Do I demonstrate a thorough knowledge of my subject by establishing my authority on the subject?

Much of your authority will be established by answering as many questions from this program as possible.

Other ways to establish authority include personal experience with your claim, knowing and citing authorities in the field and what they have said (or might say) about your claim, and (oddly enough) admitting that you are not an expert but that you are very interested in the subject.

Ask yourself how authority is established in the works you have read on your subject.

When you finish rereading your essay and making changes to establish your authority, go to the next question.

___Style Standards

Do I demonstrate a thorough knowledge of my subject by following all submission and style standards to the letter?

Think of this part of your review this way: “If I get one period out of place, my entire manuscript may be rejected.”

Editors and instructors expect conventions (even if what you have to say – or even the way you use conventions – is unconventional). There are a number of handbooks available that contain rules for conventions, like MLA, APA, and other “styles.” Editors may ask for a specified number of words, an abstract, an outline, a disk, several copies, separate cover sheets or title pages, email, a biography (yours), or any number of other things (or all of the above), in addition to a particular style. Follow all of them to the letter, and ask questions if there is any convention about which you are unsure.

When you finish rereading your essay and making changes to conform to the submission standards of an editor or instructor, go to the next question.

___Conventions

Do I demonstrate a thorough knowledge of my subject by following conventions of that style to the letter?

Remember, no convention is optional. Each must be carried out.

Again, if you are not sure how to proceed, ask your instructor, email the editor, or both. If it calls for MLA style, don’t plan to use whatever you think “looks right.” Check out example essays in any good style manual.

When you finish rereading your essay and making changes to conform to the conventions of the style under which you are submitting, go to the next question.

Grammatical Person

Do I demonstrate a thorough knowledge of my subject by appropriate grammatical person?

Grammatical person refers to the use of the first-person pronouns (“I” or “we”), or the second person-pronoun (“you”), or third-person (where the audience and writer are not directly addressed or alluded to).

If you choose first- or second-person pronouns, **you are in effect putting less distance between you and the reader**. This may be perfectly acceptable if that is part of the conventions that the audience expects. (Note: avoid “you” unless you are addressing the reader directly, as in the note here).

Many readers consider first- or second-person voice to be more sincere, which in a sense it is, since you are doing all the talking.

In many cases, however, third-person is more appropriate for two reasons: 1) **it establishes a distance between the reader and the writer**, and 2) **it gives the reader a sense of objectivity** about what the writer is saying.

Ask yourself which grammatical person seems to be used most often in the works you have read on your subject.

When you finish rereading your essay and making changes to establish an appropriate grammatical person throughout your essay, go to the next question.

Verb Tense

Do I demonstrate a thorough knowledge of my subject by using an appropriate verb tense?

Generally we have the past and the present tenses to work from in writing an essay. Again, look at what other writers are doing and follow their lead. However, present tense seems to bring the audience closer to the issue and make it more personal and immediate. Past tense lets a reader keep his or her distance and use a more formal and objective sounding voice.

Ask yourself which tense is generally used in the works you have read on your subject?

When you finish rereading your essay and making changes to the verb tenses, go to the next question.

Grammatical Voice

Do I demonstrate a thorough knowledge of my subject by using an appropriate grammatical voice (active/passive)?

Again, the primary consideration for grammatical voice is the space or distance it seems to put between a reader and a writer. Active constructions draw a reader closer to the writer while passive constructions create a distance. It is also a matter of responsibility: If you use the passive voice and say (like my seven-year-old) that “the cookie got eaten,” then there is no one to take responsibility for the act. An active construction accepts (or places) responsibility (“I ate the cookie”), and a passive construction avoids or spreads responsibility for a given action or claim.

Ask yourself what grammatical voice is generally used, and when, in the works you have read on your subject.

When you finish rereading your essay and making changes in grammatical voice, go to the next question.

Word Size

Do I demonstrate a thorough knowledge of my subject by using appropriate word size?

This may be tricky. When in doubt, use your own words. However, many times a particular term is called for when discussing a particular subject. Too many terms, however, and terms used in a way that confuses or confounds the reader, has the effect of distancing and eventually alienating a reader.

Ask yourself what size words are used in the works you have read on your subject.

When you finish rereading your essay and making changes to establish your authority, go to the next question.

Qualifiers/Adjectives

Do I demonstrate a thorough knowledge of my subject by appropriate qualifiers and adjectives?

A qualifier is a word like “nearly,” “some,” “others,” “all,” “often,” and “most.” These are words that you should consider carefully before using. They should make your phrasing at each point they are used more accurate. If each does not, you should probably not use it. Adjectives should also be considered (or reconsidered) at each point they are used. When in doubt, leave them out. (See also “honorific” and “pejorative” language under pathos below).

Ask yourself what kinds of adjectives and qualifiers are used in the works you have read on your subject.

When you finish rereading your essay and making changes to qualifiers and adjectives, go to the next question.

Punctuation

Do I demonstrate a thorough knowledge of my subject by using appropriate punctuation?

Once you get beyond commas and periods to mark standard phrases, clauses, and sentences, punctuation and other typographic marks may also be used to close the distance between the writer and the reader. Only commas and periods imply distance; everything else implies closeness. This includes parentheses, dashes, boldface type, italics, quotation marks (for other than quotations), all caps, underlining, and other marks.

Be sure that you notice what kind of punctuation is used in the works you have read on your subject.

When you finish rereading your essay and making changes to punctuation, go to the next question.

Tone

Do I demonstrate a thorough knowledge of my subject by controlled and appropriate voice/tone (happy, serious, angry, etc.)?

You may be very angry about an issue, or you may simply want the reader to take a look at a point for the sake of discussion. Listen for the emotions in the words you have used. What may be appropriate for one audience may not be appropriate for another. An effect might be amplified if you imply that you simply “want to put in your two cents’ worth,” even though you may feel strongly (see, for example, Swift’s “A Modest Proposal”). Angry or sarcastic words tend to alienate even sympathetic audiences; consider using a polite tone.

Consider the tone in the works you have read on the subject.

When you finish rereading your essay and making changes in its tone, go to the Pathos part of this section.

2. Pathos

Pathos is appealing to audience emotions, which is not necessarily “the way they feel.” “Emotion” in pathos refers to **beliefs and values and how you react when those beliefs and values are alluded to, questioned, or threatened**. Please note that this is different from the usual way we think of “emotions.”

For example, let’s say that I am the director of some program that is a “worthy cause,” like a food bank. I need your money to keep the place going (a place that provides food for people who are really hungry). The simplest thing to do might be to write you a letter and ask you for the money, perhaps even giving you a figure (“send one single 20 dollar bill for the whole year”). I will probably be successful, up to a point.

I might be more successful, however, if I appealed to your pathos. I could do this by including an 8x10 black and white photograph of a big-eyed, sad-faced, raggedly dressed child, with a caption that says, “Amy is hoping you can make the hunger pains go away. Amy is saying ‘help me’.” Now the appeal is to your reaction when **your beliefs and values are alluded to, questioned, or threatened**.

Most of your essay is probably equivalent to only writing the letter above, not the picture. However, be careful with the next few questions. A little pathos goes a long way.

Checklist for pathos:

— **Honorific language**

Do I use honorific language?

Re-read your entire manuscript, adding honorific language – language that is respectful, polite, courteous – wherever you can. Any language that shows respect for other points of view tends to increase the audience's respect for you.

When you have reread your entire essay and inserted honorific language, go to the next question.

— **Pejorative language**

Do I use pejorative language?

Pejorative language is language that puts down, belittles, sounds sarcastic. As much fun as it may seem to make fun of an opposing view, it makes your audience suspicious of you, particularly if your audience holds an opposing view. This kind of language should be eliminated from your essay.

Re-read your entire manuscript, eliminating any pejorative language. This may include phrases, punctuation, or the use of qualifiers and adjectives that make you look like you can only make fun of an opposing view, rather than make a serious point.

Note: If you find that this is the only kind of language you can use to make your point, then you may not have a point to make, and both pejorative language and not making a point alienate audiences.

When you have reread your entire essay and eliminated pejorative language, go to the next question.

— **Anecdotes**

Do I use anecdotes?

You could very easily insert a number of anecdotes to highlight what you are claiming, in the same way I included the photograph above. You have done this already in your Introduction with a single anecdote. However, most readers of persuasive essays at this level do not appreciate many direct emotional appeals. I would limit your anecdote to the one in your Introduction, though the more anecdotes you use, the more emotional the argument. This includes anecdotes you tell yourself and anecdotes you find other places.

When you are satisfied that you have used a number of anecdotes appropriate for the audience, go to the next question.

— **Allusion**

Do I allude to my anecdotes or other well-known symbols?

At most, I would only allude to your single, beginning anecdote. Pathos in writing like this should be limited to the kind of language you use, and the way you use it. However, you may also allude to anything that puts you and the audience in the same system of beliefs, or values, or assumptions about life. In the example Introduction I recounted an anecdote about a teacher's comment on one of my essays. In a long persuasive essay, it is probably enough to remind the reader of the anecdote in the conclusion by referring to it indirectly, like I did in the sentence before this one.

3. Logical Fallacies

This next step involves a careful re-reading of your claims, grounds, and the objections of your Refutation section (and for any quotes that seem to contradict your claim), for logical fallacies. Logical fallacies are to be avoided in your argument, and pointed out in the claims of those who oppose or object to your claim. A logical fallacy is a mistake in logic.

Note

Take any of the below arguments out of your own writing.

Ad hominem (against the man)

Attacking the person who presents a claim or issue rather than the claim or issue itself: “We should not accept President Clinton’s budget proposal because we can’t trust him to tell us the truth.”

Bandwagon

Argument on the grounds that everyone else does it, so it must be right and I must do it too: “Chevy trucks are the best selling vehicle in the state of Oklahoma.”

Begging the question

Arguing by restating the claim or issue and claiming it is proof: “Becoming a teacher is a good thing because teachers are good people.” “He is lazy because he does not like to work.”

Equivocation

An argument that rests on the use of a term in two different senses: “Guns don’t kill people, people do [kill people].” “Kill” is used in two different senses.

False analogy

An argument based on the assumption that because things are alike in some ways they are alike in other ways, too: “Buy a pre-owned Chevrolet Geo from General Motors, the same company that makes Cadillacs and other fine cars.”

False authority

Assuming an expert in one field is credible in another: “I am not a doctor, but I play one on TV (therefore what I have to say is credible).” Any celebrity endorsement.

Post hoc, ergo propter hoc

Assuming that because something happens after some event, it is caused by that event: “I washed my car yesterday, and it rained.”

False dilemma

An argument that assumes there are only two choices to make regarding an issue, when in fact there are others: “We must have the freedom to own guns without government control or lose our freedom altogether.”

Guilt by association

An argument that assumes that because a person is associated with others who are indeed guilty, that person is guilty as well: “He is probably a drug dealer because he lives in the same building where a drug dealer was arrested last week.”

Hasty generalization

An argument that assumes that if something is true of a few, it is true for many, but with too small a sample or with biased evidence: “A high school driver nearly ran me off the road. High school drivers are just too young and inexperienced to drive and should not be allowed to.”

Non sequitur

A statement that does not necessarily follow logically from another statement: “I have worked really hard this semester. I deserve an ‘A’.”

Oversimplification

An argument that ignores key elements of an issue in order to draw a conclusion: “People who pass tests are lucky.” (They also probably study more).

Red herring

An argument designed to draw attention away from the issue at hand: “Why are we talking about more police on the street when our school buildings are falling down around our children?”

Slippery slope

An argument that implies that if we accept the issue at hand it will be step one in a series of steps that leads only to disaster: “If we let the president get away with this, it will destroy the integrity of the office, cause a whole generation of children to think it is OK to lie and then become adults without any moral foundation, and destroy civilization as we know it.”

If your argument contains any of these, you should remove them or replace them or otherwise clarify them. If your refutations or quotes contain any of these, you simply point out each one as the fallacy it is.

4. Documentation

Assemble documentation according to the style manual you are using (MLA, APA, Chicago style, etc.). Refer to any good handbook or the style manual.

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6.3: Criterion-Referenced Skills for College Writing (Part 1)

Appendix D

Section I. Common Errors (Editing)

Usage

The student writer demonstrates a thorough knowledge of usage by eliminating:

	yes	no	N/A	note
“you” from the writing				
“a lot” from the writing				
“would” from the writing				
“started to,” “began to,” “headed out” from the writing				
“needless to say” from the writing				
“obviously” from the writing				
“etc.” from the writing				
clichés from the writing				

The student writer demonstrates a thorough knowledge of usage by correctly using:

	yes	no	N/A	note
“...” (ellipses)				
“myself”				
“a person <u>who</u> ” rather than “a person <u>that</u> ”				
“every day” or “everyday”				
“he or she” or “they”				
a comma before “and” in a list				
punctuation marks inside the end quotation marks				
quoted material incorporated into the grammar of a sentence				
defined words in quotation marks				
book titles underlined and all other titles in quotation marks				
words and phrases from foreign languages in <i>italics</i>				
a spell-check				
a grammar-check				

Peer Editing

	yes	no	N/A	note
Did the student use the above checklist?				
Did the student ask a peer to edit his/her paper according to the checklist?				
Did the student make all changes previously requested by the instructor?				

Section II. Essay Structure

A. Argument Essay Assessment

Matrix for Argument Writing Patterns

Choosing an Issue

The student is able to arrive at **an issue** by answering the following questions:

	yes	no	N/A	note
What is something that is very important to me personally or professionally?				
Is it really an issue ?				
Is it something I know much about already?				
Is it something I really want to talk about?				
Is it within the guidelines or restrictions of the assignment?				

1 Introduction

The student is able to arrive at a **claim statement** by writing the answers to each of the questions:

	yes	no	N/A	note
What is my issue, stated generally?				
How may I restate the same issue as a very specific statement or series of statements?				
How may I summarize in one statement what I have written so far?				
Why do I think this will work (or why should this be accepted)?				
How are some practical ways to implement my summary statement above?				
What is my purpose for dealing with this issue (as an <i>anecdote</i>)?				
How may I restate my summary statement as a <i>claim</i> ?				

2 Review of the Literature (Annotated Bibliography)

The student is able to **summarize** EACH SOURCE by writing the answers to each of the questions:

	yes	no	N/A	note
What is the title , who is the author , and what is a summative statement about the selection?				
The point to the selection seems to be what?				
This point is best summed up by what quoted from the selection?				
How do I assess or evaluate this selection as a whole?				

3 Evaluation

The student is able to **evaluate the claim statement** by writing the answers to each of the questions:

	yes	no	N/A	note
Does this issue/claim exist? (Is it really an issue?);				
Who will this claim most affect?				
How could I prove this if I had to?				
Where does this issue seem to come from? (How did it begin, as far as I know?)				
How could I prove this if I had to?				
What is the cause of this issue?				
How could I prove this if I had to?				
What will change (How will the world be different) if my claim is accepted?				
How could I prove this if I had to?				
Why is mine a good claim to deal with?				
Why should it be sought or accepted ?				
Why is it better than (some alternative)?				

4 Definition

The student is able to **define key terms in the claim statement** by writing the answers to each of the questions:

	yes	no	N/A	note
What are the key terms in my claim statement?				

For Specialized Key Terms:

	yes	no	N/A	note
Are there any terms in my claim from a specialized vocabulary?				
How does a resource or an authority in that specialized area define each term?				

For Common/Ambiguous Key Terms:

	yes	no	N/A	note
Are there any common terms in my claim that need clarification?				
What different senses of the term are defined in the dictionary?				
What different senses of the term existed in the past (what is its etymology) from the dictionary?				
What are some antonyms, synonyms, and examples of the way the terms is used from the dictionary?				

Re-define Common/Ambiguous Key Terms:

	yes	no	N/A	note
How do I re-define each term as a formal definition ?				

5 Procedure

The student is able to **outline how to implement the claim statement** by writing the answers to each of the questions:

	yes	no	N/A	note
How may I outline each step , in great detail, of my practical statements from my Introduction?				
What has to happen to initiate changes ?				
What is the process if this proposal (or claim) is accepted ?				

6 Refutation

The student is able to **refute counter arguments** by writing the answers to each of the questions:

	yes	no	N/A	note
What are some major objections to my claim?				
How do I respond (as copiously as possible) to each objection?				
Why won't my opponent's claim work?				
Why is it wrong ?				

7 Argument (conclusion)

The student is able to **state claim, warrants, and grounds** by writing the answers to each of the questions:

	yes	no	N/A	note
What is the central claim ?				
What sorts of warrants underlie my claim?				
Which of these underlying assumptions needs some clarification in order for the audience to agree?				
Which of these warrants is the audience most likely to disagree with? How do I explain why my assumptions are different? On what do I rest these assumptions?				
What are some examples of where [my claim] works (or applies, exists, is true, etc.)?				
What is an analogy for my claim? or What is something analogous to my claim?				
What causes this claim to be true?				

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6.4: Criterion-Referenced Skills for College Writing (Part 2)

B. Analysis Essay

Assessment Matrix for Analysis (Expository) Writing Patterns

1 Basic Thesis Development (Summary; Introduction)

Does the development of a thesis statement through Summary have the following structural traits (statements)?

	yes	no	N/A	note
Title of selection, author , and 1-phrase summary of whole selection in opening statement				
Each section or part of the selection is summarized with a summary statement				
The point or main idea of the selection is summarized with a summary statement				
One phrase, passage, sentence, or quote from the selection that best sums up this point is included in a statement				
The passage(s) where the point or main idea is expressed is paraphrased				
Who the point seems to be for or about is summed up in a statement				
Where the point seems to apply most is summed up in a statement				
When the point seems to apply best is summed up in a statement				
The student's general observations about the selection or point are summed up in a single "thesis" statement				

2 Self Evaluation

Do the Self Evaluation paragraphs have the following structural traits (statements)?

	yes	no	N/A	note
An opening statement indicating how the student feels about writing in general				
A statement about the student's experience with writing in general				
A statement about the student's earliest recollection of reading or writing in general				
A statement indicating how the student's attitudes towards writing has changed over the years				
A statement indicating what attitudes the student has been encouraged to take , and by whom				
A statement indicating what the student likes about writing				
A statement indicating what the student dislikes about writing				
A statement indicating what the student's best experience with writing is				
A statement indicating what the student's worst experience with writing is				
A statement indicating what the student thinks of spending a whole semester studying writing				

3 First Impression

Do the First Impression paragraphs have the following structural traits (statements)?

	yes	no	N/A	note
An opening statement indicating what seems to be the general subject of the selection				
A statement indicating what seems to be the " gist " or main idea of the selection				
A statement indicating what the author or narrator seems to be saying literally				
A statement indicating what the author or narrator seems to be implying if we "read between the lines"				
A statement indicating what seem to be some " meaningful " words				
A statement indicating what seems to be a primary emotion evoked by the work				
A statement indicating what the selection reminds the student of				
A statement indicating a descriptive word that seems to describe the whole work				

4 Favorite Line(s)

Do the Favorite Line(s) paragraphs have the following structural traits (statements)?

	yes	no	N/A	note
A statement repeating what seems to be the main idea of the selection				
A statement indicating by quoting a line (or group of words or phrases) from the selection that particularly strikes the student				
A statement indicating the context in which these words are placed				
A statement indicating situations in life of which these words remind the student				
A statement indicating people in life of which these words remind the student				
A statement indicating places in life of which these words remind the student				
A statement indicating emotions in life of which these words remind the student				
A statement indicating events in life of which these words remind the student				
A statement indicating people in general for whom these words might have particular meaning				
A statement indicating people in particular for whom these words might have particular meaning				

5 Different Perspectives

Do the Different Perspectives paragraphs have the following structural traits (statements)?

	yes	no	N/A	note
A statement indicating what seems to be the point to this selection (may have to be repeated from above)				
A statement indicating what someone in general who disagrees with the point might say				
A statement indicating what someone of a different gender who disagrees with the point might say				
A statement indicating what someone of a different age who disagrees with the point might say				
A statement indicating what someone of a different country or culture who disagrees with the point might say				
A statement indicating what someone of a different social, political, or economic background who disagrees with the point might say				
A statement indicating what conclusions the student has drawn from the selection so far, and how the student might argue against those conclusions				

6 Selective Reading

Do the Selective Reading paragraphs have the following structural traits (statements)?

	yes	no	N/A	note
A statement indicating what words, phrases, lines, images, passages, and so on, are most noticeable in the selection				
A statement indicating how these words, etc., reinforce what the author/narrator is trying to say				
A statement indicating what these words suggest is the general attitude of the author/narrator				
A statement indicating what these words, etc., seem to be saying by themselves				

7 Text Strategies

Do the Text Strategies paragraphs have the following structural traits (statements)?

	yes	no	N/A	note
A statement indicating the major text strategies used in this selection				
A series of statements indicating an example of each text strategy from the selection				
A series of statements indicating the effect each text strategy seems to have on the student's understanding of the selection				

8 Patterns

Do the Patterns paragraphs have the following structural traits (statements)?

	yes	no	N/A	note
A statement describing the way the selection is composed or divided by using Text Strategies terms				
A statement indicating the reason(s) the selection is divided this way				
A statement indicating how many paragraphs there are in the selection and how large or small they are by sections				
A statement indicating the reason(s) for length and size variations				
A statement indicating how patterns are repeated and how words or phrases are repeated in each section				
A statement indicating how words, phrases, and/or patterns are repeated throughout the selection				
A statement indicating what was particularly striking , unexpected, or unusual about any of the patterns in the selection				

9 Literary Perspectives

Do the Literary Perspectives paragraphs have the following structural traits (statements)?

	yes	no	N/A	note
A statement describing the archetypal images manifested in the selection				
A statement indicating how these images relate to a particular culture and environment				
A statement indicating themes within the selection				
A statement indicating polarities within the selection				
A statement indicating reoccurring situations or patterns within the selection				
A statement indicating symbols within the selection				
A statement indicating characters within the selection				
A statement indicating whether or not the student believes these images are “ real ” or imaginary				
A statement indicating which words in the selection give clues to when, where, how, and why the selection was written				
A statement indicating what underlying messages or ideas are suggested by the construction of the words, sentences, ideas, etc.				

10 General Analysis

Do the General Analysis paragraphs have **at least 3** of the following structural traits (statements)?

	yes	no	N/A	note
A statement describing how the author's childhood and family interactions affect his writing				
A statement indicating what in the author's life created or contributed to the author's opinion				
A statement indicating how the author's education affected his or her beliefs				
A statement indicating how the author's life experiences affected his or her beliefs				
A statement indicating whether or not the author practiced what he or she preached				
A statement indicating how the author defines an issue				
A statement indicating what was the author's background				
A statement indicating who or what the author compares the central issue to				
A statement indicating how the author classifies events, things, or issues				
A statement indicating what the author's opinions might be on related and unrelated topics				

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11 Social Analysis

Do the Social Analysis paragraphs have **at least 3** of the following structural traits (statements)?

	yes	no	N/A	note
A statement describing what social situations this work describes or addresses				
A statement identifying the author's attitudes toward men and women				
A statement indicating what social events in childhood affected the author's thinking				
A statement indicating what type or types of groups he or she belonged to				
A statement indicating what was acceptable and unacceptable in his or her society				
A statement indicating what effects social institutions (marriage, children, parenting, government, church) have on the writing				
A statement indicating what specific social areas he or she addressed				
A statement indicating whether or not society should act like this				
A statement indicating whether or not we are a product of our social surroundings				
A statement indicating what solutions are suggested				

12 Gendered Analysis

Do the Gendered Analysis paragraphs have **at least 3** of the following structural traits (statements)?

	yes	no	N/A	note
A statement identifying which gender is the author's audience				
A statement indicating what is the author's attitude toward men				
A statement indicating what is the author's attitude toward women				
A statement indicating the effect of the gender of the author on this selection				
A statement indicating how the author's attitude toward the "non-audience" is gender-biased				
A statement indicating what male conventions exist in the selection				
A statement indicating what activities, emotions, values are privileged in this text				
A statement indicating how the reader reacts to the selection depending on the gender of the author				
A statement indicating whether or not the author subconsciously wants to be a different gender				
A statement indicating whether he or she had a "normal" sexual orientation				
A statement indicating whether or not the author subconsciously hates the other gender				
A statement indicating whether or not he or she suffered a sexual				

	yes	no	N/A	note
trauma at the hands of the other gender				
A statement indicating whether or not he or she was obsessed with sex				
A statement indicating who was his or her sexual role model				

13 Psychoanalytical Analysis

Do the Psychoanalytical Analysis paragraphs have **at least 3** of the following structural traits (statements)?

	yes	no	N/A	note
A statement indicating whether the author condescends, or "explains" his or her more profound thoughts				
A statement indicating the author's assumptions about his or her reader and whether the author pretends to a relevance, an attitude, or an awareness he or she does not possess				
A statement indicating what kind of pressure there is from the author for the reader to conform to the author's social standards				
A statement indicating to what degree the author feels he or she is excluded justly or unjustly because of social, racial, or ethical discrimination				
A statement indicating the degree to which physical, emotional, or intellectual deviations from the "normal" were severe enough to have colored the author's view				
A statement indicating whether any deviations were severe enough to have made the author's viewpoint distinctively different from others				
A statement indicating whether an emotional or physical trauma resulted in an altered viewpoint				
A statement indicating how the physical or emotional trauma-				

	yes	no	N/A	note
oriented disturbance validates or invalidates the author's work for the general public				

14 Historical Analysis

Do the Historical Analysis paragraph(s) have **at least 3** of the following structural traits (statements)?

	yes	no	N/A	note
A series of statements indicating how the selection is related to other works during the same period of time				
A series of statements indicating which particular historical event (or events) contributed to or influenced the selection				
A series of statements indicating what prevailing social, intellectual, religious, political, and economic attitudes existed that may have impacted the work				
A statements indicating what literary period this selection fall into				
A series of statements describing how this selection is representative of or contradictory to the literary period				
A statement indicating how this selection fits into a tradition (literary or otherwise)				
A statement indicating how this selection affects us today				
A statement indicating how the selection fits into the overall historical period				

15 Conclusion (Synthesis/Evaluation)

Does the Conclusion have the following structural traits (statements)?

	yes	no	N/A	note
A statement indicating what the student finds to be true from his or her analysis of this selection				
A statement or statements indicating anything else he or she finds to be true from studying this selection				
A statement or statements indicating why what he or she finds to be true is important				
A statement or statements indicating what he or she first thought about the topic in the selection				
A statement or statements indicating what, after the analysis, he or she now thinks about the topic				
A statement or statements indicating what some people might say after reading the selection				
A statement or statements indicating what other people might say				
A statement or statements indicating how the student writer feels overall about this selection and what it has to say				

Section III. Revision

Style (Appeal to Audience)

Does the student **demonstrate a thorough knowledge** of the subject or issue by:

	yes	no	N/A	note
Using terms and expressions appropriate to the audience ?				
Establishing his authority on the subject?				
Following all submission and style standards to the letter?				
Following conventions of that style to the letter?				
Using Appropriate grammatical person ?				
Using an appropriate verb tense ?				
Using an appropriate grammatical voice (active/passive)?				
Using appropriate word size ?				
Using appropriate qualifiers and adjectives ?				
Using appropriate punctuation ?				
Using controlled and appropriate voice/ tone (happy, serious, angry, etc.)?				
Using honorific language?				
Avoiding pejorative language?				
Using anecdotes ?				
Alluding to his anecdotes or other well-known symbols?				

Fallacies

Does the student avoid the following **logical fallacies** in his or her argument:

	yes	no	N/A	note
<i>Ad hominem</i>				
Bandwagon				
Begging the question				
Equivocation				
False analogy				
False authority				
<i>Post hoc, ergo propter hoc</i>				
False dilemma				
Guilt by association				
Hasty generalization				
<i>Non sequitur</i>				
Oversimplification				
Red herring				
Slippery slope				

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