Advanced Community College ESL Composition: An Integrated Skills Approach

ADVANCED COMMUNITY COLLEGE ESL COMPOSITION: AN INTEGRATED SKILLS APPROACH

JENELL RAE, JACOB SKELTON, EDGAR PEREZ, AND SARA BESETA

Los Angeles

CONTENTS

Part III. Literary Analysis

Part IV. Critical Thinking and Reading

Introduction

Advanced Community College ESL Composition: An Integrated Skills Approach (2019) is a textbook adapted under a grant from the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges (ASCCC) under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 License without attribution as requested by the work's original creator or licensee.

This text is a transformation of *Successful College Composition* a text created by Kathryn Crowther, Lauren Curtright, Nancy Gilbert, Barbara Hall, Tracienne Ravita, and Kirk Swenson who adopted it under a grant from Affordable Learning Georgia to Georgia Perimeter College (GPC) in 2015. This text is a revision of a prior adaptation of Writing for Success led by Rosemary Cox in GPC's Department of English, titled Successful College Writing for GPC Students (2014, 2015). *Successful College Composition* is a transformation of Writing for Success, a text adapted by The Saylor Foundation under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 License without attribution as requested by the work's original creator or licensee. Section 1.3 was authored by Rebecca Weaver. A *Handbook for Writers* published and adapted by Saylor Academy under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 3.0 License without attribution as requested by the work's original creator or licensor.

To the Instructor

Thank you for considering this textbook for your advanced ESL writing class. We hope that the fundamental rhetorical modes in the chapters on writing will provide helpful information to your class. We also realize that every instructor should have the freedom of choosing content, so our recommended topics for the essay assignments may be changed to suit your specific purpose.

Our theme-based approach, with content from professional writers, will give your students the opportunity to delve deeply into the readings, learn annotation strategies, and apply critical thinking to their assignments. This approach allows students to build their skills, but it doesn't expect the instructor to be the content expert. We hope it will encourage collaboration, active learning, and provide guidance towards academic topics.

According to *Teaching by Principles* by H. Douglas Brown, "Theme-based instruction provides an alternative to what would otherwise be traditional language classes by structuring a course around themes or topics. Theme-based curricula can serve the multiple interests of students in a classroom and can offer a focus on content while still adhering to institutional needs for offering a language course, per se. …The major principles underlying both theme-based and content-based instruction are:

- The automaticity principle (focus on purpose and meaningful use of language)
- The meaningful learning principle (subsume new information into existing structures and memory systems)
- The intrinsic motivation principle (behavior stems from wants, needs, desires from within)
- The communicative competence principle (attention to language use and fluency)

All these principles are well served by theme-based instruction and/or courses that are successfully able to get students excited and interested in some topic, issue, idea, or problem rather than bored or weary of over-analyzing linguistic rules.

Numerous current ESL textbooks, especially at the intermediate and advanced levels, offer theme-based courses of study. Such textbooks catch the curiosity and motivation of students with challenging topics and as they grapple with a whole array of real-life issues ranging from simple to complex, they can also focus on improving linguistic skills" (222).

We have also included samples of authentic ESL essays written by non-native speakers at the high-intermediate and advanced levels. By allowing your students to read and critique these pieces, we hope that they will begin to pay more attention to their own errors and gain confidence in self-editing as part of their writing process.

To the Student

This book has been created to provide a framework for building your skills in writing and critical thinking. It provides access to published samples from professional authors along with essay drafts from ESL students who have polished their skills in their respective writing courses.

The themes in the readings will give you a variety of topics to discuss with your classmates, which may inspire your own deeper thinking and writing. Overall, we hope that as you proceed through these chapters, you will build confidence and develop your voice in the classroom and beyond.

Welcome to the world of academic writing!

Acknowledgements

Thanks to all who have provided guidance and support for the creation of this textbook.

Jenell Rae: *A special thanks to my family for their patience during this project, my colleagues at East Los Angeles College who always share ideas and inspire me to grow as an educator, and finally, the OER movement for making life easier for students nationwide.*

Sara Behseta: *Special thanks to Shana Pacheco and Kevin Van Houten at East Los Angeles College for their annotation ideas, which were used in the appendix of this text. My gratitude also to the ESL and English faculty at East Los Angeles College along with my district colleagues, three of whom are authors of this text, for all their wise words that made a profound impact on my teaching. And most importantly, I wish to thank my parents and particularly my husband, Sam, whose support can only be described as the most meaningful of all.*

Edgar Perez: *First, I want to thank the Academic Senate for California Community Colleges for their support in the OER initiative. I also want to specially thank my E.S.L. colleagues at the Los Angeles Community College District for their support in this textbook project. This text is a testament of your knowledge and collaboration efforts. I want to thank Dr. Reginald Hubbard for your encouragement, support, and ideas for this textbook. Finally, to my family, thank you for your patience and understanding during this project.*

PART I

THE WRITING PROCESS

Introduction to Academic Writing

Becoming a Successful Writer

In her book *On Writing*, Eudora Welty maintains: "To write honestly and with all our powers is the least we can do, and the most." But writing well is difficult. People who write for a living sometimes struggle to get their thoughts on the page; even people who generally enjoy writing have days when they would rather do anything else. For people who do not like writing or do not think of themselves as good writers, writing assignments can be stressful or even intimidating. And, of course, you cannot get through college without having to write—sometimes a lot, and often at a higher level than you are used to. No magic formula will make writing quick and easy. However, you can use strategies and resources to manage writing assignments more easily. College will challenge you as a writer, but it is also a unique opportunity to grow.

Writing to Think and Communicate

One purpose of writing is to help you clarify and articulate your thoughts. Writing a list of points, both pro and con, on an issue of concern allows you to see which of your arguments are the strongest or reveals areas that need additional support. Putting ideas on paper helps you review and evaluate them, reconsider their validity, and perhaps generate new concepts. Writing your thoughts down may even help you grasp them for the first time.

Another important—and practical—function of writing is to communicate ideas. For your college classes you are required to write essays, research papers, and essay responses on tests. If you apply to other colleges or universities, you will have to compose letters of application, respond to specific questions, or write an autobiographical sketch. When you enter your chosen career you may have to send emails and write reports, proposals, grants, or other work-related documents. You must correspond with clients, business associates, and co-workers. And on a personal level, you want to contact friends and relatives. You may even find yourself responding to a community or national issue by writing a letter to the editor of your local newspaper.

Writing is an essential skill you must have in order to function in the twenty-first century, but like any skill, it is something that can be acquired and refined. Some people naturally express themselves better than others, but everyone can learn the basic craft of writing.

Overcoming Writer's Block

At some point, every writer experiences writer's block: staring at a blank page or computer screen without being able to put down even a single line. Your mind is blank, and panic sets in. Writer's block usually happens when you are working against a deadline such as in a timed writing assignment or for a paper that is due the next day. Even though there is nothing you can do to prevent writer's block from happening, there are several techniques you can use to help you overcome its negative effects:

- Don't procrastinate. Give yourself as much time as possible to complete your assignment. Budget your time so you can write the assignment in sections and still have time to edit and revise. If you are in a timed writing situation, jot down ideas in a scratch outline and work from that.
- Try free-writing without guilt. Start putting ideas down on paper without worrying about whether or not you are making spelling and grammatical errors; you shouldn't fret over organization. Keep in mind that you can always delete what you have written once your ideas begin to flow.
- Follow your inspiration. Begin by writing the section of the paper you feel best able to write. If you cannot start at the beginning, write the conclusion first, or begin writing the body of the paper. If you have an outline, you will already have the ideas and organization you need to write the body paragraphs.
- Break the writing project into parts. Think of the paper as a series of short sections. Sometimes you can be overwhelmed by the prospect of writing a ten-page research paper, but if you break it up into manageable pieces, the assignment does not seem so daunting.
- Review the assignment. Reread the instructions for the assignment to make sure you understand what you are expected to write. Look for keywords that you can research to give you insight into your topic. Often discussing the assignment with your professor can give you the clarity you need to begin writing.
- Verbalize your ideas. Discuss your ideas with a classmate, friend or family member. You can gain new insights and confidence by hearing what others have to say about your topic and sharing your misgivings with them.
- Visualize a friendly audience. Imagine you are writing the paper to a friend or someone you know well. Often the fear of rejection paralyzes your ability to start writing, so removing that obstacle should enable you to write without inhibition.
- Take a break. Try working on another writing project or switch to a completely different activity. Often if you get bogged down on one subject, thinking about something else for a while might clear your brain so you can come back to the original project with a new perspective. And getting up from the computer usually unclogs any mental blocks: take a walk, wash the dishes, or play with the dog.
- Change locations. Try moving to another area more conducive to your writing style. Some people write best in a noisy environment while others require a place with minimal distractions. Find what works best for you.

Remember that writer's block is only temporary—relax and start writing.

Selecting an Appropriate Voice

Whether you are writing an argumentative essay expressing your conviction that whale hunting should be abolished or a literary analysis of Kate Chopin's novel *The Awakening*, your paper should express a distinct point of view. Your purpose should be to convince your audience that you have something worthwhile to say. Gaining their approval depends to a large degree on their perception of the writer; you need to present yourself as educated, rational, and well-informed. But in doing so, you need to be careful not to lose your own voice. You should never use a wordy, artificial style in an attempt to impress your readers; neither should you talk down to them or apologize for your writing.

Choosing the Proper Pronoun Focus

One important consideration in selecting the appropriate voice for your paper is to choose the proper pronoun focus, and this is dependent upon the nature of the assignment. In some instances, the first person ("I") is acceptable. For example, if you are writing an autobiographical sketch for an application to a university, anything other than first person would sound odd. Likewise, if you are writing an extemporaneous essay that answers a question prompting a first person response, such as "Explain why you do or do not vote," again, first person would be the obvious choice. Even within the development of an essay that takes a third person approach, if you use an example from your personal experience to illustrate a point, you can discuss that isolated example using the first person. Most of the same arguments apply to the use of the second person pronoun ("you"). This textbook, for instance, utilizes the second person because of the unique relationship between the student/reader and the instructor/writer.

As discussed in *The Use of "I" in Writing* in this book's section "The Persuasive Essay," the appropriateness of the first-person pronoun in college writing is a topic of debate. But academic writing more often requires you to adopt a third-person focus, preferably in the plural form ("they"). Using third person enables you to avoid boring the reader by suggesting that the topic is of interest only to you. In other words, it broadens the audience appeal. Using third person in the plural form also allows you to avoid making pronoun agreement errors which might occur as the natural result of imitating spoken English which seems to favor the plural form instead of the more grammatically correct singular. For example, most people would say, "Everyone should have their book in class" instead of "Everyone should have his book in class," even though the former is technically incorrect. In addition, using third person plural eliminates the problem of sexist language and prevents the awkward use of "his/her."

Consider the following examples for their use of pronoun focus imagining they appeared in an essay about the validity of using source materials from the Internet.

Examples

- Weak example: As I surfed the Internet, I found a lot of articles that I couldn't trust because I didn't see any authors' names or sponsoring organizations.
- Weak example: As we surf the Internet, we frequently find articles we cannot trust because we do not find authors' names or sponsoring organizations.
- Weak example: As one surfs the Internet, one frequently finds articles one cannot trust because one cannot find authors' names or sponsoring organizations.
- Strong example: Surfing the Internet for source information is unreliable because many articles do not indicate their authors or sponsoring organizations.

The first example is too limited—who cares what *you* found on the Internet? The second example generalizes the focus better than the first, but it too restricts the audience.

Changing the pronoun to "one" is also problematic because it is repetitious and awkward. The final example is the best to use in an essay because it emphasizes the point in an all-inclusive manner, without being redundant or sounding artificial.

EXERCISE 1

Rewrite the following sentences, changing the pronoun focus to best suit an essay written for your ESL Composition class.

1. I find that walking is one of the best forms of exercise because it helps me lose weight and improve my cardiovascular system while I can enjoy being outside in the fresh air.
2. One should always pay attention to the charges on one's credit card bills in order to identify if one's account number has been stolen and to avoid being charged for services one did not receive.
3. We believe that we should be able to eat healthy fruits and vegetables without our having to pay exorbitant prices for organically grown food.
4. Your best chance of making a lot of money for retirement is to diversify your portfolio, investing in a variety of options instead of putting all of your funds in just one account.

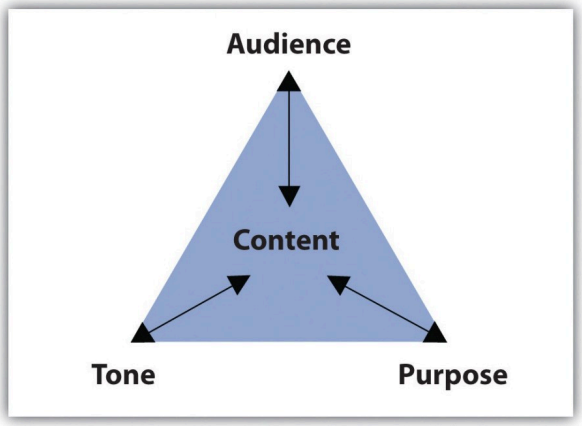
Key Takeaways

- Writing is an effective way to clarify, articulate, and communicate your thoughts.
- Writer's Block does not have to stall the writing process if you employ effective techniques to overcome it.
- Before you begin to write, adopt a voice and pronoun focus appropriate to your purpose in writing the essay.

Purpose, Audience, Tone, and Content

Imagine reading one long block of text, with each idea blurring into the next. Even if you are reading a thrilling novel or an interesting news article, you will likely lose interest in what the author has to say very quickly. During the writing process, it is helpful to position yourself as a reader. Ask yourself whether you can focus easily on each point you make. Keep in mind that three main elements shape the content of each essay: purpose, audience, and tone.

- Purpose: the reason the writer composes the essay.
- Audience: the individual or group whom the writer intends to address.
- Tone: the attitude the writer conveys about the essay's subject.



Content, audience, tone, purpose diagram

The assignment's purpose, audience, and tone dictate what each paragraph of the essay covers and how the paragraph supports the main point—the thesis.

Identifying Common Academic Purposes

The purpose for a piece of writing identifies the reason you write it by answering the question "Why?" For example, why write a play? To entertain a packed theater. Why write instructions to the babysitter? To inform him or her of your schedule and rules. Why write a letter to your congressman? To persuade him to address your community's needs.

In academic settings, the reasons for writing typically fulfill four main purposes:

- To summarize
- To analyze
- To synthesize
- To evaluate

A summary shrinks a large amount of information into only the essentials, using your own words; although shorter than the original piece of writing, a summary should still communicate all the key points and key support of the original document.

An analysis, on the other hand, separates complex materials into their different parts and demonstrates how the parts relate to one another. In the sciences, for example, the analysis of simple table salt would require a deconstruction of its parts—the elements sodium (Na) and chloride (Cl). Then, scientists would demonstrate how the two elements interact to create the compound NaCl, or sodium chloride: simple table salt.

In an academic analysis, instead of deconstructing compounds, the essay takes apart a primary source (an essay, a book, an article, etc.) point by point. It communicates the main points of the document by examining individual points and identifying how the points relate to one another.

The third type of writing—synthesis—combines two or more items to create an entirely new item. Take, for example, the electronic musical instrument aptly named the synthesizer. It looks like a simple keyboard but displays a dashboard of switches, buttons, and levers. With the flip of a few switches, a musician may combine the distinct sounds of a piano, a flute, or a guitar—or any other combination of instruments—to create a new sound. The purpose of an academic synthesis is to blend individual documents into a new document by considering the main points from one or more pieces of writing and linking the main points together to create a new point, one not replicated in either document.

Finally, an evaluation judges the value of something and determines its worth. Evaluations in everyday life are often not only dictated by set standards but also influenced by opinion and prior knowledge such as a supervisor's evaluation of an employee in a particular job. Academic evaluations, likewise, communicate your opinion and its justifications about a particular document or a topic of discussion. They are influenced by your reading of the document as well as your prior knowledge and experience with the topic or issue. Evaluations typically require more critical thinking and a combination of summary, analysis, and synthesis.

You will encounter these four purposes not only as you read for your classes but also as you read for work or pleasure. And, because reading and writing work together, your writing skills will improve as you read. Remember that the purpose for writing will guide you through each part of your paper, helping you make decisions about content and style.

When reviewing directions for assignments, look for the verbs that ask you to summarize, analyze, syn-

thesize, or evaluate. Instructors often use these words to clearly indicate the assignment's purpose. These words will cue you on how to complete the assignment because you will know its exact purpose.

EXERCISE 2

Read the following paragraphs about four films and then identify the purpose of each paragraph: to summarize, to analyze, to synthesize, or to evaluate.

- This film could easily have been cut down to less than two hours. By the final scene, I noticed that most of my fellow moviegoers were snoozing in their seats and were barely paying attention to what was happening on screen. Although the director sticks diligently to the book, he tries too hard to cram in all the action, which is just too ambitious for such a detail-oriented story. If you want my advice, read the book and give the movie a miss.
- During the opening scene, we learn that the character Laura is adopted and that she has spent the past three years desperately trying to track down her real parents. Having exhausted all the usual options—adoption agencies, online searches, family trees, and so on—she is on the verge of giving up when she meets a stranger on a bus. The chance encounter leads to a complicated chain of events that ultimately result in Laura getting her lifelong wish. But is it really what she wants? Throughout the rest of the film, Laura discovers that sometimes the past is best left where it belongs.
- To create the feeling of being gripped in a vice, the director, May Lee, uses a variety of elements to gradually increase the tension. The creepy, haunting melody that subtly enhances the earlier scenes becomes ever more insistent, rising to a disturbing crescendo toward the end of the movie. The desperation of the actors, combined with the claustrophobic atmosphere and tight camera angles create a realistic firestorm, from which there is little hope of escape. Walking out of the theater at the end feels like staggering out of a Roman dungeon.
- The scene in which Campbell and his fellow prisoners assist the guards in shutting down the riot immediately strikes the viewer as unrealistic. Based on the recent reports on prison riots in both Detroit and California, it seems highly unlikely that a posse of hardened criminals will intentionally help their captors at the risk of inciting future revenge from other inmates. Instead, both news reports and psychological studies indicate that prisoners who do not actively participate in a riot will go back to their cells and avoid conflict altogether. Examples of this lack of attention to detail occur throughout the film, making it almost unbearable to watch.

Collaboration: Please share with a classmate and compare your answers

EXERCISE 3

Group Activity: Working in a group of four or five, assign each group member the task of collecting one document each.

These documents might include magazine or newspaper articles, workplace documents, academic essays, chapters from a reference book, film or book reviews, or any other type of writing. As a group, read through each document and discuss the author's purpose for writing. Use the information you have learned in this chapter to decide whether the main purpose is to summarize, analyze, synthesize, or evaluate. Write a brief report on the purpose of each document, using supporting evidence from the text.

EXERCISE 4

Consider the essay most recently assigned to you. Identify the most effective academic purpose for the assignment.

- My assignment:
- My purpose:

Identifying the Audience

Imagine you must give a presentation to a group of executives in an office. Weeks before the big day, you spend time creating and rehearsing the presentation. You must make important, careful decisions not only about the content but also about your delivery. Will the presentation require technology to project figures and charts? Should the presentation define important words, or will the executives already know the terms? Should you wear your suit or dress? The answers to these questions will help you develop an appropriate relationship with your audience, making them more receptive to your message.

Now imagine you must explain the same business concepts from your presentation to a group of high school students. Those important questions you previously answered may now require different answers. The figures and charts may be too sophisticated, and the terms will certainly require definitions. You may even reconsider your outfit and sport a more casual look. Because the audience has shifted, your presentation and delivery will shift as well to create a new relationship with the new audience.

In these two situations, the audience—the individuals who will watch and listen to the presentation—plays a role in the develop-

Writing at Work

Thinking about the purpose of writing a report in the workplace can help focus and structure the document. A summary should provide colleagues with a factual overview of your findings without going into too much specific detail. In contrast, an evaluation

should include your personal opinion, along with supporting evidence, research, or examples to back it up. To help determine a purpose for writing, listen for words such as summarize, analyze, synthesize, or evaluate when your boss asks you to complete a report.

ment of presentation. As you prepare the presentation, you visualize the audience to anticipate their expectations and reactions. What you imagine affects the information you choose to present and how you will present it. Then, during the presentation, you meet the audience in person and discover immediately how well you perform.

Although the audience for writing assignments—your readers—may not appear in person, they play an equally vital role. Even in everyday writing activities, you identify your readers' characteristics, interests, and expectations before making decisions about what you write. In fact, thinking about audience has become so common that you may not even detect the audience-driven decisions. For example, you update your status on a social networking site with the awareness of who will digitally follow the post. If you want to brag about a good grade, you may write the post to please family members. If you want to describe a funny moment, you may write with your friends' senses of humor in mind. Even at work, you send emails with a subconscious awareness of the intended audience.

In other words, being aware of the identity of the reader is a skill you most likely already possess and one you rely on every day. Consider the following paragraphs. Which one would the author send to her parents? Which one would she send to her best friend?

Example A

Last Saturday, I volunteered at a local hospital. The visit was fun and rewarding. I even learned how to do cardiopulmonary resuscitation, or CPR. Unfortunately, I think I caught a cold from one of the patients. This week, I will rest in bed and drink plenty of clear fluids. I hope I am well by next Saturday to volunteer again.

Example B

OMG! You won't believe this! My advisor forced me to do my community service hours at this hospital all weekend! We

learned CPR but we did it on dummies, not even real peeps. And some kid sneezed on me and got me sick! I was so bored and sniffling all weekend; I hope I don't have to go back next week. I def do NOT want to miss the basketball tournament!

Most likely, you matched each paragraph to its intended audience with little hesitation. Because each paragraph reveals the author's relationship with the intended readers, you can identify the audience fairly quickly. When writing your own essays, you must engage with your audience to build an appropriate relationship given your subject.

Imagining your readers during each stage of the writing process will help you make decisions about your writing. Ultimately, the people you visualize will affect what and how you write.

While giving a speech, you may articulate an inspiring or critical message, but if you left your hair a mess and laced up mismatched shoes, your audience would not take you seriously. They may be too distracted by your appearance to listen to your words.

Similarly, grammar and sentence structure serve as the appearance of a piece of writing. Polishing your work using correct grammar will impress your readers and allow them to focus on what you have to say.

Because focusing on audience will enhance your writing, your process, and your finished product, you must consider the specific traits of your audience's members. Use your imagination to anticipate the readers' demographics, education, prior knowledge, and expectations.

- Demographics: these measure important data about a group of people, such as their age range, their ethnicity, their religious beliefs, or their gender. Certain topics and assignments will require these kinds of considerations about your audience. For other topics and assignments, these measurements may not influence your writing in the end. Regardless, it is important to consider demographics when you begin to think about your purpose for writing.
- Education: this considers the audience's level of schooling. If audience members have earned a doctorate degree, for example, you may need to elevate your style and use more formal language. Or, if audience members are still in college, you could write in a more relaxed style. An audience member's major or emphasis may also dictate your writing.
- Prior knowledge: this refers to what the audience already knows about your topic. If your readers have studied certain topics, they may already know some terms and concepts related to the topic. You may decide whether to define terms and explain concepts based on your audience's prior knowledge. Although you cannot peer inside the brains of your readers to discover their knowledge, you can make reasonable assumptions. For instance, a nursing major would presumably know more about health- related topics than a business major would.
- Expectations: these indicate what readers will look for while reading your assignment. Readers may expect consistencies in the assignment's appearance, such as correct grammar and traditional formatting like double-spaced lines and legible font. Readers may also have content-based expectations given the assignment's purpose and organization. In an essay titled "The Economics of Enlightenment: The Effects of Rising Tuition," for example, audience members may expect to read about the economic repercussions of college tuition costs.

EXERCISE 5

On your own sheet of paper, generate a list of characteristics under each category for each audience. This list will help you later when you read about tone and content.

1. Your classmates
    - Demographics
    - Education
    - Prior knowledge
    - Expectations
2. Your instructor
    - Demographics
    - Education
    - Prior knowledge
    - Expectations
3. The head of your academic department
    - Demographics
    - Education
    - Prior knowledge
    - Expectations
4. Now think about your next writing assignment. Identify the purpose (you may use the same purpose listed in Exercise 4), and then identify the audience. Create a list of characteristics under each category.
    - My assignment:
    - My purpose:
    - My audience:
        - Demographics
        - Education
        - Prior knowledge
        - Expectations

Collaboration: Please share with a classmate and compare your answers

EXERCISE 6

At some point during your career, you may be asked to write a report or to complete a presentation. Imagine that you have been asked to report on the issue of health and safety in the workplace. Using the information in this section complete an analysis of your intended audience—your fellow office workers. Consider how demographics, education, prior knowledge, and expectations will influence your report and explain how you will tailor it to your audience accordingly.

Collaboration: Pair with a classmate and compare your answers

Selecting an Appropriate Tone

Tone identifies a speaker's attitude toward a subject or another person. You may pick up a person's tone of voice fairly easily in conversation. A friend who tells you about her weekend may speak excitedly about a fun skiing trip. An instructor who means business may speak in a low, slow voice to emphasize her serious mood. Or a coworker who needs to let off some steam after a long meeting may crack a sarcastic joke.

Just as speakers transmit emotion through voice, writers can transmit a range of attitudes and emotions through prose—from excited and humorous to somber and critical. These emotions create connections among the audience, the author, and the subject, ultimately building a relationship between the audience and the text. To stimulate these connections, writers intimate their attitudes and feelings with useful devices, such as sentence structure, word choice, punctuation, and formal or informal language. Keep in mind that the writer's attitude should always appropriately match the audience and the purpose.

Read the following paragraph and consider the writer's tone. How would you describe the writer's attitude toward wildlife conservation?

> Many species of plants and animals are disappearing right before our eyes. If we don't act fast, it might be too late to save them. Human activities, including burning fossil fuels, deforestation, hunting, and overpopulation, are devastating the natural environment. Without our help, many species will not survive long enough for our children to see them in the wild. Take the tiger, for example. Today, tigers occupy just seven percent of their historical range, and many local populations are already extinct. Hunted for their beautiful pelts and other body parts, the tiger population has plummeted from one hundred thousand in 1920 to just a few thousand. Contact your local wildlife conservation society today to find out how you can stop this terrible destruction.

EXERCISE 7

Think about the assignment, purpose, and audience that you selected in previous exercises. Now, identify the tone you would use in the assignment.

- My assignment:
- My purpose:
- My audience:
- My tone:

Choosing Appropriate, Interesting Content

Content refers to all the written substance in a document. After selecting an audience and a purpose, you must choose what information will make it to the page. Content may consist of examples, statistics, facts, anecdotes, testimonies, and observations, but no matter the type, the information must be appropriate and interesting for the audience and purpose. An essay written for third graders that summarizes the legislative process, for example, would have to contain succinct and simple content.

Content is also shaped by tone. When the tone matches the content, the audience will be more engaged, and you will build a stronger relationship with your readers. Consider that audience of third graders. You would choose simple content that the audience will easily understand, and you would express that content through an enthusiastic tone.

The same considerations apply to all audiences and purposes.

EXERCISE 8

Match the content of the following listed examples to the appropriate audience and purpose. On your own sheet of paper, write the correct letter in the blank next to the word "content."

A. Whereas economist, Holmes, contends that the financial crisis is far from over, the presidential advisor, Jones, points out that it is vital to catch the first wave of opportunity to increase market share. We can use elements

of both experts' visions. Let me explain how.

A. In 2000 foreign money flowed into the United States contributing to easy credit conditions. People bought larger houses than they could afford eventually defaulting on their loans as interest rates rose.
B. The Emergency Economic Stabilization Act, known by most of us as the humongous government bailout, caused mixed reactions. Although supported by many political leaders, the statute provoked outrage among grassroots groups. In their opinion, the government was actually rewarding banks for their appalling behavior.

Audience: An instructor

Purpose: To analyze the reasons behind the 2007 financial crisis

Content:

Audience: Classmates

Purpose: To summarize the effects of the $700 billion government bailout

Content:

Audience: An employer

Purpose: To synthesize two articles on preparing businesses for economic recovery

Content:

Collaboration: Share with a classmate and compare your answers

EXERCISE 9

Using the assignment, purpose, audience, and tone from Exercise 7, generate a list of content ideas. Remember that content consists of examples, statistics, facts, anecdotes, testimonies, and observations.

- My assignment:
- My purpose:
- My audience:
- My tone:
- My content ideas:

Key Takeaways

- The content of each paragraph in the essay is shaped by purpose, audience, and tone.
- The four common academic purposes are to summarize, to analyze, to synthesize, and to evaluate.
- Identifying the audience's demographics, education, prior knowledge, and expectations will affect how and what you write.
- Devices such as sentence structure, word choice, punctuation, and formal or informal language communicate tone and create a relationship between the writer and his or her audience.
- Content may consist of examples, statistics, facts, anecdotes, testimonies, and observations. All content must be appropriate and interesting for the audience, purpose and tone.

Methods of Organizing Your Writing

The method of organization for essays and paragraphs is just as important as content. When you begin to draft an essay or paragraph, your ideas may seem to flow from your mind in a seemingly random manner; however, your readers, who bring to the table different backgrounds, viewpoints, and ideas, need you to clearly organize these ideas to help them draw connections between the body and the thesis. A solid organizational pattern not only helps readers to process and accept your ideas, but also gives your ideas a path that you can follow as you develop your essay (or paragraph). Knowing how you will organize your paragraphs allows you to better express and analyze your thoughts. In addition, planning the structure of your essay before you choose supporting evidence helps you conduct more effective and targeted research. This section covers three ways to organize both essays and paragraphs: chronological order, order of importance, and spatial order.

Chronological Order

Chronological arrangement has the following purposes:

- To explain the history of an event or a topic
- To tell a story or relate an experience
- To explain how to do or to make something
- To explain the steps in a process

Chronological order is mostly used in expository writing, which is a form of writing that narrates, describes, informs, or explains a process. When using chronological order, arrange the events in the order that they actually happened, or will happen if you are giving instructions. This method requires you to use words such as first, second, then, after that, later, and finally. These transition words guide you and your reader through the paper as you expand your thesis. For example, if you are writing an essay about the history of the airline industry, you would begin with its conception and detail the essential timeline events up until present day. You would follow the chain of events using words such as first, then, next, and so on.

Keep in mind that chronological order is most appropriate for the following purposes:

- Writing essays containing heavy research
- Writing essays with the aim of listing, explaining, or narrating
- Writing essays that analyze literary works such as poems, plays, or books

When using chronological order, your introduction should indicate the information you will cover and should also establish the relevance of the information. Your body paragraphs should then provide clear divisions or steps in chronology. You can divide your paragraphs by time (such as decades, wars, or other histori-

cal events) or by the same structure of the work you are examining (such as a line-by-line explication of a poem).

EXERCISE 10

Choose an accomplishment you have achieved in your life. The important moment could be in sports, schooling, or extracurricular activities. On your own sheet of paper, list the steps you took to reach your goal. Try to be as specific as possible with the steps you took. Pay attention to using transition words to focus your writing.

EXERCISE 11

On a separate sheet of paper, write a paragraph that describes a process you are familiar with and can do well. Assume that your reader is unfamiliar with the procedure. Remember to use the chronological key words, such as first, second, then, and finally.

Order of Importance

Order of importance is best used for the following purposes:

- Persuading and convincing
- Ranking items by their importance, benefit, or significance
- Illustrating a situation, problem, or solution

Most essays move from the least to the most important point, and the paragraphs are arranged in an effort to build the essay's strength. Sometimes, however, it is necessary to begin with the most important supporting point, such as in an essay that contains a thesis that is highly debatable. When writing a persuasive essay, it is best to begin with the most important point because it immediately captivates your readers and compels them to continue reading.

For example, if you were supporting your thesis that homework is detrimental to the education of community college students, you would want to present your most convincing argument first, and then move

on to the less important points for your case. During your career, you may be required to work on a team that devises a strategy for a specific goal of your company, such as increasing profits. When planning your strategy you should organize your steps in order of importance. This demonstrates the ability to prioritize and plan. Using the order of importance technique also shows that you can create a resolution with logical steps for accomplishing a common goal.

EXERCISE 12

On a separate sheet of paper, write a paragraph that discusses a passion of yours. Your passion could be music, a particular sport, film-making, and so on. Your paragraph should be built upon the reasons why you feel so strongly. Briefly discuss your reasons in the order of least to greatest importance.

Spatial Order

Spatial order is best used for the following purposes:

- Helping readers visualize something as you want them to see it
- Evoking a scene using the senses (sight, touch, taste, smell, and sound)
- Writing a descriptive essay

Spatial order means that you explain or describe objects as they are arranged around you in your space, for example in a bedroom. As the writer, you create a picture for your readers, and their perspective is the viewpoint from which you describe what is around you. The view must move in an orderly, logical progression, giving the reader clear directional signals to follow from place to place. The key to using this method is to choose a specific starting point and then guide the reader to follow your eye as it moves in an orderly trajectory from your starting point. Pay attention to the following student's description of her bedroom and how she guides the reader through the viewing process, foot by foot.

> Attached to my back bedroom wall is a small wooden rack dangling with red and turquoise necklaces that shimmer as I enter. Just to the right of the rack, billowy white curtains frame a large window with a sill that ends just six inches from the floor. The peace of such an image is a stark contrast to my desk, sitting to the right of the window, layered in textbooks, crumpled papers, coffee cups, and an overflowing ashtray. Turning my head to the right, I see a set of two bare windows that frame the trees outside the glass like a three-dimensional painting. Below the windows is an oak chest from which blankets and scarves are protruding. Against the wall opposite the billowy curtains is an antique dresser, on top of which sits a jewelry box and a few picture frames. A tall mirror attached to the dresser takes up much of the lavender wall.

The paragraph incorporates two objectives covered in this chapter: using an implied topic sentence, and applying spatial order. Often in a descriptive essay, the two objectives work together.

The following are possible transition words to include when using spatial order:

- Just to the left or just to the right
- Behind
- Between
- On the left or on the right
- Across from
- A little further down
- To the south, to the east, and so on
- A few yards away
- Turning left or turning right

EXERCISE 13

On a separate sheet of paper, write a paragraph using spatial order that describes your commute to work, school, or another location you visit often.

Collaboration: Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

Key Takeaways

- The way you organize your body paragraphs ensures you and your readers stay focused on and draw connections to your thesis statement.
- A strong organizational pattern allows you to articulate, analyze, and clarify your thoughts.
- Planning the organizational structure for your essay before you begin to search for supporting evidence helps you conduct more effective and directed research.
- Chronological order is most commonly used in expository writing. It is useful for explaining the history of your subject, for telling a story, or for explaining a process.
- Order of importance is most appropriate in a persuasion paper as well as for essays in which you rank things, people, or events by their significance.
- Spatial order describes things as they are arranged in space and is best for helping readers visualize something as you want them to see it; it creates a dominant impression.

Writing Thesis Statements

To be effective, all support in an essay must work together to convey a central point; otherwise, an essay can fall into the trap of being out of order and confusing. Just as a topic sentence focuses and unifies a single paragraph, the thesis statement focuses and unifies an entire essay. This statement is like a signpost that signals the essay's destination; it tells the reader the point you want to make in your essay, while the essay itself supports that point.

Because writing is not a linear process, you may find that the best thesis statement develops near the end of your first draft; however, creating a draft or working thesis early in the writing project helps give the drafting process clear direction. You should form your thesis before you begin to organize an essay, but you may find that it needs revision as the essay develops.

A thesis is not just a topic, but rather the writer's comment or interpretation of the question or subject. For whatever topic you select (for example, school uniforms, social networking), you must ask yourself, "What do I want to say about it?" Asking and then answering this question is vital to forming a thesis that is precise, forceful, and confident.

In the majority of essays, a thesis is one sentence long and appears toward the end of the introduction. It is specific and focuses on one to three points of a single idea—points that are able to be demonstrated in the body. It forecasts the content of the essay and suggests how you will organize your information. Remember that a thesis statement does not summarize an issue but rather dissects it.

Working Thesis Statements

A strong thesis statement must have the following qualities:

- It must be arguable. A thesis statement must state a point of view or judgment about a topic. An established fact is not considered arguable.
- It must be supportable. The thesis statement must contain a point of view that can be supported with evidence (reasons, facts, examples).
- It must be specific. A thesis statement must be precise enough to allow for a coherent argument and remain focused on the topic.

Examples of Appropriate Thesis Statements:

1. Closing all American borders for a period of five years is one solution that will tackle illegal immigration.
2. Compared to an absolute divorce, no-fault divorce is less expensive, promotes fairer settlements, and reflects a more realistic view of the causes for marital breakdown.
3. Exposing children from an early age to the dangers of drug abuse is a sure method of preventing future drug addicts.

4. In today's crumbling job market, a high school diploma is not significant enough education to land a stable, lucrative job.
5. Shakespeare's use of dramatic irony in Romeo and Juliet spoils the outcome for the audience and weakens the plot.
6. J. D. Salinger's character in Catcher in the Rye, Holden Caulfield, is a confused rebel who voices his disgust with phonies, yet acts like a phony on many occasions.
7. The societal and personal struggles of Troy Maxson, in the play *Fences*, symbolize the challenge of black males who lived through segregation and integration in the United States.

Pitfalls to Avoid:

- A thesis is weak when it is simply a declaration of your subject or a description of what you will discuss in your essay.
  - Weak thesis statement: My paper will explain why imagination is more important than knowledge.
- A thesis is weak when it makes an unreasonable or outrageous claim or insults the opposing side.
  - Weak thesis statement: Religious radicals across America are trying to legislate their Puritanical beliefs by banning required high school books.
- A thesis is weak when it contains an obvious fact or something that no one can disagree with or provides a dead end.
  - Weak thesis statement: Advertising companies use sex to sell their products.
- A thesis is weak when the statement is too broad.
  - Weak thesis statement: The life of Abraham Lincoln was long and challenging.

EXERCISE 14

Read the following thesis statements. On a separate piece of paper, identify each as weak or strong. For those that are weak, list the reasons why. Then revise the weak statements so that they conform to the requirements of a strong thesis.

1. The subject of this paper is my experience with ferrets as pets.
2. The government must expand its funding for research on renewable energy resources in order to prepare for the impending end of oil.
3. Edgar Allan Poe was a poet who lived in Baltimore during the nineteenth century.
4. In this essay, I will give you lots of reasons why slot machines should not be legalized in Baltimore.
5. Despite his promises during his campaign, President Kennedy took few executive measures to support civil rights leg-

islation.

6. Because many children's toys have potential safety hazards that could lead to injury, it is clear that not all children's toys are safe.
7. My experience with young children has taught me that I want to be a disciplinary parent because I believe that a child without discipline can be a parent's worst nightmare.

Thesis Statement Revision

Your thesis statement begins as a working thesis statement, an indefinite statement that you make about your topic early in the writing process for the purpose of planning and guiding your writing. Working thesis statements often become stronger as you gather information and form new opinions and reasons for those opinions. Revision helps you strengthen your thesis so that it matches what you have expressed in the body of the paper.

Ways to Revise Your Thesis:

You can cut down on irrelevant aspects and revise your thesis by taking the following steps:

- Pinpoint and replace all nonspecific words, such as people, everything, society, or life, with more precise words in order to reduce any vagueness.
  - Working thesis: Young people have to work hard to succeed in life.
  - Revised thesis: Recent college graduates must have discipline and persistence in order to find and maintain a stable job in which they can use and be appreciated for their talents.
  - Explanation: The original includes too broad a range of people and does not define exactly what success entails. By replacing those general words like people and work hard, the writer can better focus his or her research and gain more direction in his or her writing. The revised thesis makes a more specific statement about success and what it means to work hard.
- Clarify ideas that need explanation by asking yourself questions that narrow your thesis.
  - Working thesis: The welfare system is a joke.
  - Revised thesis: The welfare system keeps a socioeconomic class from gaining employment by alluring members of that class with unearned income, instead of programs to improve their education and skill sets.
  - Explanation: A joke means many things to many people. Readers bring all sorts of backgrounds and perspectives to the reading process and would need clarification for a word so vague. This expression may also be too informal for the selected audience. By asking questions, the writer can devise a more precise and appropriate explanation for joke and more accurately defines his or her stance, which will better guide the writing of the essay.
- Replace any linking verbs with action verbs. Linking verbs are forms of the verb to be, a verb that simply states that a situation exists.
  - Working thesis: Kansas City schoolteachers are not paid enough.
  - Revised thesis: The Kansas City legislature cannot afford to pay its educators, resulting in job cuts and resignations in a district that sorely needs highly qualified and dedicated teachers.

    - Explanation: The linking verb in this working thesis statement is the word are. Linking verbs often make thesis statements weak because they do not express action. Rather, they connect words and phrases to the second half of the sentence. Readers might wonder, "Why are they not paid enough?" But this statement does not compel them to ask many more questions. Asking questions will help you replace the linking verb with an action verb, thus forming a stronger thesis statement that takes a more definitive stance on the issue:
        - Who is not paying the teachers enough?
        - What is considered "enough"?
        - What is the problem?
        - What are the results?
- Omit any general claims that are hard to support.
    - Working thesis: Today's teenage girls are too sexualized.
    - Revised thesis: Teenage girls who are captivated by the sexual images on MTV are conditioned to believe that a woman's worth depends on her sensuality, a feeling that harms their self-esteem and behavior.
    - Explanation: It is true that some young women in today's society are more sexualized than in the past, but that is not true for all girls. Many girls have strict parents, dress appropriately, and do not engage in sexual activity while in middle school and high school. The writer of this thesis should ask the following questions:
        - Which teenage girls?
        - What constitutes "too" sexualized?
        - Why are they behaving that way?
        - Where does this behavior show up? What are the repercussions?

EXERCISE 15

On a separate sheet of paper, write a thesis statement for each of the following topics. Remember to make each statement specific, precise, demonstrable, forceful and confident. Then choose one of the topics and create a list of supporting points that could be developed into one or more paragraphs each.

- Texting while driving
- The legal drinking age in the United States
- Steroid use among professional athletes
- Abortion
- Racism

Key Takeaways

- Proper essays require a thesis statement to provide a specific focus and suggest how the essay will be organized.
- A thesis statement is your interpretation of the subject, not the topic itself.
- A strong thesis is specific, precise, forceful, confident, and is able to be demonstrated.
- A strong thesis challenges readers with a point of view that can be debated and can be supported with evidence.
- A weak thesis is simply a declaration of your topic or contains an obvious fact that cannot be argued.
- Depending on your topic, it may or may not be appropriate to use first person point of view.
- Revise your thesis by ensuring all words are specific, all ideas are exact, and all verbs express action.

Writing Paragraphs

Imagine reading one long block of text with each idea blurring into the next. You are likely to lose interest in a piece of writing that is disorganized and spans many pages without breaks. Paragraphs separate ideas into logical, manageable chunks, with each paragraph focusing on only one main idea and presenting coherent sentences to support that one point. Because all the sentences in one paragraph support the same point, a paragraph may stand on its own. For most types of informative or persuasive academic writing, writers find it helpful to think of the paragraph analogous to an essay, as each is controlled by a main idea or point, and that idea is developed by an organized group of more specific ideas. Thus, the thesis of the essay is analogous to the topic sentence of a paragraph, just as the supporting sentences in a paragraph are analogous to the supporting paragraphs in an essay.

In essays, each supporting paragraph adds another related main idea to support the writer's thesis, or controlling idea. Each related supporting idea is developed with facts, examples, and other details that explain it. By exploring and refining one idea at a time, writers build a strong case for their thesis. Effective paragraphing makes the difference between a satisfying essay that readers can easily process and one that requires readers to mentally organize the piece themselves. Thoughtful organization and development of each body paragraph leads to an effectively focused, developed, and coherent essay.

An effective paragraph contains three main parts:

- Topic sentence
- Supporting sentences (body)
- Concluding sentence

In informative and persuasive writing, the topic sentence is usually the first sentence or second sentence of a paragraph and expresses its main idea, followed by supporting sentences that help explain, prove, or enhance the topic sentence. In narrative and descriptive paragraphs, however, topic sentences may be implied rather than explicitly stated, with all supporting sentences working to create the main idea. If the paragraph contains a concluding sentence, it is the last sentence in the paragraph and reminds the reader of the main point by restating it in different words. The following figure illustrates the most common paragraph structure for informative and persuasive college essays.

Paragraph Structure Graphic Organizer

Topic Sentence (topic + comment, judgement, or interpretation):

Supporting Sentence 1:

Supporting Sentence 2:

Supporting Sentence 3:

Supporting Sentence 4:

Supporting Sentence 5

Concluding Sentence (summary of comment, judgement, or interpretation):

*Note: The number of supporting sentences varies according to the paragraph's purpose and the writer's sentence structure.

Creating Focused Paragraphs with Topic Sentences

The foundation of a paragraph is the topic sentence, which expresses the main idea or point of the paragraph. The topic sentence functions in two ways: it clearly refers to and supports the essay's thesis, and it indicates what will follow in the rest of the paragraph. As the unifying sentence for the paragraph, it is the most general sentence, whereas all supporting sentences provide different types of more specific information, such as, facts, details, or examples.

An effective topic sentence has the following characteristics:

- A topic sentence provides an accurate indication of what will follow in the rest of the paragraph.
  - Weak example: First, we need a better way to educate students.
    - Explanation: The claim is vague because it does not provide enough information about what will follow, and it is too broad to be covered effectively in one paragraph.
  - Stronger example: Creating a national set of standards for math and English education will improve student learning in many states.
    - Explanation: The sentence replaces the vague phrase "a better way" and leads readers to expect supporting facts and examples as to why standardizing education in these subjects might improve student learning in many states.
- A good topic sentence is the most general sentence in the paragraph and thus does not include supporting details.
  - Weak example: Salaries should be capped in baseball for many reasons, most importantly so we don't allow the same team to win year after year.

        - Explanation: This topic sentence includes a supporting detail that should be included later in the paragraph to back up the main point.
    - Stronger example: Introducing a salary cap would improve the game of baseball for many reasons.
        - Explanation: This topic sentence omits the additional supporting detail so that it can be expanded upon later in the paragraph, yet the sentence still makes a claim about salary caps improving the game.
- A good topic sentence is clear and easy to follow.
    - Weak example: In general, writing an essay, thesis, or other academic or nonacademic document is considerably easier and of much higher quality if you first construct an outline, of which there are many different types.
        - Explanation: The confusing sentence structure and unnecessary vocabulary bury the main idea, making it difficult for the reader to follow the topic sentence.
    - Stronger example: Most forms of writing can be improved by first creating an outline.
        - Explanation: This topic sentence cuts out unnecessary verbiage and simplifies the previous statement, making it easier for the reader to follow. The writer can include examples of what kinds of writing can benefit from outlining in the supporting sentences.

Location of Topic Sentences

A topic sentence can appear anywhere within a paragraph or can be implied (such as in narrative or descriptive writing). In college-level expository or persuasive writing, placing an explicit topic sentence at the beginning of each paragraph (the first sentence) makes it easier for readers to follow the essay and for writers to stay on topic, but writers should be aware of variations and maintain the flexibility to adapt to different writing projects. The following examples illustrate varying locations for the topic sentence. In each example, the topic sentence is underlined.

Topic Sentence Begins the Paragraph (General to Specific)

> After reading the new TV guide this week I wondered why we are still being bombarded with reality shows, a plague that continues to darken our airwaves. Along with the return of viewer favorites, we are to be cursed with yet another mindless creation. *Prisoner* follows the daily lives of eight suburban housewives who have chosen to be put in jail for the purposes of this fake psychological experiment. A preview for the first episode shows the usual tears and tantrums associated with reality television. I dread to think what producers will come up with next season and hope that other viewers will express their criticism. These producers must stop the constant stream of meaningless shows without plot lines. We've had enough reality television to last us a lifetime!

The first sentence tells readers that the paragraph will be about reality television shows, and it expresses the writer's distaste for these shows through the use of the word bombarded. Each of the following sentences in the paragraph supports the topic sentence by providing further information about a specific reality television show and why the writer finds it unappealing. The final sentence is the concluding sentence. It reiterates the main point that viewers are bored with reality television shows by using different words from the topic sentence.

Paragraphs that begin with the topic sentence move from the general to the specific. They open with

a general statement about a subject (reality shows) and then discuss specific examples (the reality show *Prisoner*). Most academic essays contain the topic sentence at the beginning of the first paragraph.

Topic Sentence Ends the Paragraph (Specific to General)

> Last year, a cat traveled 130 miles to reach its family who had moved to another state and had left their pet behind. Even though it had never been to their new home, the cat was able to track down its former owners. A dog in my neighborhood can predict when its master is about to have a seizure. It makes sure that he does not hurt himself during an epileptic fit. Compared to many animals, our own senses are almost dull.

The last sentence of this paragraph is the topic sentence. It draws on specific examples (a cat that tracked down its owners and a dog that can predict seizures) and then makes a general statement that draws a conclusion from these examples (animals' senses are better than humans'). In this case, the supporting sentences are placed before the topic sentence and the concluding sentence is the same as the topic sentence. This technique is frequently used in persuasive writing. The writer produces detailed examples as evidence to back up his or her point, preparing the reader to accept the concluding topic sentence as the truth.

When the Topic Sentence Appears in the Middle of the Paragraph

> For many years, I suffered from severe anxiety every time I took an exam. Hours before the exam, my heart would begin pounding, my legs would shake, and sometimes I would become physically unable to move. Last year, I was referred to a specialist and finally found a way to control my anxiety—breathing exercises. It seems so simple, but by doing just a few breathing exercises a couple of hours before an exam, I gradually got my anxiety under control. The exercises help slow my heart rate and make me feel less anxious. Better yet, they require no pills, no equipment, and very little time. It's amazing how just breathing correctly has helped me learn to manage my anxiety symptoms.

In this paragraph, the underlined sentence is the topic sentence. It expresses the main idea—that breathing exercises can help control anxiety. The preceding sentences enable the writer to build up to his main point (breathing exercises can help control anxiety) by using a personal anecdote (how he used to suffer from anxiety). The supporting sentences then expand on how breathing exercises help the writer by providing additional information. The last sentence is the concluding sentence and restates how breathing can help manage anxiety. Placing a topic sentence in the middle of a paragraph is often used in creative writing. If you notice that you have used a topic sentence in the middle of a paragraph in an academic essay, read through the paragraph carefully to make sure that it contains only one major topic.

Implied Topic Sentences

Some well-organized paragraphs do not contain a topic sentence at all, a technique often used in descriptive and narrative writing. Instead of being directly stated, the main idea is implied in the content of the paragraph, as in the following narrative paragraph:

> Heaving herself up the stairs, Luella had to pause for breath several times. She let out a wheeze as she sat down heavily in the wooden rocking chair. Tao approached her cautiously, as if she might crumble at the slightest touch. He studied her face, like parchment, stretched across the bones so finely he could almost see right through the skin to the decaying muscle underneath. Luella smiled a toothless grin.

Although no single sentence in this paragraph states the main idea, the entire paragraph focuses on one concept—that Luella is extremely old. The topic sentence is thus implied rather than stated so that all the details in the paragraph can work together to convey the dominant impression of Luella's age. In a para-

graph such as this one, an explicit topic sentence would seem awkward and heavy-handed. Implied topic sentences work well if the writer has a firm idea of what he or she intends to say in the paragraph and sticks to it. However, a paragraph loses its effectiveness if an implied topic sentence is too subtle or the writer loses focus.

EXERCISE 16

In each of the following sentence pairs, choose the more effective topic sentence.

1. a. This paper will discuss the likelihood of the Democrats winning the next election.
   b. To boost their chances of winning the next election, the Democrats need to listen to public opinion.
2. a. The unrealistic demands of union workers are crippling the economy for three main reasons.
   b. Union workers are crippling the economy because companies are unable to remain competitive as a result of added financial pressure.
3. a. Authors are losing money as a result of technological advances.
   b. The introduction of new technology will devastate the literary world.
4. a. Rap music is produced by untalented individuals with over-sized egos.
   b. This essay will consider whether talent is required in the rap music industry.

EXERCISE 17

Read the following statements and evaluate each as a topic sentence.

1. Exercising three times a week is healthy.
2. Sexism and racism exist in today's workplace.
3. I think we should raise the legal driving age.
4. Owning a business.
5. There are too many dogs on the public beach.

EXERCISE 18

Create a topic sentence on each of the following subjects. Write your responses on your own sheet of paper.

1. An endangered species
2. The cost of fuel
3. The legal drinking age
4. A controversial film or novel

Developing Paragraphs

If you think of a paragraph as a sandwich, the supporting sentences are the filling between the bread. They make up the body of the paragraph by explaining, proving, or enhancing the controlling idea in the topic sentence. The overall method of development for paragraphs depends upon the essay as a whole and the purpose of each paragraph; thus, paragraphs may be developed by using examples, description, narration, comparison and contrast, definition, cause and effect, classification and division. A writer may use one method, or combine several methods

Writers often want to know how many words a paragraph should contain, and the answer is that a paragraph should develop the idea, point, or impression completely enough to satisfy the writer and readers. Depending on their function, paragraphs can vary in length from one or two sentences, to over a page; however, in most college assignments, successfully developed paragraphs usually contain approximately one hundred to two hundred and fifty words and span one-fourth to two-thirds of a typed page. A series of short paragraphs in an academic essay can seem choppy and unfocused, whereas paragraphs that are one page or longer can tire readers. Giving readers a paragraph break on each page helps them maintain focus.

This advice does not mean, of course, that composing a paragraph of a particular number of words or sentences guarantees an effective paragraph. Writers must provide enough supporting sentences within paragraphs to develop the topic sentence and simultaneously carry forward the essay's main idea.

For example, in a descriptive paragraph about a room in the writer's childhood home, a length of two or three sentences is unlikely to contain enough details to create a picture of the room in the reader's mind, and it will not contribute in conveying the meaning of the place. In contrast, a half-page paragraph full of carefully selected, vivid, specific details, and comparisons provides a fuller impression and engages the reader's interest and imagination. In descriptive or narrative paragraphs, supporting sentences present details and actions in vivid, specific language in objective or subjective ways, appealing to the readers' senses to make them see and experience the subject. In addition, some sentences writers use make com-

parisons that bring together, or substitute the familiar with the unfamiliar; thus, enhancing and adding depth to the description of the incident, place, person, or idea.

In a persuasive essay about raising the wage for certified nursing assistants, a paragraph might focus on the expectations and duties of the job comparing them to that of a registered nurse. Needless to say, a few sentences that simply list the certified nurse's duties will not give readers a complete enough idea of what these healthcare professionals do. If readers do not have enough information about the duties and expectations of both certified and registered nurses, the paragraph fails to do its part in convincing readers that the pay of certified nurses is inadequate and should be increased.

In informative or persuasive writing, a supporting sentence usually offers one of the following.

- Reason: The refusal of the baby boom generation to retire is contributing to the current lack of available jobs.
- Fact: Many families now rely on older relatives to support them financially.
- Statistic: Nearly 10 percent of adults are currently unemployed in the United States.
- Quotation: "We will not allow this situation to continue," stated Senator Johns.
- Example: Last year, Bill was asked to retire at the age of fifty-five.

The type of supporting sentence you choose will depend on what you are writing and why you are writing. For example, if you are attempting to persuade your audience to take a particular position, you should rely on facts, statistics, and concrete examples, rather than personal opinions. Personal testimony in the form of an extended example can be used in conjunction with the other types of support.

Paragraph Elements

Consider the elements in the following paragraph:

Topic sentence:

There are numerous advantages to owning a hybrid car.

Sentence 1 (statistic):

First, they get 20 percent to 35 percent more miles to the gallon than a fuel-efficient gas-powered vehicle.

Sentence 2 (fact):

Second, they produce very few emissions during low speed city driving.

Sentence 3 (reason):

Because they do not require gas, hybrid cars reduce dependency on fossil fuels, which helps lower prices at the pump.

Sentence 4 (example):

Alex bought a hybrid car two years ago and has been extremely impressed with its performance.

Sentence 5 (quotation):

"It's the cheapest car I've ever had," she said. "The running costs are far lower than previous gas powered vehicles I've owned."

Concluding sentence:

Given the low running costs and environmental benefits of owning a hybrid car, it is likely that many more people will follow Alex's example in the near future.

Sometimes the writing situation does not allow for research to add specific facts or other supporting information, but paragraphs can be developed easily with examples from the writer's own experience. Hripsime, a student in an ESL Advanced Composition class, quickly drafted an essay during a timed writing assignment in class. To practice improving paragraph development, she selected the body paragraph below to add support:

Topic: Would you be better off if you didn't own a television? Discuss.

Original paragraph:

> Lack of ownership of a television set is also a way to preserve innocence, and keep the exposure towards anything inappropriate at bay. From simply watching a movie, I have seen things I shouldn't have, no matter how fast I switch the channel. Television shows not only display physical indecency, but also verbal. Many times movies do voice-overs of profane words, but they also leave a few words uncensored. Seeing how all ages can flip through and see or hear such things make t.v. toxic for the mind, and without it I wouldn't have to worry about what I may accidentally see or hear.

The original paragraph identifies two categories of indecent material, and there is mention of profanity to provide a clue as to what the student thinks is indecent. However, the paragraph could use some examples to make the idea of inappropriate material clearer. Hripsime considered some of the television shows she had seen and made a few changes.

Revised paragraph:

> Not owning a television set would also be a way to preserve innocence and keep my exposure to anything inappropriate at bay. While searching for a program to view, I have seen things I shouldn't have, no matter how fast I switched the channel. The synopsis of Euro Trip, which describes high school friends traveling across Europe, leads viewers to think that the film is an innocent adventure; however; it is filled with indecency, especially when the students reach Amsterdam. The movie Fast and Furious has the same problem since the women are all half-naked in half tops and mini-skirts or short-shorts. Television shows not only display physical indecency, but also verbal. Many television shows have no filters, and the characters say profane words freely. On Empire, one of the most viewed dramas today, the main characters Cookie and Lucious Lyon use profane words during their fights throughout entire episodes. Because The Big Bang Theory is a show about a group of science geeks and their cute neighbor, viewers might think that these science geniuses' conversations would be about their current research or other science topics. Instead, their characters regularly engage in conversations about their personal lives that should be kept private. The ease of flipping through channels and seeing or hearing such things makes t.v. toxic for the mind, and without a television I wouldn't have to worry about what I may accidentally see or hear.

Hripsime's addition of a few examples helps to convey why she thinks she would be better off without a television.

Consider the paragraph below on the topic of trauma in J. D. Salinger's work, noticing how examples are used to develop the paragraph.

Thesis:

> Author J.D. Salinger relied primarily on his personal life and belief system as the foundation for the themes in the majority of his works.

Supporting Point/Topic Sentence:

> Salinger, a World War II veteran, suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, a disorder that influenced themes in many of his works.

Examples 1–3: A title and description of each work are used to establish support for the topic sentence.

> Salinger, a World War II veteran, suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, a disorder that influenced the themes in many of his works. He did not hide his mental anguish over the horrors of war and once told his daughter, "You never really get the smell of burning flesh out of your nose, no matter how long you live." His short story "A Perfect Day for Bananafish" details a day in the life of a WWII veteran who was recently released form an army hospital for psychiatric problems. The man acts questionably with a little girl he meets on the beach before he returns to his hotel room and commits suicide. Another short Story, "For Esme – with Love and Squalor," is narrated by a traumatized soldier who sparks an unusual relationship with a young girl he meets before he departs to partake in D-Day. Finally, in Salinger's only novel, The Catcher in the Rye, he continues with the theme of post-traumatic stress, though not directly related to war. From a rest home for the mentally ill, sixteen-year-old Holden Caulfield narrates the story of his nervous breakdown following the death of his younger brother.

Concluding Sentences

An effective concluding sentence draws together all the ideas raised in your paragraph. It reminds readers of the main point—the topic sentence—without restating it in exactly the same words. Using the hamburger example, the top bun (the topic sentence) and the bottom bun (the concluding sentence) are very similar. They frame the "meat" or body of the paragraph.

Compare the topic sentence and concluding sentence from the first example on hybrid cars:

Topic Sentence:

> There are many advantages to owning a hybrid car.

Concluding Sentence:

> Given the low running costs and environmental benefits of owning a hybrid car, it is likely that many more people will follow Alex's example in the near future.

Notice the use of the synonyms advantages and benefits. The concluding sentence reiterates the idea that owning a hybrid is advantageous without using the exact same words. It also summarizes two examples of the advantages covered in the supporting sentences: low running costs, and environmental benefits.

Writers should avoid introducing any new ideas into a concluding sentence because a conclusion is intended to provide the reader with a sense of completion. Introducing a subject that is not covered in the paragraph will confuse readers and weaken the writing.

A concluding sentence may do any of the following:

- Restate the main idea.
  - Example: Childhood obesity is a growing problem in the United States.
- Summarize the key points in the paragraph.
  - Example: A lack of healthy choices, poor parenting, and an addiction to video games are among the many factors contributing to childhood obesity.
- Draw a conclusion based on the information in the paragraph.
  - Example: These statistics indicate that unless we take action, childhood obesity rates will continue to rise.
- Make a prediction, suggestion, or recommendation about the information in the paragraph.
  - Example: Based on this research, more than 60 percent of children in the United States will be

morbidly obese by the year 2030 unless we take evasive action.

- Offer an additional observation about the controlling idea.
  - Example: Childhood obesity is an entirely preventable tragedy.

Paragraph Length

Although paragraph length is discussed in the section on developing paragraphs with supporting sentences, some additional reminders about when to start a new paragraph may prove helpful to writers:

- If a paragraph is over a page long, consider providing a paragraph break for readers. Look for a logical place to divide the paragraph; then revise the opening sentence of the second paragraph to maintain coherence.
- A series of short paragraphs can be confusing and choppy. Examine the content of the paragraphs and combine ones with related ideas or develop each one further.
- When dialogue is used, begin a new paragraph each time the speaker changes.
- Begin a new paragraph to indicate a shift in subject, tone, or time and place.

EXERCISE 19

Use one of the topic sentences created in Exercise 18 and develop a paragraph with supporting details.

EXERCISE 20

Identify the topic sentence, supporting sentences, and concluding sentence in the following paragraph.

> The desert provides a harsh environment in which few mammals are able to adapt. Of these hardy creatures, the kangaroo rat is possibly the most fascinating. Able to live in some of the most arid parts of the southwest, the kangaroo rat neither sweats nor pants to keep cool. Its specialized kidneys enable it to survive on a minuscule amount of water. Unlike other desert creatures, the kangaroo rat does not store water in its body but instead is able to convert the dry seeds it eats into moisture. Its ability to adapt to such a hostile environment makes the kangaroo rat a truly amazing creature.

Collaboration: Pair with another student and compare your answers.

EXERCISE 21

On your own paper, write one example of each type of concluding sentence based on a topic of your choice.

Improving Paragraph Coherence

A strong paragraph holds together well, flowing seamlessly from the topic sentence into the supporting sentences and on to the concluding sentence. To help organize a paragraph and ensure that ideas logically connect to one another, writers use a combination of elements:

- A clear organizational pattern that is chronological (for narrative writing and describing processes), spatial (for descriptions of people or places), and ordered according to importance (general to specific (deductive), or specific to general (inductive)).
- Transitional words and phrases that connect words that describe a relationship between ideas.
- Repetition of ideas that keep the parts of the paragraph together by maintaining focus on the main idea. This element reinforces both paragraph coherence and unity.

In the following example, notice the use of transitions and key words:

> Owning a hybrid car benefits both the owner and the environment. First, these cars get 20 percent to 35 percent more miles to the gallon than a fuel-efficient gas-powered vehicle. Second, they produce very few emissions during low speed city driving. Because they do not require gas, hybrid cars reduce dependency on fossil fuels, which helps lower prices at the pump. Alex bought a hybrid car two years ago and has been extremely impressed with its performance. "It's the cheapest car I've ever had," she said. "The running costs are far lower than previous gas-powered vehicles I've owned." Given the low running costs and environmental benefits of owning a hybrid car, it is likely that many more people will follow Alex's example in the near future.

Words such as first and second are transition words that show sequence or clarify order. They help organize the writer's ideas by showing that he or she has another point to make in support of the topic sentence. The transition word *because* is a transition word of consequence that continues a line of thought. It indicates that the writer will provide an explanation of a result. In this sentence, the writer explains why hybrid cars will reduce dependency on fossil fuels (because they do not require gas).

In addition to transition words, the writer repeats the word hybrid (and other references such as *these cars*, and *they*), and ideas related to benefits to keep the paragraph focused on the topic and hold it together.

To include a summarizing transition for the concluding sentence, the writer could rewrite the final sentence as follows:

> In conclusion, given the low running costs and environmental benefits of owning a hybrid car, it is likely that many more people will follow Alex's example in the near future.

Although the phrase "in conclusion" certainly reinforces the idea of summary and closure, it is not necessary. In this case it is redundant because the sentence without the phrase already repeats and summarizes the benefits presented in the topic sentence and flows smoothly from the preceding quotation. The second half of the sentence, in making a prediction about the future, signals a conclusion, also making the phrase "in conclusion" unnecessary. The original version of the concluding sentence also illustrates how varying sentence openings can improve paragraph coherence. As writers continue to practice and develop their style, they more easily make these decisions between using standard transitional phrases and combining the repetition of key ideas with varied sentence openings.

The following table provides some useful transition words and phrases to connect sentences within paragraphs:

Table of Common Transitional Words and Phrases

Transitions That Show Sequence or Time		
after	before	later
afterward	before long	meanwhile
as soon as	finally	next
at first	first, second, third	soon
at last	in the first place	then
Transitions That Show Position		
above	across	at the bottom
at the top	behind	below
beside	beyond	inside
near	next to	opposite
to the left, to the right, to the side	under	where
Transitions That Show a Conclusion		
indeed	hence	in conclusion
in the final analysis	therefore	thus
Transitions That Continue a Line of Thought		
consequently	furthermore	additionally
because	besides the fact	following this idea further
in addition	in the same way	moreover
looking further	considering..., it is clear that	
Transitions That Change a Line of Thought		
but	yet	however
nevertheless	on the contrary	on the other hand
Transitions That Show Importance		
above all	best	especially
in fact	more important	most important
most	worst	
Transitions That Introduce the Final Thoughts in a Paragraph or Essay		
finally	last	in conclusion
most of all	least of all	last of all
All-Purpose Transitions to Open Paragraphs or to Connect Ideas Inside Paragraphs		
admittedly	at this point	certainly
granted	it is true	generally speaking
in general	in this situation	no doubt

Table of Common Transitional Words and Phrases		
no one denies	obviously	of course
to be sure	undoubtedly	unquestionably
Transitions That Introduce Examples		
for instance	for example	
Transitions That Clarify the Order of Events or Steps		
first, second, third	generally, furthermore, finally	in the first place, also, last
in the first place, furthermore, finally	in the first place, likewise, lastly	

EXERCISE 22

Using your own paper, write a paragraph on a topic of your choice. Be sure to include a topic sentence, supporting sentences, and a concluding sentence and to use transitional words and phrases to link your ideas together.

Collaboration: Share your paragraph with another student or your writing group.

Key Takeaways

- A paragraph contains three distinct components: a topic sentence, body, and concluding sentence.
- The topic sentence expresses the main idea of the paragraph.
- Good topic sentences are general enough to cover the supporting sentences and limited enough to be developed well.
- Topic sentences are clear and easy to follow, and provide an accurate indication of what will follow in the rest of the paragraph.
- Topic sentences may be explicit or implied. They are usually explicit in informative and persuasive essays, whereas they are often implied in narrative and descriptive writing.
- Topic sentences may be placed at the beginning, middle, or end of a paragraph. In most academic essays, the topic sentence is placed at the beginning of a paragraph.
- Supporting sentences help explain, prove, or enhance the topic sentence by offering facts, reasons, statistics, quotations, or examples.

- Concluding sentences summarize the key points in a paragraph and reiterate the main idea without repeating it word for word.
- Transitional words and phrases help organize ideas in a paragraph and show how these ideas relate to one another.
- Repetition of keywords helps keep paragraphs focused and coherent.

Rhetorical Modes of Writing

Rhetorical modes simply mean the ways we can effectively communicate through language. Each day people interact with others to tell a story about a new pet, describe a transportation problem, explain a solution to a science experiment, persuade a customer that a brand is the best, or even reveal what has caused a particular medical issue. We speak in a manner that is purposeful to each situation, and writing is no different. While rhetorical modes can refer to both speaking and writing, in this chapter we reveal the ways in which we shape our writing according to our purpose or intent.

Your purpose for writing determines the mode you choose.

The four major categories of rhetorical modes are narration, description, exposition, and persuasion. The narrative essay tells a relevant story or relates an event. The descriptive essay uses vivid, sensory details to draw a picture in words. The writer's purpose in expository writing is to explain or inform. Exposition is subdivided into five modes: classification, process, definition, comparison/contrast, and cause/effect. In the persuasive essay, the writer's purpose is to persuade or convince the reader by presenting one idea against another and clearly taking a stand on one side of the issue. We often use several of these modes in everyday and professional writing situations. This chapter will also consider special examples of these modes such as personal statements and other common academic writing assignments.

Whether you are asked to write a cause/effect essay in a history class, a comparison/contrast report in biology, or a narrative email recounting the events in a situation on the job, you will be equipped to express yourself precisely and communicate your message clearly. Learning these rhetorical modes will also help you to become a more effective writer.

The best way to become a better writer is to become a closer reader. The next chapter contains essays from students and professional writers that illustrate the rhetorical modes. Model student essays demonstrating these and other rhetorical modes can often be found in college and university publications such as Perimeter College's *The Polishing Cloth*. While you read these essays, remember the purpose of the writing and pay attention to the following:

- Thesis statement: What is the author's main point of the essay? Identify the sentence and see how well it is supported throughout the essay.
- Topic sentence: How well does each topic sentence support the thesis, and how well does it describe the main idea of the paragraph?
- Supporting evidence: What evidence does the author uses to support the essay's main ideas, and

gauge their credibility? Note these elements should shape your response to each essay and also to your own writing.

The Writing Process

If you think that a blank sheet of paper or a blinking cursor on the computer screen is a scary sight, you are not alone. Many writers, students, and employees find that beginning to write can be intimidating. When faced with a blank page, however, experienced writers remind themselves that writing, like other everyday activities, is a process. Every process, from writing to cooking, and bike riding to using a new cell phone, will get significantly easier with practice.

Just as you need a recipe, ingredients, and the proper tools to cook a delicious meal, you also need a plan, resources, and adequate time to create a well-written composition. In other words, writing is a process that requires following steps and using strategies to accomplish your goals.

Effective writing can be simply described as good ideas that are expressed well and arranged in the proper order. This chapter will give you the chance to work on all these important aspects of writing. In this chapter, we will be using the Process of writing an essay to illustrate the idea of of process writing.

Prewriting

Loosely defined, prewriting includes all the writing strategies employed before writing your first draft. Although many more prewriting strategies exist, the following section covers: using experience and observations, reading, freewriting, asking questions, listing, and clustering/idea mapping. Using the strategies in the following section can help you overcome the fear of the blank page and confidently begin the writing process.

Choosing a Topic/Theme

In addition to understanding that writing is a process, writers also understand that choosing a good general topic for an assignment is an essential first step. Sometimes your instructor will give you an idea to begin an assignment, and other times your instructor will ask you to come up with a topic on your own. A good topic not only covers what an assignment will be about, but it also fits the assignment's purpose and its audience. This textbook is theme-based, which means that each chapter has an underlying set of thematic readings.

In the next few sections, you will follow a writer named Romina as she explores and develops her essay's topic and focus. You will also be planning one of your own. The first step is to identify why you are writing (to inform, to explain, or some other purpose) and for whom you are writing. Write your purpose and your audience on your own sheet of paper, and keep the paper close by as you read and complete exercises in this chapter and write the first draft.

- My purpose:
- My audience:

Prewriting Techniques: Brainstorming

Brainstorming refers to writing techniques used to:

- Generate topic ideas
- Transfer your abstract thoughts on a topic into more concrete ideas on paper (or digitally on a computer screen)
- Organize the ideas you have generated to discover a focus and develop a working thesis

Although brainstorming techniques can be helpful in all stages of the writing process, you will have to find the techniques that are most effective for your writing needs. The following general strategies can be used when initially deciding on a topic, or for narrowing the focus for a topic: freewriting, asking questions, listing, and clustering/idea mapping.

In the initial stage of the writing process, it is fine if you choose a general topic. Later you can use brainstorming strategies to narrow the focus of the topic.

Experience and Observations

When selecting a topic, you may want to consider something that interests you or something based on your own life and personal experiences. Even everyday observations can lead to interesting topics. After writers think about their experiences and observations, they often take notes on paper to better develop their thoughts. These notes help writers discover what they have to say about their topic.

Reading

Reading plays a vital role in all the stages of the writing process, and firstly influences the development of ideas and topics. Different kinds of documents can help you choose and develop a topic. For example, a magazine cover advertising the latest research on the threat of global warming may catch your eye in the supermarket. This subject may interest you, and you may consider global warming as a topic. Or maybe a novel's courtroom drama sparks your curiosity of a particular lawsuit or legal controversy.

After you choose a topic, critical reading is essential to the development of a topic. While reading almost any document, you evaluate the author's point of view by thinking about the main idea and supporting details. When you judge the author's argument, you discover more about not only the author's opinion but also your own. If this step already seems daunting, remember that even the best writers need to use prewriting strategies to generate ideas.

Prewriting strategies depend on your critical reading skills. Reading, prewriting, and brainstorming exercises (and outlines and drafts later in the writing process) will further develop your topic and ideas. As you continue to follow the writing process, you will see how Romina uses critical reading skills to assess her own prewriting exercises.

Freewriting

Freewriting is an exercise in which you write freely about any topic for a set amount of time (usually five to seven minutes). During the time limit, you may jot down any thoughts that come to your mind. Try not to worry about grammar, spelling, or punctuation. Instead, write as quickly as you can without stopping. If you get stuck, just copy the same word or phrase over and over again until you come up with a new thought.

Writing often comes easier when you have a personal connection with the topic you have chosen. Remember, to generate ideas in your freewriting, you may also think about readings that you have enjoyed or that have challenged your thinking. Doing this may lead your thoughts in interesting directions.

Quickly recording your thoughts on paper will help you discover what you have to say about a topic. When writing quickly, try not to doubt or question your ideas. Allow yourself to write freely and unconsciously. Once you start writing with few limitations, you may find you have more to say than you first realized. Your flow of thoughts can lead you to discover even more ideas about the topic. Freewriting may even lead you to discover another topic that excites you even more.

Look at Romina's example below. The instructor allowed the members of the class to choose their own topics, and Romina thought about her experiences as a communications major. She used this freewriting exercise to help her generate more concrete ideas from her own experience.

Freewriting Example

> Last semester my favorite class was about mass media. We got to study radio and television. People say we watch too much television, and even though I try not to, I end up watching a few reality shows just to relax. Everyone has to relax! It's too hard to relax when something like the news (my husband watches all the time) is on because it's too scary now. Too much bad news, not enough good news. News. Newspapers I don't read as much anymore. I can get the headlines on my homepage when I check my email. Email could be considered mass media too these days. I used to go to the video store a few times a week before I started school, but now the only way I know what movies are current is to listen for the Oscar nominations. We have cable but we can't afford movie channels, so I sometimes look at older movies late at night. UGH. A few of them get played again and again until you're sick of them. My husband thinks I'm crazy, but sometimes there are old black-and-whites on from the 1930s and '40s. I could never live my life in black-and-white. I like the home decorating shows and love how people use color on their walls. Makes rooms look so bright. When we buy a home, if we ever can, I'll use lots of color. Some of those shows even show you how to do major renovations by yourself. Knock down walls and everything. Not for me–or my husband. I'm handier than he is. I wonder if they could make a reality show about us?

EXERCISE 1

Freewrite about one event you have recently experienced. With this event in mind, write without stopping for five minutes. After you finish, read over what you wrote. Does anything stand out to you as a good general topic to write about? One of the following prompts may help you get started:

- A celebration
- The first day of a job or the first day of school
- An illness
- The loss of a friend or relative
- Finding a place to live

Asking Questions

Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?

In everyday situations, you pose these kinds of questions to get more information. Who will be my partner for the project? When is the next meeting? Why is my car making that odd noise? When faced with a writing assignment, you might ask yourself, "How do I begin?"

You seek the answers to these questions to gain knowledge, to better understand your daily experiences, and to plan for the future. Asking these types of questions will also help you with the writing process. As you choose your topic, answering these questions can help you revisit the ideas you already have and generate new ways to think about your topic. You may also discover aspects of the topic that are unfamiliar to you and that you would like to learn more about. All these idea-gathering techniques will help you plan for future work on your assignment.

When Romina reread her freewriting notes, she found she had rambled and her thoughts were disjointed. She realized that the topic that interested her most was the one she started with, the media. She then decided to explore that topic by asking herself questions about it. Her purpose was to refine media into a topic she felt comfortable writing about. To see how asking questions can help you choose a topic, take a look at the following chart that Romina completed to record her questions and answers. She asked herself the questions that reporters and journalists use to gather information for their stories. The questions are often called the 5WH questions, after their initial letters.

Examples of "Asking Questions"

Who?

I use media. Students teachers, parents, employers and employees– almost everyone uses media.

What?

The media can be a lot of things– television, radio, email (I think), newspapers, magazines, books.

Where?

The media is almost everywhere now. It's at home, at work, in cars, and even on cell phones.

When?

The media has been around for a long time, but it seems a lot more important now.

Why?

Hmm. This is a good question. I don't know why there is mass media. Maybe we have it because we have the technology now. Or people live far away from their families and have to stay in touch.

How?

Well, media is possible because of the technology inventions, but I don't know how they all work.

EXERCISE 2

Using the prompt you chose to practice freewriting in Exercise 1, continue to explore the topic by answering the 5 WH questions, as Romina did in the above example.

Narrowing the focus

After rereading her essay assignment, Romina realized her general topic, mass media, is too broad for her class's short paper requirement. Three pages are not enough to cover all the concerns in mass media today. Romina also realized that although her readers are other communications majors who are interested in the topic, they might want to read a paper about a particular issue in mass media.

The prewriting techniques of brainstorming by freewriting and asking questions helped Romina think more about her topic, but the following prewriting strategies can help her (and you) narrow the focus of the topic:

- Listing
- Clustering/Idea Mapping

Narrowing the focus means breaking up the topic into subtopics, or more specific points. Generating lots of subtopics will help you eventually select the ones that fit the assignment and appeal to you and your audience.

Listing

Listing is a term often applied to describe any prewriting technique writers use to generate ideas on a topic, including freewriting and asking questions. You can make a list on your own or in a group with your classmates. Start with a blank sheet of paper (or a blank computer screen) and write your general topic across the top. Underneath your topic, make a list of more specific ideas. Think of your general topic as a broad

category and the list items as things that fit in that category. Often you will find that one item can lead to the next, creating a flow of ideas that can help you narrow your focus to a more specific paper topic. The following is Romina's brainstorming list:

	Mass Media	
Magazines	DVD	Smart Phones
Newspapers	Gaming/Video	Text Messages
Broadcasting	Games	Tiny Cameras
Radio	Internet	GPS
Television	Cell Phones	

From this list, Romina could narrow her focus to a particular technology under the broad category of "mass media."

Idea Mapping

Idea mapping, sometimes called clustering or webbing, allows you to visualize your ideas on paper using circles, lines, and arrows. This technique is also known as clustering because ideas are broken down and clustered, or grouped together. Many writers like this method because the shapes show how the ideas relate or connect, and writers can find a focused topic from the connections mapped. Using idea mapping, you might discover interesting connections between topics that you had not thought of before.

To create an idea map:

1. Start by writing your general topic in a circle in the center of a blank sheet of paper. Moving out from the main circle, write down as many concepts and terms ideas you can think of related to your general topic in blank areas of the page. Jot down your ideas quickly–do not overthink your responses. Try to fill the page.
2. Once you've filled the page, circle the concepts and terms that are relevant to your topic. Use lines or arrows to categorize and connect closely related ideas. Add and cluster as many ideas as you can think of.

To continue brainstorming, Romina tried idea mapping. Review the following idea map that Romina created:

Notice Romina's largest circle contains her general topic, mass media. Then, the general topic branches into two subtopics written in two smaller circles: television and radio. The subtopic television branches into even more specific topics: cable and DVDs. From there, Romina drew more circles and wrote more specific ideas: high definition and digital recording from cable and Blu-ray from DVDs. The radio topic led Romina to draw connections between music, downloads versus CDs, and, finally, piracy. From this idea map, Romina saw she could consider narrowing the focus of her mass media topic to the more specific topic of music piracy.

Topic Checklist: Developing a Good Topic

- Am I interested in this topic?
- Would my audience be interested?
- Do I have prior knowledge or experience with this topic? If so, would I be comfortable exploring this topic and sharing my experience?
- Do I want to learn more about this topic?
- Is this topic specific?
- Does it fit the length of the assignment

Prewriting strategies are a vital first step in the writing process. First, they help you choose a broad topic,

and then they help you narrow the focus of the topic to a more specific idea. An effective topic ensures that you are ready for the next step: Developing a working thesis and planning the organization of your essay by creating an outline.

EXERCISE 3

Return to the topic explored in **Exercise 2** through the prewriting technique of answering questions (5 WH). Explore and narrow the topic further by practicing the prewriting techniques of Brainstorming (listing) and Idea Mapping. Allow yourself no more than five to seven minutes for each technique.

Collaboration: Share your results with a classmate or in small groups, and compare answers. Offer feedback to your classmate(s) on what you find interesting about his or her topic.

Key Takeaways

- All writers rely on steps and strategies to begin the writing process.
- The steps in the writing process are prewriting, outlining, writing a rough draft, revising, and editing.
- Writers often choose a general topic first and then narrow the focus to a more specific topic.
- Prewriting includes any brainstorming technique used to generate ideas, narrow the focus of abstract thoughts and ideas, and transfer them into written form.
- A good topic interests the writer, appeals to the audience, and fits the purpose of the writing project.

Outlining

Purpose of an Outline

Once your topic has been chosen, your ideas have been generated through brainstorming techniques, and you've developed a working thesis, the next step in the prewriting stage is to create an outline. Sometimes called a "blueprint," or "plan" for your paper, an outline helps writers organize their thoughts and categorize the main points they wish to make in an order that makes sense.

Creating an outline is an important step in the writing process!

The purpose of an outline is to help you organize your paper by checking to see if and how your ideas connect to each other, or whether you need to flesh out a point or two.

No matter the length of the paper, from a three-page weekly assignment to a 50-page senior thesis, outlines can help you see the overall picture.

Having an outline also helps prevent writers from "getting stuck" when writing the first draft of an essay.

A well-developed outline will show the essential elements of an essay:

- thesis of essay
- main idea of each body paragraph
- evidence/support offered in each paragraph to substantiate the main points

A well-developed outline breaks down the parts of your thesis in a clear, hierarchical manner. Writing an outline before beginning an essay helps the writer organize ideas generated through brainstorming and/or research. In short, a well-developed outline makes your paper easier to write.

The formatting of any outline is not arbitrary; the system of formatting and number/letter designations creates a visual hierarchy of the ideas, or points, being made in the essay.

Major points, in other words, should not be buried in subtopic levels.

Types of Outlines

Alphanumeric Outlines

This is the most common type of outline used and is usually instantly recognizable to most people. The formatting follows these characters, in this order:

- Level 1: Roman Numerals (I, II, III, IV, V, etc.)
- Level 2: Capitalized Letters (A, B, C, D, E, etc.)
- Level 3: Arabic Numerals (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.)
- Level 4: Lowercase Letters (a, b, c, d, e, etc.)

Alphanumeric Example

I.
- A. (Supporting detail) Gas mileage significantly decreases at speeds over 55 mp.
  1. (Supporting detail for sub-point) Slowing down from 65 mph to 55 mph can increase MPG by as much as 15 percent.
     a. (Additional explanation/support for supporting detail) Each 5 mph driven over 60 mph is like paying an additional $0.21 per gallon for gas (at $3.00 per gallon).

If the outline needs to subdivide beyond these divisions, use Arabic numerals inside parentheses and then lowercase letters inside parentheses.

Decimal Outlines

The decimal outline follows the same levels of indentation when formatting to indicate the hierarchy of ideas/points as the alphanumeric outline. The added benefit of decimal notation, however, is that it clearly shows, through the decimal breakdown, how each progressive level relates to the larger whole.

Decimal Example

- 1. (Main point) Lowering the speed limit on all Interstate highways to 55 mph would create a significant, cost free reduction in air pollution
  - 1.1 (Supporting detail) Gas consumption significantly increases at speeds over 55 mph
    - 1.2 (Supporting detail for sub-point) Slowing down from 65 mph to 55 mph can increase your MPG by as much as 15 percent, and thereby eliminate 15 percent of carbon emissions
      - 1.3 (Additional explanation/support for supporting detail) According to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), "as a rule of thumb, each 5 mph driven over 60 mph is like paying an additional $0.21 per gallon for gas (at $3.00 per gallon)."

Micro and Macro Outlines

The indentation/formatting of a micro (full sentence) or macro (topic) outline is essentially the same as alphanumeric/decimal outlines. The difference between micro and macro outlines lies in the specificity and depth of the content.

Micro outlines focus on the "micro," the drilled-down specific details of the essay's content. They are particularly useful when the topic you are discussing is complex in nature. When creating a micro outline, it can also be useful to insert the quotations you plan to include in the essay (with citations) and subsequent analyses of quotes. Taking this extra step helps ensure that you have enough support for your ideas, as well as reminding writers to actually analyze and discuss quotations, rather than simply inserting quotes and moving on. While time-consuming to create, micro outlines can be seen as basically creating the first rough draft of an essay.

Macro outlines, in contrast, focus on the "big picture" of an essay's main points and support by using short phrases or keywords to indicate the focus and content at each level of the essay's development. A macro outline is useful when writing about a variety of ideas and issues where the ordering of points is more flexible. Macro outlines are also especially helpful when writing timed essays, or essay exam questions–or any rhetorical situation where writers need to quickly get their ideas down in an organized essay format.

Micro/Full-Sentence Outline Example

- I. (Main point) Lowering the speed limit on all Interstate highways to 55 mph would create a significant, cost free reduction in air pollution.
  - A. (Supporting detail) Gas consumption significantly increases at speeds over 55 mph.
    - 1. (Supporting detail for sub-point) Slowing down from 65 mph to 55 mph can increase your car's MPG by as much as 15 percent, and thereby eliminate 15 percent of car-

bon emissions.
    - a. (Additional explanation/support for supporting detail) According to the U.S. Department of Energy (DOE), “as a rule of thumb, each 5 mph driven over 60 mph is like paying an additional $0.21 per gallon for gas (at $3.00 per gallon)”.

Macro/Topic Outline Example

- I. (Main point) Lowering the speed limit on all Interstate highways to 55 mph would create a significant, cost free reduction in air pollution.
    - A. (Supporting detail) Increase of Consumption over 55 mph.
        - 1. (Supporting detail for sub-point) Consumption and carbon emissions.
            - a. (Additional explanation/support for supporting detail) Amount of money saved

Creating an Outline

- Identify your topic: Put the topic in your own words in with a single sentence or phrase to help you stay on topic.
- Determine your main points. What are the main points you want to make to convince your audience? Refer back to the prewriting/brainstorming exercise of answering 5 WH questions: “why or how is the main topic important?” Using your brainstorming notes, you should be able to create a working thesis.
- List your main points/ideas in a logical order. You can always change the order later as you evaluate your outline.
- Create sub-points for each major idea. Typically, each time you have a new number or letter, there need to be at least two points (i.e. if you have an A, you need a B; if you have a 1, you need a 2; etc.). Though perhaps frustrating at first, it is indeed useful because it forces you to think hard about each point; if you can’t create two points, then reconsider including the first in your paper, as it may be extraneous information that may detract from your argument.
- Evaluate: Review your organizational plan, your blueprint for your paper. Does each paragraph have a controlling idea/topic sentence? Is each point adequately supported? Look over what you have written. Does it make logical sense? Is each point suitably fleshed out? Is there anything included that is unnecessary?

EXERCISE 4

1. Create a sentence outline from the following introductory paragraph in alphanumeric format:

The popularity of knitting is cyclical, rising and falling according to the prevailing opinion of women’s places in society. Though

> internationally a unisex hobby, knitting is pervasively thought of as a woman's hobby in the United States. Knitting is currently enjoying a boost in popularity as traditionally minded women pick up the craft while women who enjoy subverting traditional gender roles have also picked up the needles to reclaim "the lost domestic arts" and give traditionally feminine crafts the proper respect. American men are also picking up the needles in greater numbers, with men's knitting guilds and retreats nationwide. This rise in popularity has made the receiving of hand-knit items special, and many people enjoy receiving these long-lasting, painstakingly crafted items. For any knitters, the perfect gift starts by choosing the perfect yarn. Choosing the perfect yarn for a knitting project relies on the preferences of the person for whom the project is being made, the availability of the yarn, and the type of yarn recommended by the pattern.

What is the thesis? How is the topic introduced? Is there a hierarchy of supporting points?

2. Now create your own outline based on the topic you developed in **Exercise 3**.

Sample of 3-Level Alphanumeric Outline

Outline

Thesis: Making the perfect egg omelet requires proper preparation

I. Making the perfect omelet requires proper preparation.

A. The cook must have adequate utensils.

1. A heavy, Teflon-coated frying pan gives even heat and prevents burning.
2. A plastic spatula prevents the cook from scratching the frying pan.

B. The cook must select fresh ingredients.

1. Fresh eggs make a fluffier omelet than eggs that have aged.
2. Sweet milk blends into the egg batter more evenly than sour milk.
3. Fresh vegetable oil is necessary to avoid giving the omelets a greasy flavor and texture.
4. Newly cracked pepper and salt add extra zest to the egg batter.

II. Making the perfect egg omelet requires skillful cooking techniques.

A. The cook must prepare the egg batter quickly.

1. The eggs must be beaten with a whisk until they are fluffy.
2. The milk and seasonings must be whisked into the egg batter before the eggs go flat.

B. The cook must fry the egg batter with care

1. The egg batter must be poured into the frying pan as soon as the oil is hot.
2. The omelet must be turned in the pan only once as soon as the batter sets on top.

Drafting

Drafting is the stage of the writing process in which you develop a complete first version of a piece of writing. Even professional writers admit that an empty page scares them because they feel they need to come up with something fresh and original every time they open a blank document on their computers. Because you have completed the first two steps in the writing process, you have already recovered from empty page syndrome. You have prewriting and planning already done, so you know what will go on that blank page: what you wrote in your outline.

Goals and Strategies for Drafting

Your objective at this stage of the writing process is to draft an essay with at least three body paragraphs, which means that the essay will contain a minimum of five paragraphs, including an introduction and a conclusion. A draft is a complete version of a piece of writing, but it is not the final version. The step in the writing process after drafting, as you may remember, is revising. During revising, you will have the opportunity to make changes to your first draft before you put the finishing touches on it during the editing and proofreading stage. A first draft gives you a working version that you can later improve.

If you are more comfortable starting on paper than on the computer, you can start on paper and then type it before you revise. You can also use a voice recorder to get yourself started, dictating a paragraph or two to get you thinking. In this lesson, Romina does all her work on the computer, but you may use pen and paper or the computer to write a rough draft.

Making the Writing Process Work for You

The following approaches, done alone or in combination with others, may improve your writing and help you move forward in the writing process:

- Begin writing with the part you know the most about: You can start with the third paragraph in your outline if ideas come easily to mind. You can start with the second paragraph or the first paragraph, too. Although paragraphs may vary in length, keep in mind that short paragraphs may contain insufficient support. Readers may also think the writing is abrupt. Long paragraphs may be wordy and may lose your reader's interest. As a guideline, try to write paragraphs longer than one sentence but shorter than the length of an entire double-spaced page.
- Write one paragraph at a time and then stop: As long as you complete the assignment on time, you may choose how many paragraphs you complete in one sitting. Pace yourself. On the other hand, try not to procrastinate. Writers should always meet their deadlines.
- Take short breaks to refresh your mind: This tip might be most useful if you are writing a multi-page report or essay. Still, if you are antsy or cannot concentrate, take a break to let your mind rest. But do not let breaks extend too long. If you spend too much time away from your essay, you may have trouble starting again. You may forget key points or lose momentum. Try setting an alarm to limit your break, and when the time is up, return to your desk to write.
- Be reasonable with your goals: If you decide to take ten-minute breaks, try to stick to that goal. If you told yourself that you need more facts, then commit to finding them. Holding yourself to your own goals will create successful writing assignments.
- Keep your audience and purpose in mind as you write: These aspects of writing are just as important when you are writing a single paragraph for your essay as when you are considering the direction of the entire essay.

Of all of these considerations, keeping your purpose and your audience at the front of your mind is the most important key to writing success. If your purpose is to persuade, for example, you will present your facts and details in the most logical and convincing way you can. Your purpose will guide your mind as you compose your sentences. Your audience will guide word choice. Are you writing for experts, for a general

audience, for other college students, or for people who know very little about your topic? Keep asking yourself what your readers, with their background and experience, need to be told in order to understand your ideas. How can you best express your ideas so they are totally clear and your communication is effective?

You may want to identify your purpose and audience on an index card that you clip to your paper (or keep next to your computer). On that card, you may want to write notes to yourself—perhaps about what that audience might not know or what it needs to know—so that you will be sure to address those issues when you write. It may be a good idea to also state exactly what you want to explain to that audience, or to inform them of, or to persuade them about.

EXERCISE 5

Using the topic for the essay that you outlined in the second step of **Exercise 4**, describe your purpose and your audience as specifically as you can. Use your own sheet of paper to record your responses. Then keep these responses near you during future stages of the writing process.

Purpose:

Audience:

Discovering the Basic Elements of a First Draft

If you have been using the information in the previous chapters step by step to help you develop an assignment, you already have both a formal topic outline and a formal sentence outline to direct your writing. Knowing what a first draft looks like will help you make the creative leap from the outline to the first draft

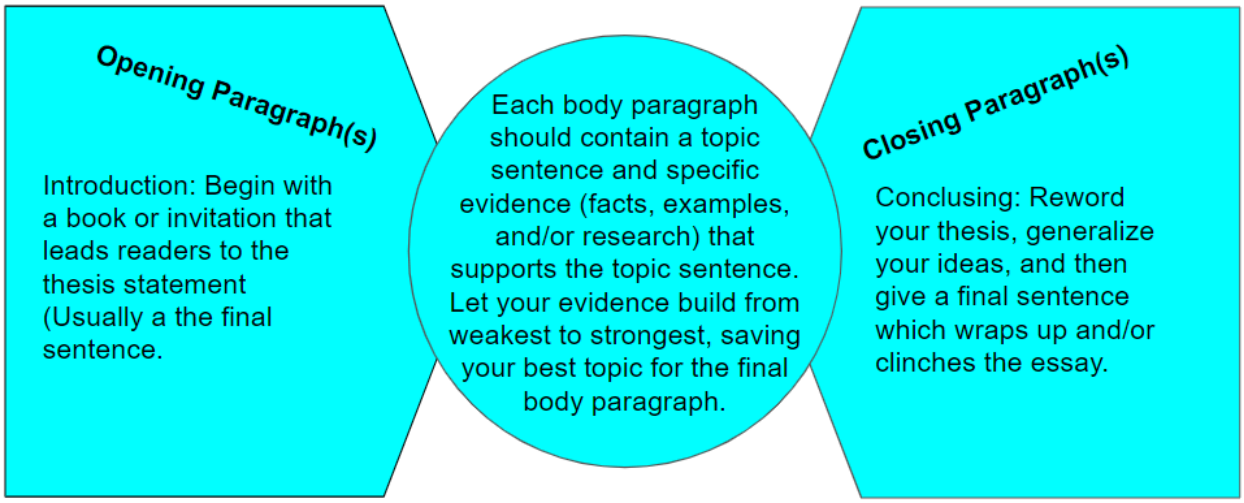
A first draft should include the following elements:

- An introduction that piques the audience's interest, tells what the essay is about, and motivates readers to keep reading.
- A thesis statement that presents the main point, or controlling idea, of the entire piece of writing.
- A topic sentence in each paragraph that states the main idea of the paragraph and implies how that main idea connects to the thesis statement.
- Supporting sentences in each paragraph that develop or explain the topic sentence. These can be specific facts, examples, anecdotes, or other details that elaborate on the topic sentence.
- A conclusion that reinforces the thesis statement and leaves the audience with a feeling of completion.

The Bowtie Method

There are many ways to think about the writing process as a whole. One way to imagine your essay is to see it like a bowtie. In the figure below, you will find a visual representation of this metaphor. The left side of the bow is the introduction, which begins with a hook and ends with the thesis statement. In the center, you will find the body paragraphs, which grow with strength as the paper progresses, and each paragraph contains a supported topic sentence. On the right side, you will find the conclusion. Your conclusion should reword your thesis and then wrap up the paper with a summation, clinch, or challenge. In the end, your paper should present itself as a neat package, like a bowtie.

Figure of the "Bowtie Method"



Starting Your First Draft

Now we are finally ready to look over Romina's shoulder as she begins to write her essay about digital technology and the confusing choices that consumers face. As she does, you should have in front of you your outline, with its thesis statement and topic sentences, and the notes you wrote earlier in this lesson on your purpose and audience. Reviewing these will put both you and Romina in the proper mind-set to start.

The following is Romina's thesis statement:

> E-book readers are changing the way people read.

Here are the notes that Romina wrote to herself to characterize her purpose and audience:

- Everyone wants the newest and the best digital technology, but the choices are many, and the specifications are often confusing.
- Purpose: My purpose is to inform readers about the wide variety of consumer digital technology available in stores and to explain why the specifications for these products, expressed in numbers that average consumers don't understand, often cause bad or misinformed buying decisions.
- Audience: My audience is my instructor and members of this class. Most of them are not heavy into technology except for the usual laptops, cell phones, and MP3 players, which are not topics I'm writing about. I'll have to be as exact and precise as I can be when I explain possibly unfamiliar product specifications. At the same time, they're more with it electronically than my grandparents' VCR-flummoxed generation, so I won't have to explain every last detail.

Romina chose to begin by writing a quick introduction based on her thesis statement. She knew that she would want to improve her introduction significantly when she revised. Right now, she just wanted to give herself a starting point. Remember that she could have started directly with any of the body paragraphs.

You will learn more about writing attention-getting introductions and effective conclusions later in this chapter.

With her thesis statement and her purpose and audience notes in front of her, Romina then looked at her sentence outline. She chose to use that outline because it includes the topic sentences. The following is the portion of her outline for the first body paragraph. The Roman numeral I identifies the topic sentence for the paragraph, capital letters indicate supporting details, and Arabic numerals label sub-points.

1. Ebook readers are changing the way people read.
    1. Ebook readers make books easy to access and to carry.
        1. Books can be downloaded electronically.
        2. Devices can store hundreds of books in memory.
    2. The market expands as a variety of companies enter it.
        1. Booksellers sell their own ebook readers.
        2. Electronics and computer companies also sell ebook readers.
    3. Current ebook readers have significant limitations.
        1. The devices are owned by different brands and may not be compatible.
        2. Few programs have been made to duplicate the way Americans borrow and read printed books.

Romina then began to expand the ideas in her outline into a paragraph. Notice how the outline helped her guarantee that all her sentences in the body of the paragraph develop the topic sentence.

> Ebook readers are changing the way people read, or so ebook developers hope. The main selling point for these handheld devices, which are sort of the size of a paperback book, is that they make books easy to access and carry. Electronic versions of printed books can be downloaded online for a few bucks or directly from your cell phone. These devices can store hundreds of books in memory and, with text-to-speech features, can even read the texts. The market for ebooks and ebook readers keeps expanding as a lot of companies enter it. Online and traditional booksellers have been the first to market ebook readers to the public, but computer companies, especially the ones already involved in cell phone, online music, and notepad computer technology, will also enter the market. The problem for consumers, however, is which device to choose. Incompatibility is the norm. Ebooks can be read-only on the devices they were intended for. Furthermore, use is restricted by the same kind of DRM systems that restrict the copying of music and videos. So, book buyers are often unable to lend books to other readers, as they can with a read book. Few accommodations have been made to fit the other way Americans read: by borrowing books from libraries. What is a buyer to do?

If you write your first draft on the computer, consider creating a new file folder for each course with a set of sub-folders inside the course folders for each assignment you are given. Label the folders clearly with the course names, and label each assignment folder and word processing document with a title that you will easily recognize. The assignment name is a good choice for the document. Then use that sub-folder to store all the drafts you create. When you start each new draft, do not just write over the last one. Instead, save the draft with a new tag after the title—draft 1, draft 2, and so on—so that you will have a complete history of drafts in case your instructor wishes you to submit them. In your documents, observe any formatting requirements—for margins, headers, placement of page numbers, and other layout matters—that your instructor requires.

EXERCISE 6

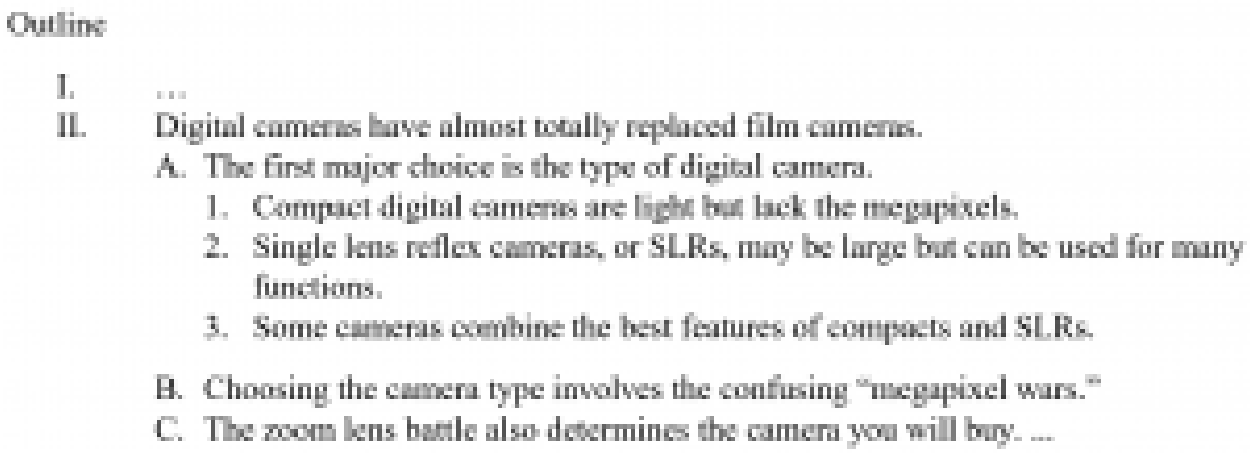
Study how Romina made the transition from her sentence outline to her first draft. First, copy her outline onto your own sheet of paper. Leave a few spaces between each part of the outline. Then copy sentences from Romina's paragraph to align each sentence with its corresponding entry in her outline.

Continuing the First Draft

Romina continued writing her essay, moving to the second and third body paragraphs. She had supporting details but no numbered sub-points in her outline, so she had to consult her prewriting notes for specific information to include.

If you decide to take a break between finishing your first body paragraph and starting the next one, do not start writing immediately when you return to your work. Put yourself back in context and in the mood by rereading what you have already written. This is what Romina did. If she had stopped writing in the middle of writing the paragraph, she could have jotted down some quick notes to herself about what she would write next.

Preceding each body paragraph that Romina wrote is the appropriate section of her sentence outline. Notice how she expanded Roman numeral II from her outline into a first draft of the second body paragraph. As you read, ask yourself how closely she stayed on purpose and how well she paid attention to the needs of her audience.



Outline

I. ...

II. Digital cameras have almost totally replaced film cameras.

A. The first major choice is the type of digital camera.

1. Compact digital cameras are light but lack the megapixels.
2. Single lens reflex cameras, or SLRs, may be large but can be used for many functions.
3. Some cameras combine the best features of compacts and SLRs.

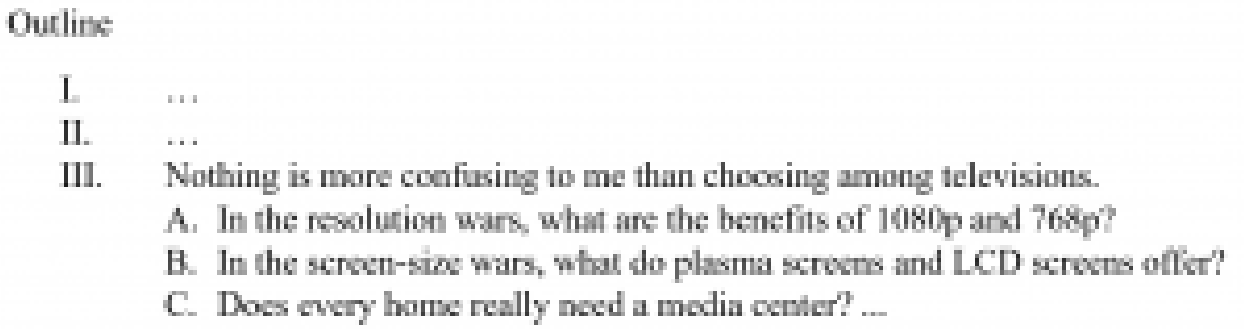
B. Choosing the camera type involves the confusing "megapixel wars."

C. The zoom lens battle also determines the camera you will buy. ...

Digital cameras have almost totally replaced film cameras in amateur photographers' gadget bags. My father took hundreds of slides when his children were growing up, but he had more and more trouble getting them developed. So, he decided to go modern. But, what kind of camera should he buy? The small compact digital

cameras could slip right in his pocket, but if he tried to print a photograph larger than an 8 x 10, the quality would be poor. When he investigated buying a single lens reflex camera, or SLR, he discovered that they were as versatile as his old film camera, also an SLR, but they were big and bulky. Then he discovered yet a third type, which combined the smaller size of the compact digital cameras with the zoom lenses available for SLRs. His first thought was to buy one of those, but then he realized he had a lot of decisions to make. How many megapixels should the camera be? Five? Ten? What is the advantage of each? Then came the size of the zoom lens. He knew that 3x was too small, but what about 25x? Could he hold a lens that long without causing camera shake? He read many photography magazines and buying guides, and he still wasn't sure he was right.

Romina then began her third and final body paragraph using Roman numeral III from her outline.



Outline

I. …
II. …
III. Nothing is more confusing to me than choosing among televisions.
A. In the resolution wars, what are the benefits of 1080p and 768p?
B. In the screen-size wars, what do plasma screens and LCD screens offer?
C. Does every home really need a media center? …

Nothing is more confusing to me than choosing among televisions. It confuses lots of people who want a new high-definition digital television (HDTV) with a large screen to watch sports and DVDs on. You could listen to the guys in the electronics stores, but word has it they know little more than you do. They want to sell you what they have in stock, not what best fits your needs. You face decisions you never had to make with the old, bulky picture-tube televisions. Screen resolution means the number of horizontal scan lines the screen can show. This resolution is often 1080p, or full HD, or 768p. The trouble is that if you have a smaller screen, 32 inches or 37 inches, you won't be able to tell the difference with the naked eye. The 1080p televisions cost more, though, so those are what the salespeople want you to buy. They get bigger commissions. The other important decision you face as you walk around the sales floor is whether to get a plasma screen or an LCD screen. Now here the salespeople may finally give you decent info. Plasma flat-panel television screens can be much larger in diameter than their LCD rivals. Plasma screens show decent lacks and can be viewed at a wider angle than current LCD screens. But be careful and tell the salesperson you have budget constraints. Large flat- panel plasma screens are much more expensive than flat-screen LCD models. Don't buy more television than you need.

EXERCISE 7

Reread body paragraphs two and three of the essay that Romina is writing. Then answer the questions on your own sheet of paper.

1. In body paragraph two, Romina decided to develop her paragraph as a nonfiction narrative. Do you agree with her decision? Explain. How else could she have chosen to develop the paragraph? Why is that better?
2. Compare the writing styles of paragraphs two and three. What evidence do you have that Romina was getting tired or running out of steam? What advice would you give her? Why?
3. Choose one of these two body paragraphs. Write a version of your own that you think better fits Romina's audience and purpose.

Writing a Title

A writer's best choice for a title is one that alludes to the main point of the entire essay. Like the headline in a newspaper or the big, bold title in a magazine, an essay's title gives the audience a first peek at the content. If readers like the title, they are likely to keep reading.

Following her outline carefully, Romina crafted each paragraph of her essay. Moving step by step in the writing process, Romina finished the draft and even included a brief concluding paragraph which you will read later. She then decided, as the final touch for her writing session, to add an engaging title.

Thesis Statement:

Everyone wants the newest and the best digital technology, but the choices are many, and the specifications are often confusing.

Working Title:

Digital Technology: The Newest and the Best at What Price?

Key Takeaways

- Make the writing process work for you. Use any and all of the strategies that help you move forward in the writing process.
- Always be aware of your purpose for writing and the needs of your audience. Cater to those needs in every sensible way.
- Remember to include all the key structural parts of an essay: a thesis statement that is part of your introductory paragraph, three or more body paragraphs as described in your outline, and a concluding paragraph. Then add an engaging

title to draw in readers.

- Write paragraphs of an appropriate length for your writing assignment. Paragraphs in college-level writing can be a page long, as long as they cover the main topics in your outline.
- Use your topic outline or your sentence outline to guide the development of your paragraphs and the elaboration of your ideas. Each main idea, indicated by a Roman numeral in your outline, becomes the topic of a new paragraph. Develop it with the supporting details and the sub-points of those details that you included in your outline.
- Generally speaking, write your introduction and conclusion last, after you have fleshed out the body paragraphs.

Drafting Body Paragraphs

If your thesis gives the reader a roadmap to your essay, then body paragraphs should closely follow that map. The reader should be able to predict what follows your introductory paragraph by simply reading the thesis statement. The body paragraphs present the evidence you have gathered to confirm your thesis. Before you begin to support your thesis in the body, you must find information from a variety of sources that support and give credit to what you are trying to prove.

Select Primary Support for Your Thesis

Without primary support, your argument is not likely to be convincing.

Primary support can be described as the major points you choose to expand on your thesis. It is the most important information you select to argue for your point of view. Each point you choose will be incorporated into the topic sentence for each body paragraph you write. Your primary supporting points are further supported by supporting details within the paragraphs.

Remember that a worthy argument is backed by examples. In order to construct a valid argument, good writers conduct lots of background research and take careful notes.

They also talk to people knowledgeable about a topic in order to understand its implications before writing about it. For guidance on incorporating research into your paragraphs, see the section "Using Sources."

Identify the Characteristics of Good Primary Support

In order to fulfill the requirements of good primary support, the information you choose must meet the following standards:

- Be relevant to the thesis: Primary support is considered strong when it relates directly to the thesis. Primary support should show, explain, or prove your main argument without delving into irrelevant details. When faced with lots of information that could be used to prove your thesis, you may think you need to include it all in your body paragraphs. But effective writers resist the temptation to lose focus. Choose your supporting points wisely by making sure they directly connect to your thesis.
- Be specific: The main points you make about your thesis and the examples you use to expand on those points need to be more specific than the thesis. Use specific examples to provide the evidence and to build upon your general ideas. These types of examples give your reader something narrow to

focus on, and if used properly, they leave little doubt about your claim. General examples, while they convey the necessary information, are not nearly as compelling or useful in writing because they are too obvious and typical.

- Be detailed: Remember that your thesis, while specific, should not be very detailed. The body paragraphs are where you develop the discussion that a thorough essay requires. Using detailed support shows readers that you have considered all the facts and chosen only the most precise details to enhance your point of view.

Pre-write to Identify Primary Supporting Points for a Thesis Statement

Recall that when you pre-write you essentially make a list of examples or reasons why you support your stance. Stemming from each point, you further provide details to support those reasons. After prewriting, you are then able to look back at the information and choose the most compelling pieces you will use in your body paragraphs.

Select the Most Effective Primary Supporting Points for a Thesis Statement

As you developed a working thesis through prewriting techniques, you may have generated a lot of information, which may be edited out later. Remember that your primary support must be relevant to your thesis. Remind yourself of your main argument, and delete any ideas that do not directly relate to it. Omitting unrelated ideas ensures that you will use only the most convincing information in your body paragraphs. Choose at least three of only the most compelling points. These will serve as the topic sentences for your body paragraphs.

When you support your thesis, you are revealing evidence. Evidence includes anything that can help support your stance. The following are the kinds of evidence you will encounter as you conduct your research:

1. Facts: Facts are the best kind of evidence to use because they often cannot be disputed. They can support your stance by providing background information on or a solid foundation for your point of view. However, some facts may still need explanation. For example, the sentence “The most populated state in the United States is California” is a pure fact, but it may require some explanation to make it relevant to your specific argument.
2. Judgments: Judgments are conclusions drawn from the given facts. Judgments are more credible than opinions because they are founded upon careful reasoning and examination of a topic.
3. Testimony: Testimony consists of direct quotations from either an eyewitness or an expert witness. An eyewitness is someone who has direct experience with a subject; he adds authenticity to an argument based on facts. An expert witness is a person who has extensive experience with a topic. This person studies the facts and provides commentary based on either facts or judgments, or both. An expert witness adds authority and credibility to an argument.
4. Personal observation: Personal observation is similar to testimony, but personal observation consists of your testimony. It reflects what you know to be true because you have experiences and have formed either opinions or judgments about them. For instance, if you are one of five children and your thesis states that being part of a large family is beneficial to a child’s social development, you could use your own experience to support your thesis.

You can consult a vast pool of resources to gather support for your stance. Citing relevant information from reliable sources ensures that your reader will take you seriously and consider your assertions. Use any of the following sources for your essay: newspapers or news organization websites, magazines, encyclopedias, and scholarly journals, which are periodicals that address topics in a specialized field. When using sources, you are responsible for properly documenting the borrowed information properly. Refer to the section "Using Sources" for more information.

Choose Supporting Topic Sentences

Each body paragraph contains a topic sentence that states one aspect of your thesis and then expands upon it. Like the thesis statement, each topic sentence should be specific and supported by concrete details, facts, or explanations.

Each body paragraph should comprise the following elements: topic sentence + supporting details (examples, reasons, or arguments)

As you read in Writing Paragraphs, topic sentences indicate the location and main points of the basic arguments of your essay. These sentences are vital to writing your body paragraphs because they always refer back to and support your thesis statement. Topic sentences are linked to the ideas you have introduced in your thesis, thus reminding readers what your essay is about. A paragraph without a clearly identified topic sentence may be unclear and scattered, just like an essay without a thesis statement.

Unless your professor instructs otherwise, you should include at least three body paragraphs in your essay. A five-paragraph essay, including the introduction and conclusion, is commonly the standard for exams and essay assignments because it is meant to help students create fully developed essays; however, writers should maintain flexibility and not expect all essays to conform to that model. The emphasis is on creating an essay that provides enough support to tell a story, create an image or idea, or inform or persuade the audience.

Consider the following example of a thesis statement:

> Author J.D. Salinger relied primarily on his personal life and belief system as the foundation for the themes in the majority of his works.

The following topic sentence is a primary supporting point for the thesis. The topic sentence states exactly what the controlling idea of the paragraph is.

> Salinger, a World War II veteran, suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, a disorder that influenced themes in many of his works.

The following paragraph contains supporting detail sentences for the primary support sentence (the topic sentence), which is underlined.

> Salinger, a World War II veteran, suffered from post-traumatic stress disorder, a disorder that influenced the themes in many of his works. He did not hide his mental anguish over the horrors of war and once told his daughter, "You never really get the smell of burning flesh out of your nose, no matter how long you live." His short story "A Perfect Day for Bananafish" details a day in the life of a WWII veteran who was recently released form an army hospital for psychiatric problems. The man acts questionably with a little girl he meets on the beach before he returns to his hotel room and commits suicide. Another short Story, "For Esme – with Love and Squalor," is narrated by a traumatized soldier who sparks an unusual relationship with a young girl he meets before he departs to partake in D-Day. Finally, in Salinger's only novel, the Catcher in The Rye, he continues with the theme of posttraumatic stress, though not directly related to war. From a rest home for the

mentally ill, sixteen-year-old Holden Caulfield narrates the story of his nervous breakdown following the death of his younger brother.

Draft Supporting Detail Sentences for Each Primary Support Sentence

After deciding which primary support points you will use as your topic sentences, you must add details to clarify and demonstrate each of those points. These supporting details provide examples, facts, or evidence that support the topic sentence. The writer drafts possible supporting detail sentences for each primary support sentence based on the thesis statement:

Example

Thesis: Unleashed dogs on city streets are a dangerous nuisance.

- I. Dogs can scare cyclists.
    - A. Cyclists are forced to zigzag on the roads.
    - B. School children panic and turn wildly on their bikes.
    - C. People walking at night freeze in fear.
- II. Loose dogs are traffic hazards.
    - A. Dogs in the street make people swerve their cars.
    - B. To avoid dogs, drivers run into other cars or pedestrians.
    - C. Children coaxing dogs across city streets create danger.
- III. Unleashed dogs damage gardens.
    - A. They step on flowers and vegetables.
    - B. They destroy hedges by urinating on them.
    - C. They mess up lawns by digging holes.

You have the option of writing your topic sentences in one of three ways. You can state it at the beginning of the body paragraph, or at the end of the paragraph, or you do not have to write it at all. This is called an implied topic sentence. An implied topic sentence lets readers form the main idea for themselves. For beginning writers, it is best to not use implied topic sentences because it makes it harder to focus your writing. Your instructor may also want to clearly identify the sentences that support your thesis.

Key Takeaways

- Your body paragraphs should closely follow the path set forth by your thesis statement.
- Strong body paragraphs contain evidence that supports your thesis.
- Primary support comprises the most important points you use to support your thesis. Strong primary support is specific, detailed, and relevant to the thesis.
- Prewriting helps you determine your most compelling primary support.
- Evidence includes facts, judgments, testimony, and personal observation.
- Reliable sources may include newspapers, magazines, academic journals, books, encyclopedias, and firsthand testimony.
- A topic sentence presents one point of your thesis statement while the information in the rest of the paragraph supports that point.
- A body paragraph comprises a topic sentence plus supporting details.

EXERCISE 8

Print out the first draft of your essay and use a highlighter to mark your topic sentences in the body paragraphs. Make sure they are clearly stated and accurately present your paragraphs, as well as accurately reflect your thesis. If your topic sentence contains information that does not exist in the rest of the paragraph, rewrite it to more accurately match the rest of the paragraph.

EXERCISE 9

Choose one of the following working thesis statements. On a separate sheet of paper, write for at least five minutes using one of the prewriting techniques you learned in **Chapter 2, "Pre-Writing Techniques."**

1. Unleashed dogs on city streets are a dangerous nuisance.

2. Students cheat for many different reasons.
3. Drug use among teens and young adults is a problem.
4. The most important change that should occur at my college or university is?

EXERCISE 10

Refer to the previous Exercise 9 and select three of your most compelling reasons to support the thesis statement. Remember that the points you choose must be specific and relevant to the thesis. The statements you choose will be your primary support points, and you will later incorporate them into the topic sentences for the body paragraphs.

Collaboration: Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

EXERCISE 11

In the previous Exercise 10, you chose three of your most convincing points to support the thesis statement you selected from the list. Take each point and incorporate it into a topic sentence for each body paragraph.

- Supporting Point 1:
- Topic Sentence:
- Supporting Point 2:
- Topic Sentence:
- Supporting Point 3:
- Topic Sentence:

Collaboration: Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

EXERCISE 12

Using the three topic sentences you composed for the thesis statement in Exercise 11, draft at least three supporting details for each point.

- Thesis Statement:
- Primary supporting point 1:
- Supporting details:
- Primary supporting point 2:
- Supporting details:
- Primary supporting point 3:
- Supporting details:

Drafting Introductory and Concluding Paragraphs

Picture your introduction as a storefront window: You have a certain amount of space to attract your customers (readers) to your goods (subject) and bring them inside your store (discussion). Once you have enticed them with something intriguing, you then point them in a specific direction and try to make the sale (convince them to accept your thesis). Your introduction is an invitation to your readers to consider what you have to say and then to follow your train of thought as you expand upon your thesis statement.

Writing an Introduction

An introduction serves the following purposes:

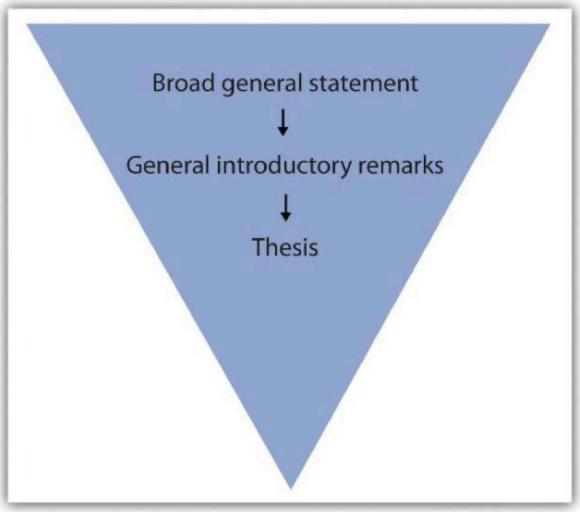
- Establishes your voice and tone, or your attitude, toward the subject
- Introduces the general topic of the essay
- States the thesis that will be supported in the body paragraphs

First impressions are crucial and can leave lasting effects in your reader's mind, which is why the introduction is so important to your essay. If your introductory paragraph is dull or disjointed, your reader probably will not have much interest in continuing with the essay.

Attracting Interest in Your Introductory Paragraph

Your introduction should begin with an engaging statement devised to provoke your readers' interest. In the next few sentences, introduce them to your topic by stating general facts or ideas about the subject. As you move deeper into your introduction, you gradually narrow the focus, moving closer to your thesis.

Moving smoothly and logically from your introductory remarks to your thesis statement can be achieved using a funnel technique, as illustrated in the diagram “Funnel Technique.”



Immediately capturing your readers’ interest increases the chances of having them read what you are about to discuss. You can garner curiosity for your essay in a number of ways. Try to get your readers personally involved by doing any of the following:

- Appealing to their emotions
- Using logic
- Beginning with a provocative question or opinion
- Opening with a startling statistic or surprising fact
- Raising a question or series of questions
- Presenting an explanation or rationalization for your essay
- Opening with a relevant quotation or incident
- Opening with a striking image
- Including a personal anecdote

Remember that your diction, or word choice, while always important, is most crucial in your introductory paragraph. Boring diction could extinguish any desire a person might have to read through your discussion. Choose words that create images or express action.

Earlier in this chapter we followed Romina as she moved through the writing process. In this section, Romina writes her introduction and conclusion for the same essay. Romina incorporates some of the introductory elements into her introductory paragraph, which she previously outlined. Her thesis statement is underlined.

> Play Atari on a General Electric brand television set? Maybe watch Dynasty? Or read old newspaper articles on microfiche at the library? Twenty-five years ago, the average college student did not have many options when it came to entertainment in the form of technology. Fast forward to the twenty-first century, and the digital age has revolutionized the way people entertain themselves. In today’s rapidly evolving world of digital technology, consumers are bombarded with endless options for how they do most everything, from buying

and reading books to taking and developing photographs. In a society that is obsessed with digital means of entertainment, it is easy for the average person to become baffled. Everyone wants the newest and best digital technology, but the choices are many and the specifications are often confusing.

Writing a Conclusion

It is not unusual to want to rush when you approach your conclusion, and even experienced writers may fade. But what good writers remember is that it is vital to put just as much attention into the conclusion as in the rest of the essay. After all, a hasty ending can undermine an otherwise strong essay.

A conclusion that does not correspond to the rest of your essay, has loose ends, or is unorganized can unsettle your readers and raise doubts about the entire essay.

However, if you have worked hard to write the introduction and body, your conclusion can often be the most logical part to compose.

The Anatomy of a Strong Conclusion

Keep in mind that the ideas in your conclusion must conform to the rest of your essay. In order to tie these components together, restate your thesis at the beginning of your conclusion. This helps you assemble, in an orderly fashion, all the information you have explained in the body. Repeating your thesis reminds your readers of the major arguments you have been trying to prove and also indicates that your essay is drawing to a close. A strong conclusion also reviews your main points and emphasizes the importance of the topic.

The construction of the conclusion is similar to the introduction, in which you make general introductory statements and then present your thesis. The difference is that in the conclusion you first paraphrase, or state in different words, your thesis and then follow up with general concluding remarks. These sentences should progressively broaden the focus of your thesis and maneuver your readers out of the essay.

Many writers like to end their essays with a final emphatic statement. This strong closing statement will cause your readers to continue thinking about the implications of your essay; it will make your conclusion, and thus your essay, more memorable. Another powerful technique is to challenge your readers to make a change in either their thoughts or their actions. Challenging your readers to see the subject through new eyes is a powerful way to ease yourself and your readers out of the essay.

When closing your essay, do expressly state that you are drawing to a close. Relying on statements such as “in conclusion”, “it is clear that”, “as you can see”, or “in summation” is necessary for clarity; although it may be considered trite at the transfer level English courses.

It is wise to avoid doing any of the following in your conclusion:

- Introducing new material: Introducing new material in your conclusion has an unsettling effect on your reader. When you raise new points, you make your reader want more information, which you could not possibly provide in the limited space of your final paragraph.
- Contradicting your thesis: Contradicting or changing your thesis statement causes your readers to think that you do not actually have a conviction about your topic. After all, you have spent several paragraphs adhering to a specific point of view.
- Changing your thesis: When you change sides or open up your point of view in the conclusion, your

reader becomes less inclined to believe your original argument.

- Using apologies or disclaimers: By apologizing for your opinion or stating that you know it is tough to digest, you are in fact admitting that even you know what you have discussed is irrelevant or unconvincing. You do not want your readers to feel this way. Effective writers stand by their thesis statement and do not stray from it.

Romina incorporates some of these pointers into her conclusion. She has paraphrased her thesis statement in the first sentence.

> In a society fixated on the latest and smartest digital technology, a consumer can easily become confused by the countless options and specifications. The ever-changing state of digital technology challenges consumer with its updates and add-ons and expanding markets and incompatible formats and restrictions – a fact that is complicated by salesmen who want to sell them anything. In a world that is increasingly driven by instant gratification, it's easy for people to buy the first thing they see. The solution for many people should be to avoid buying on impulse. Consumers should think about what they really need, not what is advertised.

Make sure your essay is balanced by not having an excessively long or short introduction or conclusion. Check that they match each other in length as closely as possible, and try to mirror the formula you used in each. Parallelism strengthens the message of your essay.

EXERCISE 14

On a separate sheet of a paper, restate your thesis from an earlier exercise in this section and then make some general concluding remarks. Next, compose a final emphatic statement. Finally, incorporate what you have written into a strong conclusion paragraph for your essay.

Collaboration: Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

Revising and Editing

Revising and editing are the two tasks you undertake to significantly improve your essay. Both are very important elements of the writing process. You may think that a completed first draft means little improvement is needed. However, even experienced writers need to improve their drafts and rely on peers during revising and editing. You may know that athletes miss catches, fumble balls, or overshoot goals. Dancers forget steps, turn too slowly, or miss beats. For both athletes and dancers, the more they practice, the stronger their performance will become. Web designers seek better images, a more clever design, or a more appealing background for their web pages. Writing has the same capacity to profit from improvement and revision.

Understanding the Purpose of Revising and Editing

Revising and editing allow you to examine two important aspects of your writing separately, so that you can give each task your undivided attention.

- When you revise, you take a second look at your ideas. You might add, cut, move, or change information in order to make your ideas clearer, more accurate, more interesting, or more convincing.
- When you edit, you take a second look at how you expressed your ideas. You add or change words. You fix any problems in grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure. You improve your writing style. You make your essay into a polished, mature piece of writing, the end product of your best efforts.

Here are some strategies that writers have developed to look at their first drafts from a fresh perspective. Try them over the course of this semester; then keep using the ones that bring results.

- Take a break. You are proud of what you wrote, but you might be too close to it to make changes. Set aside your writing for a few hours or even a day until you can look at it objectively.
- Ask someone you trust for feedback and constructive criticism.
- Use the resources that your college provides. Find out where your school's writing lab is located and ask about the assistance they provide online and in person.
- Pretend you are one of your readers. Are you satisfied or dissatisfied? Why?

Many people hear the words *critic*, *critical*, and *criticism* and pick up only negative vibes that provoke feelings that make them blush, grumble, or shout. However, as a writer and a thinker, you need to learn to be critical of yourself in a positive way and have high expectations for your work. You also need to train your eye and trust your ability to fix what needs fixing. For this, you need to teach yourself where to look.

When you reread your writing to find revisions to make, look for each type of problem in a separate sweep. Read it straight through once to locate any problems with unity.

Read it straight through a second time to find problems with coherence. You may follow this same practice during many stages of the writing process.

Completing a Peer Review

After working so closely with a piece of writing, writers often need to step back and ask for a more objective reader. What writers most need is feedback from readers who can respond only to the words on the page. When they are ready, writers show their drafts to someone they respect and who can give an honest response about its strengths and weaknesses.

You, too, can ask a peer to read your draft when it is ready. After evaluating the feedback and assessing what is most helpful, the reader's feedback will help you when you revise your draft. This process is called "peer review". You can work with a partner in your class and identify specific ways to strengthen each other's essays. Although you may be uncomfortable sharing your writing at first, remember that each writer is working toward the same goal: a final draft that fits the audience and the purpose. Maintaining a positive attitude when providing feedback will put you and your partner at ease. The box that follows provides a

useful framework for the peer review session.
<Embed Peer Review Form Here>

EXERCISE 15

Exchange essays with a classmate and complete a peer review of each other's draft in progress. Remember to give positive feedback and to be courteous and polite in your responses. Focus on providing one positive comment and one question for more information to the author.

Using Feedback

Using Feedback Objectively

The purpose of peer feedback is to receive constructive criticism of your essay. Your peer reviewer is your first real audience, and you have the opportunity to learn what confuses and delights a reader so that you can improve your work before sharing the final draft with a wider audience (or your intended audience). It may not be necessary to incorporate every recommendation your peer reviewer makes. However, if you start to observe a pattern in the responses you receive from peer reviewers, you might want to take that feedback into consideration in future assignments. For example, if you read consistent comments about a need for more research, then you may want to consider including more research in future assignments.

Using Feedback from Multiple Sources

You might get feedback from more than one reader as you share different stages of your revised draft. In this situation, you may receive feedback from readers who do not understand the assignment or who lack your involvement with and enthusiasm for it.

You need to evaluate the responses you receive according to two important criteria:

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

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

EXERCISE 16

Work with two partners. Go back Exercise 14 in this lesson and compare your responses to Romina's paragraph, with your partners' response. Recall Romina's purpose for writing and her audience. Then, working individually, list where you agree and where you disagree about revision needs.

Creating Unity and Coherence

Following your outline closely offers you a reasonable guarantee that your writing will stay on purpose and not drift away from the controlling idea. However, when writers are rushed, are tired, or cannot find the right words, their writing may become less than they want it to be. Their writing may no longer be clear and concise, and they may be adding information that is not needed to develop the main idea.

When a piece of writing has unity, all the ideas in each paragraph and in the entire essay clearly belong and are arranged in an order that makes logical sense. When the writing has coherence, the ideas flow smoothly. The wording clearly indicates how one idea leads to another within a paragraph and from paragraph to paragraph.

Reading your writing aloud will often help you find problems with unity and coherence. Listen for the clarity and flow of your ideas. Identify places where you find yourself confused, and write a note to yourself about possible fixes.

Creating Unity

Sometimes writers get caught up in the moment and cannot resist a good digression. Even though you might enjoy such detours when you chat with friends, unplanned digressions usually harm a piece of writing.

Romina stayed close to her outline when she drafted the three body paragraphs of her essay she tentatively titled "Digital Technology: The Newest and the Best at What Price?" But a recent shopping trip for an HDTV upset her enough that she digressed from the main topic of her third paragraph and included comments about the sales staff at the electronics store she visited. When she revised her essay, she deleted the off- topic sentences that affected the unity of the paragraph. Read the following paragraph twice, the first time without Romina's changes, and the second time with them.

> Nothing is more confusing to me than choosing among televisions. It confuses lots of people who want a new high-definition digital television (HDTV) with a large screen to watch sports and DVDs on. ~~You could listen to the guys in the electronics store, but word has it they know little more than you do. They want to sell you what they have in stock, not what best fits your needs.~~ You face decisions you never had to make with the old, bulky picture-tube televisions. Screen resolution means the number of horizontal scan lines the screen can show. This resolution is often 1080p, or full HD, or 768p. The trouble is that if you have a smaller screen, 32 inches or 37 inches, you won't be able to tell the difference with the naked eye. ~~The 1080p televisions cost~~

~~more, though, so those are what the salespeople want you to buy. They get bigger commissions.~~ The other important decision you face as you walk around the sales floor is whether to get a plasma screen or an LCD screen. ~~Now here the salespeople may finally give you decent info.~~ Plasma flat-panel television screens can be much larger in diameter than their LCD rivals. Plasma screens show decent lacks and can be viewed at a wider angle than current LCD screens. ~~But be careful and tell the salesperson you have budget constraints~~. Large flat-panel plasma screens are much more expensive than flat-screen LCD models. Don't ~~let someone make you~~ buy more television than you need!

EXERCISE 17

1) Answer the following two questions about Romina's paragraph:

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

Collaboration: Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

2) Now start to revise the first draft of the essay you wrote at the end of **Writing Your Own First Draft**. Reread it to find any statements that affect the unity of your writing. Decide how best to revise.

Creating Coherence

Careful writers use transitions to clarify how the ideas in their sentences and paragraphs are related. These words and phrases help the writing flow smoothly. Adding transitions is not the only way to improve coherence, but they are often useful and give a mature feel to your essays. The Table of Common Transitional Words and Phrases groups many common transitions according to their purpose.

After Romina revised for unity, she next examined her paragraph about televisions to check for coherence. She looked for places where she needed to add a transition or perhaps reword the text to make the flow of ideas clear. In the version that follows, she has already deleted the sentences that were off topic.

Many writers make their revisions on a printed copy and then transfer them to the version on-screen. They conventionally use a small arrow called a caret (^) to show where to insert an addition or correction.

^ Finally, Nothing is more confusing to me than choosing among televisions. It confuses lots of people who want a new high-definition digital television (HD television) with a large screen to watch sports and DVDs on. ^ There's good reason for this confusion: You face a decision you never had to make with the old, bulky picture-tube televisions. ^ The first big decision is the screen resolution you want. Screen resolution means the number of horizontal scan lines the screen can show. This resolution is often 1080p, or full HD, or 768p. The trouble is that if you have a smaller screen, 32 inches or 37 inches diagonal, you won't be able to tell the difference with the naked eye. The ^ second other important decision you face as you walk around the sales floor is whether to get a plasma screen or an LCD screen. ^ Along with the choice of display type, a further decision buyers face is screen size

and features. Plasma flat-panel television screens can be much larger in diameter than their LCD rivals. Plasma screens show truer blacks and can be viewed at a wider angle than current LCD screens. ^ However, Large flat-panel plasma screens are much more expensive than flat-screen LCD models. Don't buy more television than you need!

EXERCISE 18

- Answer the following questions about Romina's revised paragraph.

1. Do you agree with the transitions and other changes that Romina made to her paragraph? Which would you keep and which were unnecessary? Explain.
2. What transition words or phrases did Romina add to her paragraph? Why did she choose each one?
3. What effect does adding additional sentences have on the coherence of the paragraph? Explain. When you read both versions aloud, which version has a more logical flow of ideas? Explain.

- Now return to the first draft of the essay you wrote in Starting Your First Draft and revise it for coherence. Add transition words and phrases where they are needed, and make any other changes that are needed to improve the flow and connection between ideas.

Being Clear and Concise

Some writers are very methodical and painstaking when they write a first draft. Other writers unleash a lot of words in order to get out all that they feel they need to say. Do either of these composing styles match your style? Or is your composing style somewhere in between? No matter which description best fits you, the first draft of almost every piece of writing, no matter its author, can be made clearer and more concise. If you have a tendency to write too much, you will need to look for unnecessary words. If you have a tendency to be vague or imprecise in your wording, you will need to find specific words to replace any overly general language.

Identifying Wordiness

Sometimes writers use too many words when fewer words will appeal more to their audience and better fit their purpose. Here are some common examples of wordiness to look for in your draft. Eliminating wordiness helps all readers, because it makes your ideas clear, direct, and straightforward.

- Sentences that begin with "There is" or "There are".

  Wordy: There are two major experiments that the Biology Department sponsors.
  Revised: The Biology Department sponsors two major experiments.

- Sentences with unnecessary modifiers.

Wordy: Two extremely famous and well-known consumer advocates spoke eloquently in favor of the proposed important legislation.

Revised: Two well-known consumer advocates spoke in favor of the proposed legislation.

- Sentences with deadwood phrases that add little to the meaning. Be judicious when you use phrases such as “in terms of”, “with a mind to”, “on the subject of”, “as to whether or not”, “more or less”, “as far as…is concerned”, and similar expressions. You can usually find a more straightforward way to state your point.

  Wordy: As a world leader in the field of green technology, the company plans to focus its efforts in the area of geothermal energy. A report as to whether or not to use geysers as an energy source is in the process of preparation.

  Revised: As a world leader in green technology, the company plans to focus on geothermal energy. A report about using geysers as an energy source is in preparation.

- Sentences in the passive voice or with forms of the verb “to be”. Sentences with passive-voice verbs often create confusion, because the subject of the sentence does not perform an action. Sentences are clearer when the subject of the sentence performs the action and is followed by a strong verb. Use strong active-voice verbs in place of forms of “to be”, which can lead to wordiness. Avoid passive voice when you can.

  Wordy: It might perhaps be said that using a GPS device is something that is a benefit to drivers who have a poor sense of direction.

  Revised: Using a GPS device benefits drivers who have a poor sense of direction.

- Sentences with constructions that can be shortened.

  Wordy: The ebook reader, which is a recent invention, may become as commonplace as the cell phone. My over-sixty uncle bought an ebook reader, and his wife bought an ebook reader, too.

  Revised: The ebook reader, a recent invention, may become as commonplace as the cell phone. My over-sixty uncle and his wife both bought ebook readers.

EXERCISE 19

Now return once more to the first draft of the essay you have been revising. Check it for unnecessary words. Try making your sentences as concise as they can be.

Choosing Specific, Appropriate Words

Most college essays should be written in formal English, suitable for an academic situation. Follow these principles to be sure that your word choice is appropriate.

- Avoid slang: Find alternatives to “bummer”, “kewl”, and “rad”.
- Avoid language that is overly casual: Write about “men and women” rather than “girls and guys” unless you are trying to create a specific effect. A formal tone calls for formal language.
- Avoid contractions: Use “do not” in place of “don’t”, “I am” in place of “I’m”, “have not” in place of “haven’t”, and so on. Contractions are considered casual speech.
- Avoid clichés: Overused expressions such as “green with envy”, “face the music”, “better late than never”, and similar expressions are empty of meaning and may not appeal to your audience.
- Be careful when you use words that sound alike but have different meanings: Some examples are “allusion/illusion”, “complement/compliment”, “council/counsel”, “concurrent/consecutive”, “founder/flounder”, and “historic/historical”. When in doubt, check a dictionary.
- Choose words with the connotations you want: Choosing a word for its connotations is as important in formal essay writing as it is in all kinds of writing. Compare the positive connotations of the word “proud “and the negative connotations of “arrogant” and “conceited”.
- Use specific words rather than overly general words: Find synonyms for “thing”, “people”, “nice”, “good”, “bad”, “interesting”, and other vague words. Or use specific details to make your exact meaning clear.

Now read the revisions Romina made to make her third paragraph clearer and more concise. She has already incorporated the changes she made to improve unity and coherence.

> Finally, nothing ^ confuses buyers more than purchasing ~~is more confusing to me than choosing among televisions. It confuses lots of people who want~~ a new high-definition digital television (HDTV), ~~with a large screen to watch sports and DVDs on.~~ ^and with ~~There's a~~ good reason. ~~for this confusion. You face decisions you never had to make with the old, bulky picture tube televisions.~~ The first big decision ~~is~~ ^ involves screen resolution, ~~you want.~~ ^ which ~~Screen resolution~~ means the number of horizontal scan lines the screen can show. This resolution is often 1080p, or full HD, or ^ as 720p. The trouble is that ^ on ~~if you have~~ a ~~smaller screen,~~ 32-inch or 37-inch diagonal, ^ screen, viewers will not ~~you won't~~ be able to tell the difference ^ between them with the naked eye. The other important decision ~~you face as you walk around the sales floor~~ is whether to get a plasma screen or an LCD screen. ~~Along with the choice of display type, a further decision buyers face is screen size and features.~~ Plasma flat-panel television screens can be much larger in diameter than their LCD rivals. Plasma screens show ~~truer~~ ^ deeper blacks and can be viewed at a wider angle than current LCD screens. However, large flat-panel plasma screens are much more expensive than flat-screen LCD models. ^ Only after buyers are totally certain they know what they want should they open their wallets. ~~Don't buy more television than you need!~~

EXERCISE 20

1. Answer the following questions about Romina's revised paragraph:

    a. Read the unrevised and the revised paragraphs aloud. Explain in your own words how changes in word choice have affected Romina's writing.

    b. Do you agree with the changes that Romina made to her paragraph? Which changes would you keep and which were unnecessary? Explain. What other changes would you have made?

    c. What effect does removing contractions and the pronoun you have on the tone of the paragraph? How would you characterize the tone now? Why?

2. Now return once more to your essay in progress. Read carefully for problems with word choice. Be sure that your draft is written in formal language and that your word choice is specific and appropriate.

Editing Your Draft

If you have been incorporating each set of revisions as Romina has, you have produced multiple drafts of your writing. So far, all your changes have been content changes.

Perhaps with the help of peer feedback, you have made sure that you sufficiently supported your ideas. You have checked for problems with unity and coherence. You have examined your essay for word choice, revising to cut unnecessary words and to replace weak wording with specific and appropriate wording.

The next step after revising the content is "editing". When you edit, you examine the surface features of your text. You examine your spelling, grammar, usage, and punctuation. You also make sure you use the proper format when creating your finished assignment.

Editing often takes time. Budgeting time into the writing process allows you to complete additional edits after revising. Editing and proofreading your writing helps you create a finished work that represents your best efforts. Here are a few more tips to remember about your readers:

- Readers do not notice correct spelling, but they do notice misspellings. Readers look past your sentences to get to your ideas—unless the sentences are awkward, poorly constructed, and frustrating to read.
- Readers notice when every sentence has the same rhythm as every other sentence, with no variety.
- Readers do not cheer when you use there, their, and they're correctly; but they notice when you do not.
- Readers will notice the care with which you handled your assignment and your attention to detail in the delivery of an error-free document.

Unit 12 offers a useful review of grammar, mechanics, and usage. Use it to help you eliminate major errors

in your writing and refine your understanding of the conventions of language. Do not hesitate to ask for help, too, from peer tutors in your academic department or in the college's Writing Center. In the meantime, use the following checklists to help you edit your writing.

Checklists for Editing Your Writing

Grammar

- Are some sentences actually sentence fragments?
- Are some sentences run-on sentences? How can I correct them?
- Do some sentences need conjunctions between independent clauses?
- Does every verb agree with its subject?
- Is every verb in the correct tense?
- Are tense forms, especially for irregular verbs, written correctly?
- Have I used subject, object, and possessive personal pronouns correctly?
- Have I used who and whom correctly?
- Is the antecedent of every pronoun clear?
- Do all personal pronouns agree with their antecedents?
- Have I used the correct comparative and superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs?
- Is it clear which word a participial phrase modifies, or is it a dangling modifier?

Sentence Structure

- Are all my sentences simple sentences, or do I vary my sentence structure?
- Have I chosen the best coordinating or subordinating conjunctions to join clauses?
- Have I created long, overpacked sentences that should be shortened for clarity?
- Do I see any mistakes in parallel structure?

Punctuation

- Does every sentence end with the correct end punctuation?
- Can I justify the use of every exclamation point?
- Have I used apostrophes correctly to write all singular and plural possessive forms?
- Have I used quotation marks correctly?

Mechanics and Usage

- Can I find any spelling errors? How can I correct them?
- Have I used capital letters where they are needed?
- Have I written abbreviations, when allowed, correctly?
- Can I find any errors in the use of commonly confused words, such as to/too/two?

Be careful about relying too much on spelling checkers and grammar checkers. A spelling checker cannot recognize that you meant to write "principle" but wrote "principal" instead. A grammar checker often queries

constructions that are perfectly correct. The program does not understand your meaning; it makes its check against a general set of formulas that might not apply in each instance. If you use a grammar checker, accept the suggestions that make sense, but consider why the suggestions came up.

Proofreading requires patience; it is very easy to read past a mistake. Set your paper aside for at least a few hours, if not a day or more, so your mind will rest. Some professional proofreaders read a text backward so they can concentrate on spelling and punctuation. Another helpful technique is to slowly read a paper aloud, paying attention to every word, letter, and punctuation mark. If you need additional proofreading help, ask a reliable friend, a classmate, or a peer tutor to make a final pass on your paper to look for anything you missed.

Formatting

Remember to use proper format when creating your finished assignment. Sometimes an instructor, a department, or a college will require students to follow specific instructions on titles, margins, page numbers, or the location of the writer's name.

These requirements may be more detailed and rigid for research projects and term papers, which often observe the Modern Language Association (MLA) style guide, especially when citations of sources are included. To ensure the format is correct and follows any specific instructions, make a final check before you submit an assignment.

EXERCISE 21

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

Key Takeaways

- Revising and editing are the stages of the writing process in which you improve your work before producing a final draft.
- During revising, you add, cut, move, or change information in order to improve content.
- During editing, you take a second look at the words and sentences you used to express your ideas and fix any problems in grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure.
- Unity in writing means that all the ideas in each paragraph and in the entire essay clearly belong together and are arranged in an order that makes logical sense.

- Coherence in writing means that the writer's wording clearly indicates how one idea leads to another within a paragraph and between paragraphs.
- Transitional words and phrases effectively make writing more coherent. Writing should be clear and concise, with no unnecessary words.
- Effective formal writing uses specific, appropriate words and avoids slang, contractions, clichés, and overly general words.
- Peer reviews, done properly, can give writers objective feedback about their writing. It is the writer's responsibility to evaluate the results of peer reviews and incorporate only useful feedback.
- Remember to budget time for careful editing and proofreading. Use all available resources, including editing checklists, peer editing, and your institution's writing lab, to improve your editing skills.

EXERCISE 22

Write a thesis statement and a formal sentence outline for an essay about the writing process. Include separate paragraphs for prewriting, drafting, and revising and editing. Your audience will be a general audience of educated adults who are unfamiliar with how writing is taught at the community college level. Your purpose is to explain the stages of the writing process so that readers will understand its benefits.

Collaboration: Please share with a classmate and compare your answers.

EXERCISE 23

Group activity: Working in a peer-review group of four, go to the section on Drafting and reread the draft of the first two body paragraphs of Romina's essay, "Digital Technology: The Newest and the Best at What Price?" Review those two paragraphs using the same level of inspection given to the essay's third paragraph in the section Revising and Editing. Suggest and agree on changes to improve unity and coherence, eliminate unneeded words, and refine word choice. Your purpose is to help Romina produce two effective paragraphs for a formal college-level essay about her topic.

Sample Student Paper with Outline

The following paper and outline by Pere Ellis, entitled "Aquaponics: A Viable Solution to World Hunger," clearly breaks down the argument presented in his thesis, providing specific examples in the sub-points and further developing and expanding the sub- points.

The Process Essay

The Purpose of the Process Essay

The purpose of a process essay is to explain how to do something (directional) or how something works (informative). In either case, the formula for a process essay remains the same. The process is articulated into clear, definitive steps.

Almost everything we do involves following a step-by-step process. From learning to ride a bike as a child to starting a new job as an adult, we initially needed instructions to effectively execute the task. Likewise, we have likely had to instruct others, so we know how important good directions are—and how frustrating it is when they are poorly put together.

EXERCISE 24

On a separate sheet of paper, make a bulleted list of all the steps that you feel are required to clearly illustrate three of the following four processes (note that the first three are directional and the fourth is informative).

- Tying a shoelace
- Parallel parking
- Planning a successful first date
- How a historical event occurred (pick one you know well!)

The Structure of a Process Essay

The process essay opens with a discussion of the process and a thesis statement that states the *goal* of the process. The organization of a process essay typically follows chronological order. The steps of the process are conveyed in the order in which they usually occur, and so your body paragraphs will be constructed based on these steps. If a particular step is complicated and needs a lot of explaining, then it will likely take up a paragraph on its own. But if a series of simple steps is easy to understand, then the steps can be grouped into a single paragraph.

The time transition phrases covered in the Narration section are also helpful for organizing process

analysis essays (see Table of Transition Words and Phrases for Expressing Time). Words such as *first*, *second*, *third*, *next*, and *finally* are cues to orient readers and organize the content of the essay.

Finally, it's a good idea to always have someone else read your process analysis to make sure it makes sense. Once we get too close to a subject, it is difficult to determine how clearly an idea is coming across. Having a peer read over your analysis will serve as a good way to troubleshoot any confusing spots.

EXERCISE 25

Choose two of the lists you created in Exercise 24 and start writing out the processes in paragraph form. Try to construct paragraphs based on the complexity of each step. For complicated steps, dedicate an entire paragraph. If less complicated steps fall in succession, group them into a single paragraph.

Writing a Process Essay

Choose a topic that is interesting, is relatively complex, and can be explained in a series of steps. As with other rhetorical writing modes, it is best to choose a process that you know well so that you can more easily describe the finer details about each step in the process. Your thesis statement should come at the end of your introduction, and it should state the final outcome of the process you are describing.

Body paragraphs are composed of the steps in the process. Each step should be expressed using strong details and clear examples. If you are writing a directional essay, you should provide every detail necessary for your reader to complete the process. If you are writing an instructional essay, your body paragraphs should explain the process and how it works, although you should not expect your reader to be actually performing the process. Use time transition phrases to help organize steps in the process and to orient readers. The conclusion should thoroughly describe the result of the process described in the body paragraphs. See the student paper, "Keep Them in Stitches," on Canvas or your LMS, or read the sample professional essay below to read an example of a process analysis essay.

EXERCISE 26

Choose one of the expanded lists from Exercise 25. Construct a full process essay from the work you have already done. That means adding an engaging introduction, a clear thesis, time transition phrases, body paragraphs, and a solid conclusion.

Online Process Essay Alternatives:

Stanley Fish, an American literary theorist, public intellectual, and professor of humanities and law, tells us why "Getting Coffee Is Hard to Do."

The Purpose of Comparison and Contrast in Writing

Comparison in writing discusses elements that are similar, while contrast in writing discusses elements that are different. A compare-and-contrast essay, then, analyzes two subjects by examining them closely and comparing them, contrasting them, or both. The underlying theme of the readings for this chapter is the American education system.

The key to a good compare-and-contrast essay is to choose two or more subjects that connect in a meaningful way. The purpose of conducting the comparison or contrast is not to state the obvious but rather to illuminate subtle differences or unexpected similarities. For example, if you wanted to focus on contrasting two subjects you would not pick apples and oranges; rather, you might choose to compare and contrast two types of oranges or two types of apples to highlight subtle differences. For example, Red Delicious apples are sweet, while Granny Smiths are tart and acidic. Drawing distinctions between elements in a similar category will increase the audience's understanding of that category, which is the purpose of the compare-and-contrast essay.

Similarly, to focus on comparison, choose two subjects that seem at first to be unrelated. For a comparison essay, you likely would not choose two apples or two oranges because they share so many of the same properties already. Rather, you might try to compare how apples and oranges are quite similar. The more divergent the two subjects initially seem, the more interesting a comparison essay will be.

EXERCISE 1

Think-Pair-Share

THINK: Brainstorm an essay that leans toward contrast. Choose one of the following three categories. Pick two examples from each. Then come up with one similarity and three differences between the examples.

- Education systems
- Superheroes
- Cell phones

PAIR: Show a classmate what you wrote. Explain your ideas about the similarity and differences. Add more information based on your conversation.

SHARE: Explain your ideas to the class. Consider the feedback from your classmates. Add more information to your notes based on the group discussion.

Which difference is the MOST interesting/unexpected?

EXERCISE 2

Follow the same steps (Think-Pair-Share) but this time, brainstorm an essay that leans toward comparison. Choose one of the following three items. Then come up with one difference and three similarities.

- Childhood: Today and in the past
- Fast food chains and fine dining restaurants
- Dogs and cats

SHARE: Which similarity is the MOST interesting/unexpected?

The Structure of a Comparison-and-Contrast Essay

The compare-and-contrast essay starts with a thesis that clearly states the two subjects that are to be compared, contrasted, or both, and the reason for doing so. The thesis could lean more toward comparing, contrasting, or both. Remember, the point of comparing and contrasting is to provide useful knowledge to the reader. Take the following thesis as an example that leans more toward contrasting.

Example

Thesis statement: Organic vegetables may cost more than those that are conventionally grown, but when put to the test, they are definitely worth every extra penny.

Here the thesis sets up the two subjects to be compared and contrasted (organic versus conventional vegetables), and it makes a claim about the results that might prove useful to the reader.

You may organize compare-and-contrast essays in one of the following two ways:

1. According to the subjects themselves, discussing one and then the other
2. According to individual points, discussing each subject in relation to each point

See the "Comparison and Contrast Diagram," which diagrams ways to organize our organic versus conventional vegetables thesis.

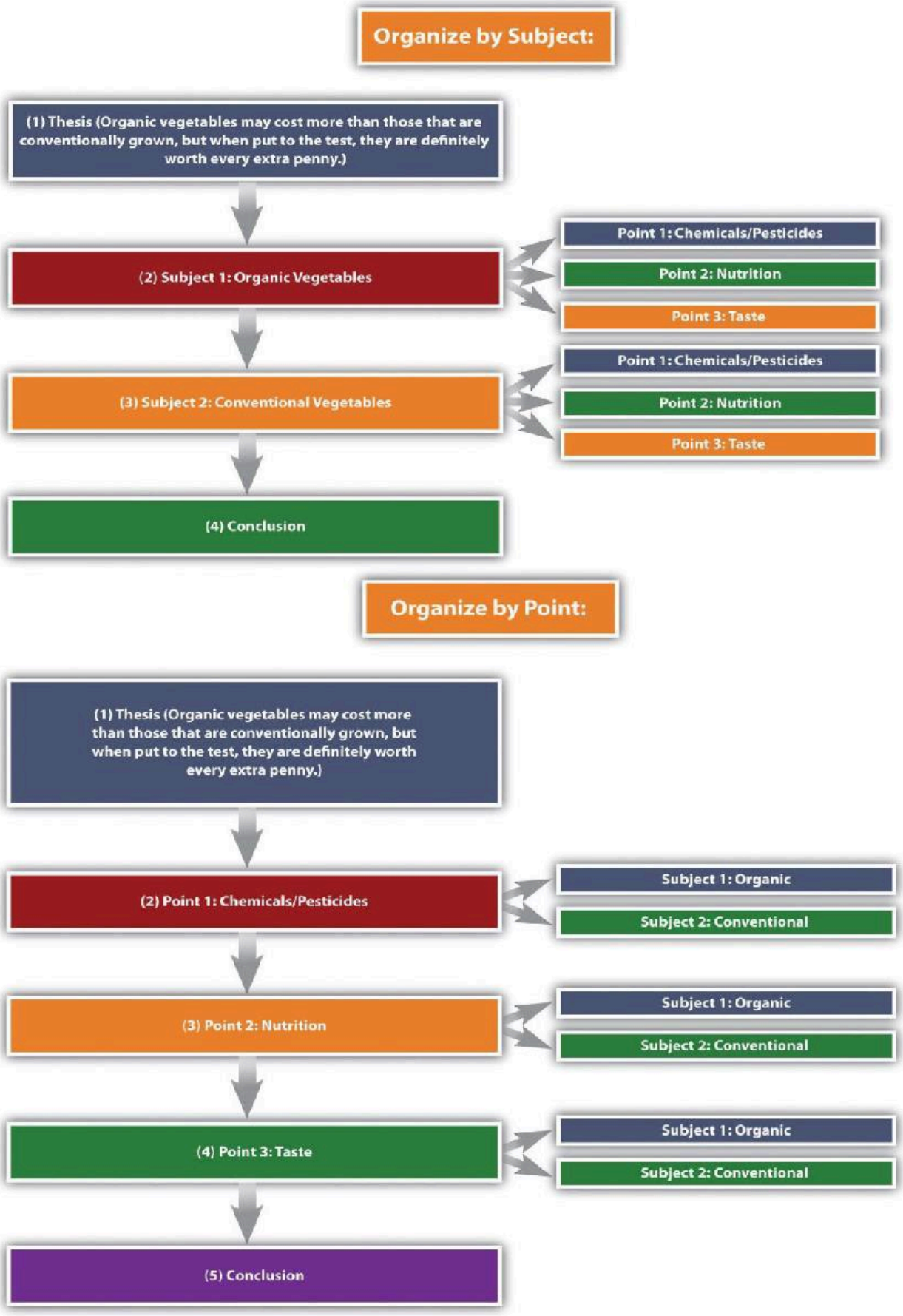
The organizational structure you choose depends on the nature of the topic, your purpose, and your audience.

Given that compare-and-contrast essays analyze the relationship between two subjects, it is helpful to have some phrases on hand that will cue the reader to such analysis. See the table below for examples of common phrases.

Table of Phrases of Comparison and Contrast:

Comparison	Contrast	Practice: Fill in the logical missing word or phrase.
one similarity	one difference	One _____ shared by both political parties is the effective use of social media t
both	conversely	The narrator describes her mother's idyllic childhood, growing up in a wealthy fami experienced a traumatic upbringing in Vietnam during the First Indochina War.
like	in contrast	Kamala Harris was the former Attorney General of California before becoming a U. Pete Buttigieg has served as the city mayor of South Bend, Indiana since 2012.
likewise	unlike	The life of a cat is typically centered within the home, _____ that of the family dog outside the house.
similarly	while	A fast food meal is often reheated in a microwave oven prior to being served on a t establishment, customers expect and are willing to wait for their meal to be prepare ingredients.
in a similar fashion	whereas	The Samsung Galaxy S10 offers upgraded features _____ to the iPhone X.

Comparison and Contrast Diagram


Organize by Subject:
(1) Thesis (Organic vegetables may cost more than those that are conventionally grown, but when put to the test, they are definitely worth every extra penny.)
(2) Subject 1: Organic Vegetables
Point 1: Chemicals/Pesticides
Point 2: Nutrition
Point 3: Taste
(3) Subject 2: Conventional Vegetables
Point 1: Chemicals/Pesticides
Point 2: Nutrition
Point 3: Taste
(4) Conclusion
Organize by Point:
(1) Thesis (Organic vegetables may cost more than those that are conventionally grown, but when put to the test, they are definitely worth every extra penny.)
(2) Point 1: Chemicals/Pesticides
Subject 1: Organic
Subject 2: Conventional
(3) Point 2: Nutrition
Subject 1: Organic
Subject 2: Conventional
(4) Point 3: Taste
Subject 1: Organic
Subject 2: Conventional
(5) Conclusion

EXERCISE 3

Using the Comparison and Contrast Diagram as a model, identify the structure of organization in the sample essay, "Childhood: Memories from Deep Inside" in Appendix B.

EXERCISE 4

Create an outline for each of the items you chose in Exercise 1 and Exercise 2.

- Use the point-by-point organizing strategy for one of them
- Use the subject organizing strategy for the other

EXERCISE 5

The sample essay on Childhood in Appendix B has a variety of errors. Which ones can you identify and correct in the sentences below?

- *Bo lived in the countryside where left him many unforgettable memories. (Para 1)*
- *That's why Bo and me like the water of the countryside. (Para 3)*
- *The countryside life made Bo and my childhood colorful, some of the same habits made our childhood full of happiness. (Para 5)*
- *However, because of the war, Bo's childhood is turbulence; because of the social and family, my childhood is comfort. (Para 5)*

"Comma Splices" are a common punctuation error for ESL students and native speakers of English. Which sentence in the box above contains a comma splice?

What are the possible ways to fix this error?

Find three more comma splices in the sample essay in Appendix B. Practice correcting this error in several ways.

To avoid these punctuation errors in your essays, please review https://www.really-learn-english.com/comma-splices.html

Writing a Comparison-and-Contrast Essay

First choose whether you want to compare seemingly disparate subjects, contrast seemingly similar subjects, or compare and contrast subjects. Once you have decided on a topic, introduce it with an engaging opening paragraph. Your thesis should come at the end of the introduction, and it should establish the subjects you will compare, contrast, or both, as well as state what can be learned from doing so. Be sure to make an argument in your thesis; explain to the reader what's at stake in analyzing the relationship between your stated subjects.

Think-Pair-Share: Consider high school ESL vs college ESL. What is similar and what is different? Write down a few ideas. Show them to a classmate and share your combined ideas with the class. Would this topic be better suited to a comparison essay or a contrast essay? Give a reason for your answer. Which comparison or contrast is the most thought-provoking point?

The body of the essay can be organized in one of two ways: by subject or by individual points. The organizing strategy that you choose will depend on, as always, your audience and your purpose. You may also consider your particular approach to the subjects as well as the nature of the subjects themselves; some subjects might better lend themselves to one structure or the other. Make sure to use comparison and contrast phrases to cue the reader to the ways in which you are analyzing the relationship between the subjects.

After you finish analyzing the subjects, write a conclusion that summarizes the main points of the essay and reinforces your thesis. See the student outline and essay in Appendix C, "Batman: A Hero for Any Time," followed by professional essays in the links to read some examples of the compare-and-contrast essay. Notice the length of these essays and consider what information you will need to write a longer essay. Think beyond the 5-paragraph essay!

Reading for Content: Pick one of the Education articles provided in the Canvas module. **Anno-**

tate the article, make a list of 5 new words, and be prepared to share what you learned from reading. Focus on the main ideas to provide a concise summary for your peers who read another article. Which sentence from the article seems to encapsulate the author's thesis? Which new words could be used in your own writing?

Identify an essential quote from the article that made you reflect more critically on the author's ideas. Our class discussion based on the readings, the vocabulary, and the "quotes" are the preparatory steps for your upcoming assignment in Exercise 6.

EXERCISE 6

Based on the topic assigned by your instructor, write a full compare-and-contrast essay. Be sure to include a summary of the source in your introduction, a clear thesis, well-defined and detailed paragraphs including quotes and paraphrases, and a fitting conclusion that ties everything together. Your essay should be 6-7 paragraphs or more.

- develop an outline based on your working thesis. Include new vocabulary in your outline and thesis!
- write a draft of your essay, including 3-5 new words, following your outline and focusing on your thesis
- get feedback from a tutor on content, organization, and vocabulary.
- revise based on the feedback, making substantive rather than superficial changes
- edit your essay based on grammar structure and vocabulary covered in class
- get feedback from a classmate, a tutor, or your professor on persistent errors
- proofread the final draft before uploading it or turning it in to your professor

The Cause and Effect Essay

The Purpose of Cause and Effect in Writing

It is often considered human nature to ask, "why?" and "how?" We want to know how our child got sick so we can better prevent it from happening in the future, or why our colleague received a pay raise because we want one as well. We want to know how much money we will save over the long term if we buy a hybrid car. These examples identify only a few of the relationships we think about in our lives, but each shows the importance of understanding cause and effect.

A cause is something that produces an event or condition; an effect is what results from an event or condition. The purpose of the cause-and-effect essay is to determine how various phenomena relate in terms of origins and results. Sometimes the connection between cause and effect is clear, but often determining the exact relationship between the two is very difficult. For example, the following effects of a cold may be easily identifiable: a sore throat, runny nose, and a cough. But determining the cause of the sickness can be far more difficult. A number of causes are possible, and to complicate matters, these possible causes could have combined to cause the sickness. That is, more than one cause may be responsible for any given effect. Therefore, cause-and- effect discussions are often complicated and frequently lead to debates and arguments. Indeed, you can use the complex nature of cause and effect to your advantage. Often it is not necessary, or even possible, to find the exact cause of an event or to name the exact effect. So, when formulating a thesis, you can claim one of a number of causes or effects to be the primary, or main, cause or effect. As soon as you claim that one cause or one effect is more crucial than the others, you have developed a thesis. In this unit, we will use *Women in STEM* as the underlying theme of the readings and try to understand the Cause – Effect relationship that this has had on its related fields.

EXERCISE 1

Consider the causes and effects in the following thesis statements. List a cause and effect for each one on your own sheet of paper.

- The growing childhood obesity epidemic is a result of technology. Much of the wildlife is dying because of the oil spill.
- The town continued programs that it could no longer afford, so it went bankrupt.
- More young people became politically active as use of the Internet spread throughout society.
- While many experts believed the rise in violence was due to the poor economy, it was really due to the summer-long heat wave.

EXERCISE 2

Write three cause-and-effect thesis statements of your own for each of the following five broad topics.

- Health and nutrition
- Sports
- Media
- Politics
- History

The Structure of a Cause-and-Effect Essay

The cause-and-effect essay opens with a general introduction to the topic, which then leads to a thesis that states the main cause, main effect, or various causes and effects of a condition or event.

The cause-and-effect essay can be organized in one of the following two primary ways:

1. Start with the cause and then talk about the effects.
2. Start with the effect and then talk about the causes

For example, if your essay were on childhood obesity, you could start by talking about the effect of childhood obesity and then discuss the cause, or you could start the same essay by talking about the cause of childhood obesity and then move to the effect.

Regardless of which structure you choose, be sure to explain each element of the essay fully and completely. Explaining complex relationships requires the full use of evidence, such as scientific studies, expert testimony, statistics, and anecdotes. Be careful of resorting to empty speculation. In writing, speculation amounts to unsubstantiated guessing. Writers are particularly prone to such trappings in cause-and-effect arguments due to the complex nature of finding links between phenomena. Be sure to have clear evidence to support the claims that you make.

Because cause-and-effect essays determine how phenomena are linked, they make frequent use of certain words and phrases that denote such linkage. See Table of Phrases of Causation for examples of such terms.

Table of Phrases of Causation

as a result	consequently
because	due to
hence	since
thus	therefore

The conclusion should wrap up the discussion and reinforce the thesis, leaving the reader with a clear understanding of the relationship that was analyzed.

EXERCISE 3

Look at some of the cause-and-effect relationships from Exercise 2. Outline the links you listed.

- Outline one using a cause-then-effect structure.
- Outline the other using the effect-then-cause structure.

Writing a Cause-and-Effect Essay

Choose an event or condition that you think has an interesting cause-and-effect relationship. Introduce your topic in an engaging way. End your introduction with a thesis that states the main cause, the main effect, or both.

Organize your essay by starting with either the cause-then-effect structure or the effect- then-cause structure. Within each section, you should clearly explain and support the causes and effects using a full range of evidence. If you are writing about multiple causes or multiple effects, you may choose to sequence either in terms of order of importance. In other words, order the causes from least to most important (or vice versa), or order the effects from least to most important (or vice versa).

Use the phrases of causation when trying to forge connections between various events or conditions. This will help you to organize your ideas and orient the reader. End your essay with a conclusion that summarizes your main points and reinforces your thesis. At the end of this section you can read some online cause-and-effect essays.

EXERCISE 4

Choose one of the ideas that you outlined in Exercise 3 and write a full cause-and-effect essay.

- Include an engaging introduction,
- a clear thesis,
- strong evidence and examples,
- and a thoughtful conclusion.

Online Cause-and-Effect Essay Example

Alan Weisman examines the human impact on the planet and its effects in "Earth without People."

Women in STEM

By Carly Berwick

Mathematicians and scientists are socially awkward men who wear glasses—at least, according to children.

In several studies, when children were asked to draw a mathematician or scientist, girls were twice as likely to draw men as they were to draw women, while boys almost universally drew men, often in a lab coat. I decided to try this out at home with my 12-year-old son, who said, "Really anyone can be a mathematician, but this is your average one," and promptly sketched a man in a checked oxford shirt with a pocket protector.

Persistent, subconscious images of male mathematicians and scientists that start at the earliest ages may be one explanation why girls enter STEM fields—science, technology, engineering, and mathematics—at dramatically lower rates than boys.

As an English teacher at a STEM magnet high school in New Jersey, I see these gender disparities in our engineering and computer science (CS) academies, even as our dynamic, thoughtful girls work hard to dispel stereotypes and recruit younger girls through coding camps and workshops. Our teachers certainly reflect the STEM fields of a generation ago: Three of our four CS teachers and engineering teachers are male.

The irony is that girls perform as well as boys in math. Nationally, math test scores for girls have been consistently equal to or within two points of boys in fourth and eighth grades over several years; middle school girls pass algebra at higher rates than boys. In science, girls perform on par with boys and enroll in advanced science and math courses at equal rates as they move into high school. And then something happens: A gender gap in participation starts to appear as girls take fewer of the more advanced STEM

courses and tests as they get closer to college. This gap widens the longer girls are in school and is often compounded by issues of race and class.

Researchers don't know yet if these continuing disparities in STEM reflect the slow pace of societal change, child-rearing expectations, or something deeper and more entrenched, such as the way we think about girls' minds. But teachers can play a significant role in influencing or dispelling stereotypes in STEM education. Here are some studies from researchers and educators that may offer a few insights—and a few solutions.

BARRIER 1: BUILDING A MATH IDENTITY

The problem: One explanation for the gender differences in STEM participation may lie with those formative ideas about who a mathematician or scientist is.

Stereotype threat—the mere perception that a group one belongs to is not good at a task—has been linked to lower academic performance, according to researchers. When girls become aware through both subtle and overt cultural messages about male superiority in math, it makes each encounter with math and technology more fraught, triggering self-doubt in even the most studious young girls.

Both teachers and curriculum can inadvertently contribute to these perceptions.

In one striking study from 2015, Israeli researchers divided sixth-grade exams into two sets for grading: One batch was graded by the teachers and included students' names, and the other contained no student names and was graded externally. In math, teachers graded boys higher, while external graders rated girls higher. Those low teacher grades then dissuaded girls for years to come.

Teachers often harbor these biases about themselves, too. Elementary school teachers are predominantly female, and many are anxious about teaching math, which can lead to lower achievement in math for girls. This persists into high school, where anxious teachers might be overly reliant on textbooks and rote methods of instruction. Images in those same textbooks can subconsciously trigger self-doubt in girls. One study found that when female high school students viewed chemistry textbooks containing pictures of female scientists, they performed better than female students who viewed textbooks containing only pictures of males.

Solutions:In response, researchers say teachers can foster a growth mindset in students by emphasizing that practice rather than innate ability improves performance. Other studies show that brief, targeted interventions in which students learn that intelligence is not fixed but can be improved through training and hard work can help them persist through challenges, a trait that, in math and science, should be particularly advantageous for girls.

Adding images of female mathematicians or scientists throughout classroom materials and assigning individual or group work that summarizes or contextualizes women's achievements in these subjects can also shift perceptions about who belongs.

Tackling the STEM gender bias can also warrant some self-reflection on the part of teachers.

"For me, it starts with a belief, these expectations I have for all of my students, that all kids can learn—every teacher doesn't have that belief," says Cicely Woodard, a middle school math teacher in Franklin, Tennessee, and the state's 2018 Teacher of the Year. "When the kids walk in the door I immediately believe they will get this content."

Stanford University professor and researcher Jo Boaler recommends that female teachers avoid phrases that imply their discomfort or dislike of math—like "I'm bad at math" or "This is hard"—and get cre-

ative with assignments that show they are truly interested in the topic. They may also want to grade papers anonymously, where possible.

BARRIER 2: THE QUESTION OF RACE AND CLASS

The problem: Our assumptions about who does math well—and the academic and financial support that follows—may, in fact, impact performance more than raw aptitude. This has particularly profound implications for low-income students and black and Latino females, who are significantly less likely to take advanced STEM courses and pursue STEM professions later in life.

A recent study by Sean Reardon at Stanford University revealed that girls often do better than boys on math in racially diverse districts, while boys perform better in affluent white districts. He theorized that in higher-income communities, parents are more able and more likely to invest in enrichment for their children—like robotics camps or theater classes—that adhere to stereotypes. Children in these communities may also be more likely to see men in positions like doctors or engineers that reinforce the narrative about who pursues STEM careers.

Additionally, research "has clearly [indicated] that black girls view themselves as outsiders in mathematics and teachers view them as outsiders," says Nicole Joseph, assistant professor of mathematics and science education at Vanderbilt University. Joseph points to tracking in math, more common in middle and high school than in the humanities, as a key structure infused with bias that restricts access to rigorous math education for black students.

Solutions: In a review of 62 studies on the perseverance of black women and girls in math, Joseph and her coauthors found that several measures can help build math identity and interest among black girls. For starters, schools can consider "structural disruptions" to how math instruction usually happens. San Francisco Unified School District, for example, recently eliminated accelerated math in middle school and allowed all students to take Algebra I in ninth grade—effectively ending tracking—which led to a rise in algebra test scores and a decrease in repeat rates for all students, including black and Latino students.

Joseph also suggests that "community influences and resilience strategies" from extra- or co-curricular programs, single-sex programs, teacher training in culturally responsive teaching strategies, and black and female role models in STEM can help.

Educators like Norman Alston, a Seattle-based educator, and Patricia Brown, a technology integration specialist in Ladue, Missouri, are fostering mathematical interest in girls through after-school STEM programs. Alston requires middle school graduates of his program to teach younger students, and every speaker or expert Brown brings to talk to her female students is a woman of color, so students can see powerful, successful female mathematicians and scientists who look like them.

BARRIER 3: IT'S NOT JUST CONTENT—IT'S CONTEXT, TOO

The problem:When it comes to teaching and learning STEM, research shows that the format matters.

A recent analysis of the admission tests to elite New York City high schools found that at Stuyvesant High School (considered the most rigorous in the city) girls had better grades in higher-level math, but overall had scored slightly lower on the admissions test, leading to lower admission rates. This is not because girls are worse at math, but may be because they guess less—a disadvantage on a multiple-choice test—and perform better with open-ended answers, according to the study.

Stanford's Reardon and his colleagues drew similar conclusions after analyzing 8 million fourth- and eighth-grade national standardized test scores and finding that gender gaps correlated with multiple choice questions—as opposed to open-ended ones—and attributed to 25 percent of the difference in scores between males and females.

Solutions: Teachers may want to move away from multiple-choice tests—often a staple in math and science—and place more emphasis on open-ended assessments that allow students, especially girls, to demonstrate their proficiency through word problems or writing, where they feel more confident.

Other STEM educators are going beyond traditional STEM instruction in their classrooms to ensure that every child has a fair chance to learn math.

As part of a pilot project at Georgia Tech to bring AP Computer Science to Atlanta students, teacher Shana White makes sure to use hands-on activities and real-world examples to supplement the online coursework and provide context and purpose for assignments.

"I hate when people say kids need grit—they have resilience, but need understanding of how to frame it in the content of the course," says White, whose students are all African American, half of them girls.

Focusing on the interdisciplinary and problem-focused nature of STEM is key, recommends Dr. Jill Marshall, associate co-director of UTeach at the University of Texas at Austin, a program trying to confront the pipeline problem of STEM teachers from diverse backgrounds.

"Project-based instruction just generally draws in more people because it addresses problems that people see as relevant," said Marshall. She cites a 2008 study from the National Academy of Engineering that asked people if they wanted to be engineers: Girls were twice as likely as boys to say no. But when asked if they would like to design a safe water system, save the rainforest, or use DNA to solve crimes, the girls answered yes.

Joe Moxley

Elements of Fiction Writing

What is Creative Writing?

Creative Writing tends to be expressive, imaginative, and literary. Readers of creative writing texts seek pleasure, entertainment, and insight into human struggles and behavior. A rather loosely defined genre, there are many forms of creative expression, including poetry, fiction, drama, screenwriting, creative, memoir, and travel writing. Thanks to emerging technologies, new creative writing genres are emerging, such as song mash-ups, cell phone novels, and Twitter poetry.

Introduction

Writing fiction isn't easy. For some it is intuitive. For others it requires hard work, perseverance, and close attention to form and technique. If you are going to learn to write fiction, you will need to know a few basic principles. These principles include point of view, characterization, plot, and conflict. These principles can be exercised in many different ways. How you choose to exercise them is what will make your story distinctively different from anyone else's.

Point of View

Point of view determines how the story will be told or narrated. As such, some choices have to be made. You must ask yourself: Will I tell this story in 1st person, 2nd person, or 3rd person? In 1st person a story is narrated using the pronoun "I." The character telling the story is part of the story, which means that the narration is limited to that character's observations and opinions. He may narrate his own story or someone else's, but in either case it will always be his story. After all, he is the one telling it. Thus the advantage of 1st person is also its disadvantage. It may offer you a sense of control in working through a single character, but it also provides limited flexibility as the narrative is restrained by that character's singular experience.

In 2nd person a story is narrated using the pronoun "you." The narrator could be speaking to someone specifically within the story or just be referencing "you" in general. If the narrator is speaking to someone within the story, the narrator is a character within the story, but if the narrator is referencing "you" in general, he may actually be the narrator of the story writing directly to his reader (i.e. you). The advantage of 2nd person is that it is slightly more flexible than 1st person as it presents the option of two different narrators. However, the disadvantage of 2nd person is that it can be complicated and confusing. If it is to be used well, it requires careful control. If it is not carefully controlled, it can quickly become cumbersome, awkward, clunky, even irritating. 2nd person tends to work best when it is a narrator within a story speaking

to another character. So make it clear that your narrator is speaking directly to another character and avoid mixing its use with the usage of "you" in general. Using "you" in general is generally best avoided, that is, unless you have an intentional reason for it.

In 3rd person a story is narrated using the pronouns "he" or "she." The narrator tells someone else's story from the outside. He may narrate by showing, that is, describing the story's characters, events, and scenes using only what can be seen or heard, or by telling, that is, depicting the characters, events, and scenes by summarizing them, interpreting them, or commenting on them. The advantage of 3rd person over 1st person or 2nd person is that it is much more flexible. 3rd person offers a range of narration from objective (purely descriptive) to omniscient (all-knowing). Using 3rd person allows you to move unhindered between the external and internal worlds of one or more characters. While 3rd person provides ultimate flexibility in terms of point of view, it may also be difficult to control. So it is wise to clearly distinguish each character and organize shifts between characters' points of view.

Example

In *Aura*, by Carlos Fuentes, the story begins:

"You're reading the advertisement. An offer like this isn't made everyday. You read it and reread it. It seems to be addressed to you and nobody else. You don't even notice when the ash from your cigarette falls into the cup of tea you ordered in this cheap, dirty cafe. You read it again: 'Wanted, young historian, conscientious, neat. Perfect knowledge, colloquial French.'"

Characterization

Character signifies human experience. It includes many elements such as a body, a mind, and social circumstances. A character must have a body. This is called physical characterization. Give your character a mole or a crooked knee. Allow your reader to see your character. For example: in Charles Dickens' *Hard Times*, Dickens depicts Mrs. Sparsit as that woman "with the Coriolanian style of nose and the dense black eyebrows" (Dickens 47). In this way, Dickens allows us to see his character, to picture her.

EXERCISE 1

Think-Pair-Share

- Think of a story you read in another class. Who was a memorable character in that novel? Jot down a few details.
- Pair: Tell a classmate about that character. Describe the physical details about the character.
- Share: Talk about the physical descriptions that make an impact on you, the reader. Why do these details stick with you long after you've finished the story?

Moreover, a character must think and feel. This is called psychological characterization. Give your character thoughts, assumptions, biases, feelings, doubts, fears, hopes, and dreams; and give your character a desire. For example: in *Hard Times* Dickens' describes his character Louisa as having a "starved imagination keeping life in itself somehow, which brightened its expression. Not with the brightness natural to cheerful youth, but with uncertain, eager, doubtful flashes, which had something painful in them, analogous to the changes on a blind face groping its way" (19). Here Dickens allows us to understand the inner dimensions of his character, Louisa—inner dimensions that have a profound impact on the events that play out in the story. In Dickens' novel we learn that Louisa wants to make her own choices in life, "that she would have been self-willed…but for her bringing-up" (19). She does not want to be controlled.

So what does your character want? Ice cream? A girlfriend? To save the neighbor's dog? To kill it? This can often be very difficult to determine. But once you clearly decide what your character wants then you should keep your character from achieving that want either by the internal issues your character struggles with or by the external struggles your character engages. In either case, a character's struggle is the story and should constitute the bulk of it.

It may sound simple, but developing a character's struggles requires lots of practice. Why? Naturally, we avoid them. We are averse to them; but as a writer, you must embrace them, even manipulate them. A writer is a manipulator. He manipulates his reader by abusing his character. The reader, on the other hand, is manipulated. That's why a reader reads: to be manipulated, to sit down and read a good story, to struggle alongside a character and reach resolution with that character. A reader enjoys this. So give it to him. Let him have it. As much as you love your character don't avoid abusing him. If you love him, let him suffer. You can always make things right in the end. Allow your reader to see the world through the eyes of your character and to want what your character wants.

Lastly, give your character social circumstances. Your character must come from somewhere and have some kind of social profile. Give or don't give your character an education, money, a family, friends, a religion, a hobby, a special taste for squid. Allow your reader to see the world from which your character comes.

Example

At the beginning of *The Moths* by Helena Maria Viramontes,

- "I was fourteen years old when Abuelita requested my help. And it seemed only fair. Abuelita had pulled me through the rages of scarlet fever by placing, removing and replacing potato slices on the temples of my forehead, she had seen me through several whippings, an arm broken by a dare-jump off Tio Enrique's toolshed, puberty, and my first lie. Really, I told Ama, it was only fair."

Plot

Plot is different from characterization. Plot equates to events. A character must have experience; but if there are no events in your story, what can your character experience or react to? In *Hard Times* Dickens places his two characters, Louisa and Thomas, whose lives are micromanaged by their practical-minded father, Mr. Gradgrind, in the path of a traveling circus, at which point we find "Louisa peeping with all her might through a hole in a deal board, and…Thomas abasing himself on the ground to catch but a hoof of the graceful equestrian Tyrolean flower-act" (18)! It is a singular event that has enormous consequences as the unimaginative and well-ordered lives of two characters are ruptured by the possibilities of the artistic and unrestrained, consequences which result in a succession of dramatic events. So give your story interesting, character-testing events. Does your character get pushed out of a car on the way to school or does that malicious girl two houses down fall out of your character's front yard tree and land on his head? How your character reacts to the events he experiences can define his character.

As your mind swells with events, you must consider how you will structure those events in order to form a story. When you consider the structure of events as a whole, you will realize that your story must begin somewhere and end somewhere else. A story is, after all, a story. It requires a beginning, middle, and end. Your story, therefore, should begin at some interesting point, travel upward as it builds on that beginning with rising action and character development, reach a climax involving the peak of a character's problem or the most alarming moment of a character's experience, and finally make a short descent as the story achieves some kind of resolution to that problem or experience. This structure is formerly known as the Fichtean curve (i.e. the upside down check mark).

Remember, a story that doesn't start somewhere is a story that never gets written. So you must begin at the place you think is most interesting. An interesting beginning could involve an event such as a perilous situation for your character (a man braces himself against a rope at the sandwich shop as a St. Bernard plants its paws on his chest) or it could involve something embarrassing (a girl, picking her nose behind the wheel of her car, gets honked at by that cute guy from the baseball team) or it could involve an image

or description such as the milieu of the country corner shop or a row of daisies bobbling in the wind. It is interesting if it engages both the reader's imagination and emotions.

In *Hard Times* Dickens chooses to begin with "the one thing needful" (9) and that is to talk about "Facts": "'Now, what I want is, Facts. Teach these boys and girls nothing but Facts. Facts alone are wanted in life. Plant nothing else, and root out everything else'" (9). In this way, Dickens establishes point of view, characterizes a central character, engages the central conflict, and sets his story's events in motion.

The story begins with dialog which allows us to see that a character is speaking. We may, therefore, conclude that the character is speaking to someone. Furthermore, his dialog is provided in quotes, which tells us that someone is narrating his speech. The facts tells us that this narrative is in 3rd person point of view, a point that is confirmed when the 3rd person narrator writes, "The scene was a plain, bare, monotonous vault of a schoolroom, and the speaker's square forefinger emphasized his observations, by underscoring every sentence with a line on the schoolmaster's sleeve" (9). These external descriptions of scene and character indicate conclusively a 3rd person point of view. In the first two paragraphs we also learn a great deal about the physical, psychological, and physiological characterization of Mr. Gradgrind. He has a "square forefinger," he is obsessed with "facts," and the fact that he is standing in a schoolroom giving a speech tells us he is an educated, possibly middle-to-upper class, man. Moreover, we are presented with the central conflict. Are facts alone wanted in life? What about imagination, creativity? Are they not also wanted in life? This dichotomy forms the basis of all conflict within the story, and Dickens presents it in his opening lines. And finally, the tangible action of Dickens' character standing in a schoolroom giving a speech to an "inclined plane of little vessels" constitutes an event.

After your story has had a character and events that occupy both space and time, it then must end at a higher plane than it began. The peak of this higher plane is called a climax. The climax occurs when the character has reached the highest point of internal and/or external crisis, the point from which the story must turn if your character is to make it out alive. Every story's climax is different. It is the point at which only you can determine. It is the point at which your mind tells you the struggle will never end even as your heart tells you it will.

As your story makes its short descent from the point of climax (ultimate conflict), it must reach for and achieve some kind of resolution, at which point you have arrived at the end of your story. While that resolution could be achieved by way of a dramatic turn, it could also be achieved by a simple shift in direction.

A dramatic turn achieves an obvious resolution (Gradgrind's daughter, Louisa, confronts her father about her upbringing and "[curses] the hour in which [she] was born to such a destiny" (208); she has made an obvious turn of mind, heart, and action, and the resultant change is distinct: "'I shall die if you hold me!' she says. 'Let me fall upon the ground!' And he laid her down there, and saw the pride of his heart and the triumph of his system, lying, an insensible heap, at his feet" (212)); whereas a shift in direction achieves a more subtle resolution (the relationship between Stephen and Rachel is unclearly redefined: "he avoided every chance of seeing her; for, although he knew that the prohibition did not yet formally extend to the women working in the factories, he found that some of them with whom he was acquainted were changed to him, and he feared to try others, and dreaded that Rachael might be even singled out from the rest if she were seen in his company" (143). This shift shows that their relationship has been "muddled," as opposed to abolished, due to the un-communicated fear of potential disgrace arising from their association.

Conflict

Conflict, on the other hand, is what disturbs a character. It can be internal or external. If conflict is internal, it resides within the character. In this case, a character may not want to go into the pet store to look at dogs because he remembers getting bitten by a dog on his newspaper route as a child; and he can't bring himself to even look at them, even though he wants to buy one for his girlfriend. If the conflict is external, it resides outside the character. In this case, a character may try to buy a dog, but it is too expensive and the owner won't let him have it for less money. Will he punch the owner in the nose, will he steal the dog when the owner isn't looking, or will he go work harder and come back when he can pay for it?

EXERCISE 2

Think-Pair-Share

- Think about a movie that you've recently watched. What was the conflict between the main characters in the movie?
- Pair: Tell a classmate about the movie and the conflict. Was it an internal or external conflict?
- Share: Discuss these movies and conflicts in a small group. What type of conflict is more interesting? Why?

In *Hard Times* we find a notable moment of external conflict when Dickens pushes Mr. Bounderby, who has concealed the truth about his upbringing throughout the story, to the brink of exposure, during which he is publicly humiliated:

> Mr Bounderby's visage exhibited an extraordinary combination of all possible colours and expressions of discomfiture, as old Mrs Pegler was disclosed to his view. "Why, what do you mean by this?" was his highly unexpected demand. "Sir!" exclaimed Mrs Sparsit, faintly.
>
> "Why don't you mind your own business, ma'am?" roared Bounderby. "How dare you go and poke your officious nose into my family affairs?" This allusion to her favourite feature overpowered Mrs Sparsit. She sat down stiffly in a chair…. (251-252)

Here we find Mr. Bounderby and Mrs. Sparsit in all-out verbal struggle. Insults are thrown; emotions, overpowered. Conflict occurs when a character is so disturbed he is forced to react; the greater the disturbance, the greater the reaction. Consider the case of Mr. Bounderby. Not only has he concealed the truth about his upbringing throughout the story, he has positioned himself as the man who picked himself up by his own boot straps and made something of himself despite the absence of any and all opportunity, a lie he uses to justify his judgmental attitude toward the uneducated labors who slave for him in his factory. He of all Dickens' characters in the story must conceal the truth; he must hide it, for if the truth be told it would shame him red. Louisa, on the other hand, experiences internal conflict when Dickens pits her inner desire against her father Mr. Gradgrind's external pressure:

> "You are, we will say in round numbers, twenty years of age; Mr Bounderby is, we will say in round numbers, fifty. There is some disparity in your respective years, but in your means and positions there is none….The disparity I have mentioned, therefore, almost ceases to be disparity, and (virtually) all but disappears."
>
> "What do you recommend, father," asked Louisa.
>
> "Confining yourself rigidly to Fact, the question of Fact you state to yourself is: Does Mr Bounderby ask me to marry him? Yes, he does. The sole remaining question then is: Shall I marry him?"
>
> "Shall I marry him?" repeated Louisa, with great deliberation.
>
> "Precisely. And it is satisfactory to me, as your father, my dear Louisa…." (98)

Throughout this interaction between Louisa and Mr. Gradgrind, Mr. Gradgrind dispassionately presents Louisa with the pressure of marrying Mr. Bounderby, a man twice her age; yet throughout, Louisa struggles to express her feelings by asking her father whether or not she should do what she secretly does not want to do. Dickens writes: "Perhaps he might have seen one wavering moment in her, when she was impelled to throw herself upon his breast, and give him the pent-up confidences of her heart" (99). As Mr. Gradgrind continues to pressure Louisa, it becomes increasingly difficult for her to openly and honestly communicate her desires.

Whether you decide to incorporate internal or external conflict or any combination of the two, remember, a story must have conflict. A story isn't interesting without it. So allow your reader to experience as much conflict as you are capable of conjuring. Be willing to place your characters in the most perilous and alarming moments of distress imaginable. In short, let your characters experience "hard times."

Work Cited

Dickens, Charles. *Hard Times*. New York: Penguin Books, 2003.

Conclusion

The choices you make involving point of view, characterization, plot, and conflict will be unique when they are the choices you make. If the story is focused on character, character will drive and define the story's events. If the story is focused on events, events will drive and define the story's character. As you make these choices, the story will unfold and you will find yourself smack in the middle of exciting drama before you know it.

Which way you decide to write is up to you, but you must remember that writing requires you to know how to use the basic principles outlined here. So it is best to do exercises focusing only on one technique at a time until you feel comfortable and confident using that technique. When you have experimented with and learned each writing technique (point of view, characterization, plot, and conflict) you will come to recognize how interwoven all the elements of craft are and how they work together and influence each other, at which point you can mix and match techniques, using them how and in what ways you like in order to tell the story you are burning to write.

The Persuasive Essay

The Purpose of Persuasive Writing

The purpose of persuasion in writing is to convince, motivate, or move readers toward a certain point of view, or opinion. The act of trying to persuade automatically implies that more than one opinion on the subject can be argued.

The idea of an argument often conjures up images of two people yelling and screaming in anger. In writing, however, an argument is very different. An argument is a reasoned opinion supported and explained by evidence. To argue in writing is to advance knowledge and ideas in a positive way. Written arguments often fail when they employ ranting rather than reasoning.

Most of us feel inclined to try to win the arguments we enter. On some level, we all want to be right, and we want others to see the error of their ways. More times than not, however, arguments in which both sides try to win end up producing losers all around. The more productive approach is to persuade your audience to consider your opinion as a valid one, not simply the right one. In this chapter, our theme will focus on the meaning of success based on *Outliers* by Malcolm Gladwell. By analyzing Gladwell's text, we will see how persuasion works in an authentic sample from popular culture.

The Structure of a Persuasive Essay

The following five features make up the structure of a persuasive essay:

- Introduction and thesis
- Opposing and qualifying ideas
- Strong evidence in support of claim
- Style and tone of language
- A compelling conclusion

Creating an Introduction and Thesis

The persuasive essay begins with an engaging introduction that presents the general topic. The thesis typically appears at the end of the introduction and clearly states the writer's point of view.

Acknowledging Opposing Ideas and Limits to Your Argument

Because an argument implies differing points of view on the subject, you must be sure to acknowledge those opposing ideas. Avoiding ideas that conflict with your own gives the reader the impression that you

may be uncertain, fearful, or unaware of opposing ideas. Thus it is essential that you not only address counterarguments but also do so respectfully.

Try to address opposing arguments earlier rather than later in your essay. Rhetorically speaking, ordering your positive arguments last allows you to better address ideas that conflict with your own because it allows you to focus on countering those arguments.

This way, you leave your reader thinking about your argument rather than someone else's. You have the last word.

Acknowledging points of view different from your own also has the effect of fostering more credibility between you and the audience. Readers will know from the outset that you are aware of opposing ideas and that you are not afraid to give them space. It is also helpful to establish the limits of your argument and what you are trying to accomplish. In effect, you are conceding early on that your argument is not the ultimate authority on a given topic. Such humility can go a long way toward earning credibility and trust with an audience ("ethos"). Audience members will know from the beginning that you are a reasonable writer, and they will trust your argument as a result. For example, in the following concessionary statement, the writer advocates for stricter gun control laws, but she admits it will not solve all of our problems with crime:

> Although tougher gun control laws are a powerful first step in decreasing violence in our streets, such legislation alone cannot end these problems since guns are not the only problem we face.

Such a concession will be welcome by those who might disagree with this writer's argument in the first place. To effectively persuade their readers, writers need to be realistic in their goals and humble in their approach to get readers to listen to their ideas. See Table of Phrases of Concession for some useful phrases of concession.

Table of Phrases of Concession

although	granted that
of course	still
though	yet

EXERCISE 1

Try to form a thesis for each of the following topics. Remember the more specific your thesis, the better.

- Foreign policy
- Television and advertising

- Stereotypes and prejudice
- Gender roles and the workplace
- Driving and cell phones

Collaboration: Please share with a classmate and compare your answers. Choose the thesis statement that most interests you and discuss why.

Bias in Writing

Everyone has various biases on any number of topics. For example, you might have a bias toward listening to music radio stations rather than talk radio or news programs. You might have a bias toward working at night rather than in the morning, or working by deadlines rather than getting tasks done in advance. These examples identify minor biases, of course, but they still indicate preferences and opinions.

Handling bias in writing and in daily life can be a useful skill. It will allow you to articulate your own points of view while also defending yourself against unreasonable points of view. The ideal in persuasive writing is to let your reader know your bias, but do not let that bias blind you to the primary components of good argumentation: sound, thoughtful evidence and a respectful and reasonable address of opposing sides.

The strength of a personal bias is that it can motivate you to construct a strong argument. If you are invested in the topic, you are more likely to care about the piece of writing. Similarly, the more you care, the more time and effort you will put forth and the better the final product will be.

The weakness of bias is when the bias begins to take over the essay—when, for example, you neglect opposing ideas, exaggerate your points, or repeatedly insert yourself ahead of the subject by using *I* too often. Being aware of all three of these pitfalls will help you avoid them.

The Use of "I" in Writing

The use of "I" in writing is a topic of debate, and the acceptance of its usage varies from instructor to instructor. It is difficult to predict the preferences for all your present and future instructors, but consider the effects it can potentially have on your writing. Be mindful of the use of *I* in your writing because it can make your argument sound overly biased. There are two primary reasons:

1. Excessive repetition of any word will eventually catch the reader's attention–and usually not in a good way. The use of "I" is no different.
2. The insertion of "I" into a sentence alters not only the way a sentence might sound but also the composition of the sentence itself. "I" is often the subject of a sentence. If the subject of the essay is supposed to be, say, "smoking," then by inserting yourself into the sentence, you are effectively displacing the subject of the essay into a secondary position.

Example

In the following example, the subject of the sentence is underlined:

Smoking is bad.

I think smoking is bad.

In the first sentence, the rightful subject, “smoking”, is in the subject position in the sentence. In the second sentence, the insertion of “I” and “think “replaces “smoking” as the subject, which draws attention to “I” and away from the topic that is supposed to be discussed. Remember to keep the message (the subject) and the messenger (the writer) separate. Indeed, your argument will be stronger if you remove the “I think” and simply assert “Smoking is bad.” For more information about pronoun focus in an essay see Unit 1 “Introduction to Academic Writing.”

Key Takeaways

Developing Sound Arguments

Does my essay contain the following elements?

- An engaging introduction
- A reasonable, specific thesis that is able to be supported by evidence
- A varied range of evidence from credible sources
- Respectful acknowledgement and explanation of opposing ideas
- A style and tone of language that is appropriate for the subject and audience
- Acknowledgement of the argument’s limits
- A conclusion that will adequately summarize the essay and reinforce the thesis

Facts and Opinions

Facts are statements that can be definitely proven using objective data. The statement that is a fact is absolutely valid. In other words, the statement can be pronounced as true or false. For example, 2 + 2 = 4. This expression identifies a true statement, or a fact, because it can be proved with objective data.

Opinions are personal views, or judgments. An opinion is what an individual believes about a particular subject. However, an opinion in argumentation must have legitimate backing; adequate evidence and credibility should support the opinion. Consider the credibility of expert opinions. Experts in a given field have the knowledge and credentials to make their opinion meaningful to a larger audience; this credibility is sometimes called "ethos" and is one way that we make our arguments persuasive. For example, you seek the opinion of your dentist when it comes to the health of your gums and you seek the opinion of your mechanic when it comes to the maintenance of your car. Both have knowledge and credentials in those respective fields, which is why their opinions matter to you. But the authority of your dentist may be greatly diminished should he or she offer an opinion about your car, and vice versa. In writing, you want to strike a balance between credible facts and authoritative opinions. Relying on one or the other will likely lose more of your audience than it gains.

EXERCISE 2

On a separate sheet of paper, take three of the theses you formed in Exercise 1 and list the types of evidence you might use in support of that thesis.

EXERCISE 3

Using the evidence you provided in support of the three theses in Exercise 2, come up with at least one counter-argument to each. Then write a concession statement, expressing the limits to each of your three arguments.

Using Visual Elements to Strengthen Arguments

Adding visual elements to a persuasive argument can often strengthen its persuasive effect. There are two main types of visual elements: quantitative visuals and qualitative visuals.

Quantitative visuals present data graphically. They allow the audience to see statistics spatially. The purpose of using quantitative visuals is to make logical appeals to the audience. An appeal based on logic is called "**logos**," and it persuades the reader using reasoning. Often we can provide information in data form to persuade the reader through logic. Quantitative visuals help display the information clearly. For example, sometimes it is easier to understand the disparity in certain statistics if you can see how the disparity looks graphically. Bar graphs, pie charts, Venn diagrams, histograms, and line graphs are all ways of presenting quantitative data in spatial dimensions.

Qualitative visuals present images that appeal to the audience's emotions. Persuading your reader based on an emotional appeal is called "**pathos**." Photographs and pictorial images are examples of qualitative visuals that can create an emotional appeal. Such images often try to convey a story, and seeing an actual example can carry more power than hearing or reading about the example. For example, one image of a child suffering from malnutrition will likely have more of an emotional impact than pages dedicated to describing that same condition in writing.

Writing a Persuasive Essay

Choose a topic that you feel passionate about. If your instructor requires you to write about a specific topic, approach the subject from an angle that interests you. Begin your essay with an engaging introduction. Your thesis should typically appear somewhere in your introduction. Be sure to have a clear thesis that states your position and previews the main points your essay will address.

Start by acknowledging and explaining points of view that may conflict with your own to build credibility and trust with your audience. Also state the limits of your argument. This too helps you sound more reasonable and honest to those who may naturally be inclined to disagree with your view. By respectfully acknowledging opposing arguments and conceding limitations to your own view, you set a measured and responsible tone for the essay.

Make your appeals in support of your thesis by using sound, credible evidence. Use a balance of facts and opinions from a wide range of sources, such as scientific studies, expert testimony, statistics, and personal anecdotes. Each piece of evidence should be fully explained and clearly stated. See Unit 10 and Unit 11 for information on how to correctly incorporate outside sources into your writing.

Make sure that your style and tone are appropriate for your subject and audience. Tailor your language and word choice to these two factors, while still being true to your own voice.

Finally, write a conclusion that effectively summarizes the main argument and reinforces your thesis. See the sample persuasive essay at the end of this chapter, "The Value of Technical High Schools in Georgia's Business Marketplace," by student Elizabeth Lamoureux. Please note that this essay uses the MLA style of documentation, for which you can find guidelines at Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL) website: http://owl.english.purdue.edu.

EXERCISE 4

Choose one of the topics you have been working on throughout this section. Use the thesis, evidence, opposing argument, and concessionary statement as the basis for writing a full persuasive essay. Be sure to include an engaging introduction, clear explanations of all the evidence you present, and a strong conclusion.

Sample Persuasive Essay

In this student paper, the student makes a persuasive case for the value of technical high schools in Georgia. As you read, pay attention to the different persuasive devices the writer uses to convince us of her position. Also note how the outline gives a structure to the paper that helps lead the reader step-by-step through the components of the argument.

Outline

Elizabeth

Dr. Cox

English 1101 Honors

April 25, 2013

Outline

Thesis: Technical high schools should be established in every county in Georgia because they can provide the technical training that companies need, can get young people into the workforce earlier, and can reduce the number of drop outs.

- I . Technical high schools can provide the technical training that companies in Georgia need.

  A. Businesses can provide input regarding jobs needed in specific technical fields.
     1. Education can focus on these specific technical fields.
     2. Education can work with business to fill these positions.

  B. Businesses can provide apprenticeship programs.
     1. Apprenticeship programs can be a vital part of a student's education.
     2. Apprenticeship programs are integral to Germany's educational program, providing a realistic model for technical high schools in Georgia.

- II. Technical high schools can prepare students to enter the workforce earlier.

  A. Students not interested in college can enter the workforce upon high school graduation.
     1. Students train during their high school years for their chosen profession.
     2. Students begin to work in a profession or trade where there is a need.

  B. Students can begin to earn a living upon graduation.
     1. Students will become independent and self-supporting at the age of eighteen when many of their peers are still dependent upon their parents.
     2. Students can make more money over the course of their lifetimes.

- III. Technical high schools can reduce the number of drop outs.

  A. Students would stay in school because they take courses that they enjoy.

1. Students are more motivated to take courses in which they have an interest.
2. Students will find both core and specialized classes more interesting and valuable when they can see the practical application of the subjects.

B. Students would no longer need to drop out to support their families.
   1. Students would be able to earn a living wage while still taking classes that would eventually lead to full-time employment.
   2. Students would learn financial skills through experience with money management.

Student Essay

Elizabeth Lamoureux
Dr. Cox
English 101
April 25, 2018

The Value of Technical High Schools in Georgia's Business Marketplace

Businesses need specialized workers; young people need jobs. It seems like this would be an easy problem to solve. However, business and education are not communicating with each other. To add to this dilemma, emphasis is still put on a college education for everyone. Samuel Halperin, study director of the Commission on Work, Family, and Citizenship for the W. T. Grant Foundation, co-authored two reports: "The Forgotten Half: Non-College Youth in America" and "The Forgotten Half: Pathways to Success for America's Youth and Young Families." Halperin states: "While the attention of the nation was focused on kids going to college . . . the truth is that 70 percent of our adults never earn a college degree" (qtd. in Rogers). According to an article in Issues in Science and Technology, the Bureau of Labor Statistics projects that there will be more need for skills obtained through "community colleges, occupational training, and work experience" (Lerman). As Anne C. Lewis points out, although the poor job situation is recognized as detrimental to American youth, President Bush tried to get rid of career and technical education (CTE) and "promote strictly academic programs." Luckily, Congress did not support it (Lewis 5). The figure for U.S. teen joblessness in October 2009 was 27.6 percent, the highest since World War II (Karaim). According to Thomas E. Persing, Americans are "disregarding the 50 percent who enter college and fail to graduate. . . ." Since everyone does not want or need to go to college, young people need an alternative choice, namely, technical high schools. Technical high schools should be established in every county in Georgia because they can provide the technical training that companies need, can get young people into the work force earlier, and can reduce the number of drop outs.

Technical high schools provide students with the technical training that companies need. By getting input from businesses on exactly what their specialized needs are, school systems could adapt their cur-

ricula to accommodate the needs of businesses. According to an article in Issues in Science and Technology, "employers report difficulty in recruiting workers with adequate skills." The article goes on to say that "the shortage of available skills is affecting their ability to serve customers, and 84% of the firms say that the K-12 school system is not doing a good job preparing students for the workplace" (Lerman). Education can work with businesses to provide them with the workforce they need, and students can learn the skills they need through apprenticeship programs.

Business can be further involved by providing these apprenticeship programs, which can be a vital part of a student's education. Currently, Robert Reich, economist and former Secretary of Labor, and Richard Riley, Secretary of Education, have spoken up for apprenticeship programs (Persing). In these programs, not only do students learn job-specific skills, but they also learn other skills for success in the work place, such as "communication, responsibility, teamwork, allocating resources, problem-solving, and finding information" (Lerman). Businesses complain that the current educational system is failing in this regard and that students enter the workforce without these skills.

The United States could learn from other countries. Apprenticeship programs are integral to Germany's educational program, for example. Because such large numbers of students in a wide array of fields take advantage of these programs, the stigma of not attending college is reduced. Timothy Taylor, the Conversable Economist, explains that most German students complete this program and still have the option to pursue a postsecondary degree. Many occupations are represented in this program, including engineering, nursing, and teaching. Apprenticeship programs can last from one to six years and provide students with a wage for learning. This allows both business and student to compete in the market place. According to Julie Rawe, "under Germany's earn-while-you-learn system, companies are paying 1.6 million young adults to train for about 350 types of jobs. . . ."

A second important reason technical high schools should be promoted in Georgia is that they prepare students to enter the work force earlier. Students not interested in college enter the work force upon high school graduation or sooner if they have participated in an apprenticeship or other cooperative program with a business. Students train during their high school years for their chosen profession and often work for the company where they trained. This ensures that students begin to work in a profession or trade where there is a need.

Another positive factor is that jobs allow students to earn a living upon graduation or before. Even though students are considered adults at eighteen, many cannot support themselves. The jobs available to young people are primarily minimum wage jobs which do not provide them with enough resources to live independently. One recent study indicates that the income gap is widening for young people, and "In

March 1997, more than one-fourth of out-of school young adults who were working full-time were earning less than the poverty line income standard of just over $16,000 annually for a family of four" ("The Forgotten Half Revisited"). Conversely, by entering the work force earlier with the skills businesses need, young people make more money over their lifetimes. Robert I. Lerman considers the advantages:

> Studies generally find that education programs with close links to the world of work improve earnings. The earnings gains are especially solid for students unlikely to attend or complete college. Cooperative education, school enterprises, and internship or apprenticeship increased employment and lowered the share of young men who are idle after high school.

Young people can obviously profit from entering the work force earlier.

One of the major benefits of promoting technical high schools in Georgia is that they reduce the number of dropouts. According to an article in the Atlanta Journal-Constitution, the figure for dropouts for the Atlanta metro area is about thirty-four percent (McCaffrey and Badertscher A16). The statistic for Germany's dropout rate is less than nine percent (Rawe). As Rawe maintains, students stay in school because they cannot get the job if they do not have the diploma. Beyond the strong incentive of a job, students are more motivated to take courses in which they have an interest. In addition to the specialized career classes, students are still required to take core classes required by traditional high schools. However, practical application of these subjects makes them more interesting and more valuable to the students.

Another reason students drop out is to support their families. By participating in a program in which they are paid a wage and then entering that job full time, they no longer need to drop out for this reason. It is necessary for many students to contribute financially to the family: by getting a job earlier, they can do this. Joining the work force early also provides students with financial skills gained through experience with money management.

The belief of most Americans that everyone needs to have a college education is outdated. The United States needs skilled employees at all levels, from the highly technical to the practical day to day services society needs to sustain its current standard of living. Germany is doing this through its apprenticeship programs which have proven to be economically successful for both businesses and workers. If the State of Georgia put technical high schools in every county, businesses would get employees with the skills they need; young people would get into good paying jobs earlier, and schools would have fewer dropouts.

Works Cited

"The Forgotten Half Revisited: American Youth and Young Families, 1988-2008." *American Youth Policy Forum*. N.p., n.d. Web. 21 Apr. 2012.

Karaim, Reed. "Youth Unemployment." *CQ Global Researcher* 6 Mar. 2012: 105-28. Web. 21 Apr. 2012.

Lerman, Robert I. "Building a Wider Skills Net for Workers: A Range of Skills Beyond Conventional Schooling Are Critical to Success in the Job Market, and New Educational Approaches Should Reflect These Noncognitive Skills and Occupational Qualifications." *Issues in Science and Technology* 24.4 (2008): 65+. *Gale Opposing Viewpoints in Context.* Web. 21 Apr. 2012.

Lewis, Anne C. "Support for CTE." *Tech Directions* 65.3 (2005): 5-6. *Academic Search Complete.* Web. 11 Apr. 2012.

McCaffrey, Shannon, and Nancy Badertscher. "Painful Truth in Grad Rates." *Atlanta Journal Constitution* 15 Apr. 2012: A1+. Print.

Persing, Thomas E. "The Role of Apprenticeship Programs." *On Common Ground.* Yale-New Haven Teachers Institute, Fall 1994. Web. 16 Apr. 2012.

Rawe, Julie. "How Germany Keeps Kids From Dropping Out." *Time Magazine U.S.* Time Magazine, 11 Apr. 2006. Web. 16 Apr. 2012.

Rogers, Betsy. "Remembering the 'Forgotten Half.'" *Washington University in St. Louis Magazine* Spring 2005. Web. 21 Apr. 2012.

Taylor, Timothy. "Apprenticeships for the U.S. Economy." *Conversableeconomist.blogspot.com. Conversable Economist*, 18 Oct. 2011. Web. 16 Apr. 2012 <http://conversableeconomist.blogspot.com/2011/10/apprenticeships-for-us-Economy.html>.

What is Success?

In the article *"The Fallacy of Success"* we introduce the underlying topic of this Unit "success**.**" In addition, you will read two chapters of Malcom Gladwell's New York Times Best Seller, *Outliers: The Story of Success.* In these chapters, Gladwell introduces some "ingredients" of success. Your challenge will be to identify them and to analyze whether or not you agree with his theory of success. Your professors will also ask you to write a Persuasive composition that will either support or deny Malcolm Gladwell's position.

Writing a Research Paper

The Purpose of Research Writing

Who has written poetry about exile? What roles did women play in the American Revolution? Where do cicadas go during their 'off' years? When did bookmakers start using movable type? Why was the Great Wall of China built? How does the human brain create, store, and retrieve memories?

You may know the answers to these questions off the top of your head. If you are like most people, however, you find answers to tough questions like these by searching the Internet, visiting a library, or asking others for information. To put it simply, you perform research.

Whether or not you realize it, you probably already perform research in your everyday life. When your boss, your instructor, or a family member asks you a question that you don't know the answer to, you locate relevant information, analyze your findings, and share your results. Locating, analyzing, and sharing information are key steps in the research process. In this chapter, you will learn more about each step. By developing your research writing skills, you will prepare yourself to answer challenging questions.

Sometimes you perform research simply to satisfy your own curiosity. Once you find the answer to your questions, your search may be over, or it may lead to more in-depth research about that topic or about another topic. Other times, you want to communicate what you have learned to your peers, your family, your teachers, or even the editors of magazines, newspapers, or journals. In your personal life, you might simply discuss the topic with your friends. In more formal situations, such as in business and school, you communicate your findings in writing or in a presentation. A report may simply relay the results of your research in an organized manner. In contrast, a research paper presents an original thesis about a topic and develops that thesis with ideas and information gathered from a variety of sources. In a research paper, you use facts, interpretations, and opinions you encounter in your research to create a narrative and support an argument about your topic.

A student in an art history course might write a research paper about an artist's work or an aesthetic movement. A student in a psychology course might write a research paper about current findings in childhood development. No matter what field of study you pursue, you will most likely be asked to write a research paper in your college degree program and to apply the skills of research and writing in your career. For similar reasons as professionals, students do research to answer specific questions, to share their findings with others, to increase their understanding of challenging topics, and to strengthen their analytical skills.

Having to write a research paper may feel intimidating at first. After all, researching and writing a long paper requires a lot of time, effort, and organization. However, its challenges have rewards. The research process allows you to gain expertise on a topic of your choice. The writing process helps you to remember what you learned and to understand it on a deeper level. Thus writing a research paper can be a great opportunity to explore a topic that particularly interests you and to grow as a person. In this chapter, the topics include race relations and success as the focus of the theme-based readings.

Examples

Writing at Work

- Knowing how to write a good research paper is a valuable skill that will serve you well throughout your career. For example, laboratory technicians and information technology professionals do research to learn about the latest technological developments in their fields. A small business owner may conduct research to learn about the latest trends in his or her industry. A freelance writer will need to research his or her topics to write informed, up-to-date articles. Whether you are developing a new product, studying the best way to perform a procedure, discovering the challenges and opportunities in your field of employment, or learning about how to find a job, you will use research techniques to guide your exploration. Because effective communication is essential to any company, employers seek to hire people who can write clearly and professionally

EXERCISE 1

Think about the job of your dreams. How might you use research writing skills to perform that job? Create a list of ways in which strong researching, organizing, writing, and critical thinking skills could help you succeed at your dream job. How might these skills help you obtain that job?

Process Overview

How does a research paper grow from a folder of notes to a polished final draft? No two projects are identical, but most writers of research papers follow six basic steps.

Step 1: Choosing a Topic

To narrow the focus of your topic, brainstorm using Prewriting Techniques. Starting with your topic, formulate a specific research question—a broad, open-ended question that will guide your research—as well as propose a possible answer, or a working thesis.

Step 2: Planning and Scheduling

Before you start researching your topic, take time to plan your researching and writing schedule. Research projects can take days, weeks, or even months to complete.

Creating a schedule is a good way to ensure that you do not end up being overwhelmed by all the work you have to do as the deadline approaches. During this step of the process, it is also a good idea to plan

the resources and organizational tools you will use to keep yourself on track throughout the project. Flowcharts, calendars, and checklists can all help you stick to your schedule.

Step 3: Conducting Research

When going about your research, you will likely use a variety of sources—anything from books and periodicals to video presentations and in-person interviews. However, you should pay close attention to instructions; instructors often specify what kinds of sources they require for research papers. Some may assign you to only use scholarly (peer-reviewed) sources. For some assignments, your sources might include both primary sources and secondary sources. Primary sources provide firsthand information or raw data. For example, surveys, in-person interviews, historical documents, works of art, and works of literature are primary sources. Secondary sources, such as biographies, literary reviews, or news articles, include some analysis or interpretation of the information presented. As you conduct research, you should take detailed, careful notes about your discoveries. You should also evaluate the reliability of each source you find, especially sources that are not peer-reviewed.

Step 4: Organizing Your Research and Ideas

When your research is complete, you will organize your findings and decide which sources to cite in your paper. You will also have an opportunity to evaluate the evidence you have collected and determine whether it supports your thesis, or the focus of your paper. You may decide to adjust your thesis or conduct additional research to ensure that your thesis is well supported.

Step 5: Drafting Your Paper

Now you are ready to combine your research findings with your critical analysis of the results in a rough draft. You will incorporate source materials into your paper and discuss each source thoughtfully in relation to your thesis or purpose statement. It is important to pay close attention to standard conventions for citing sources in order to avoid plagiarism, which is the practice of using someone else's words without acknowledging the source. You will learn how to incorporate sources in your paper and avoid some of the most common pitfalls of attributing information.

Step 6: Revising and Editing Your Paper

In the final step of the research writing process, you will revise and polish your paper. You might reorganize your paper's structure or revise for unity and cohesion, ensuring that each element in your paper smoothly and logically flows into the next. You will also make sure that your paper uses an appropriate and consistent tone. Once you feel confident in the strength of your writing, you will edit your paper for proper spelling, grammar, punctuation, mechanics, and formatting. When you complete this final step, you will have transformed a simple idea or question into a thoroughly researched and well-written paper of which you can be proud.

Writing a good research paper takes time, thought, and effort. Although this assignment is challenging, it is manageable. Focusing on one step at a time will help you develop a thoughtful, informative, well-supported research paper.

Choosing Your Topic

Your first step is to choose a topic and then to develop research questions and a working thesis. It's impor-

tant to set aside adequate time for this part of the process. Fully exploring ideas will help you build a solid foundation for your paper.

Identifying Potential Topics

When you choose a topic for a research paper, you are making a major commitment. Your choice will help determine whether you enjoy the lengthy process of research and writing—and whether your final paper fulfills the assignment requirements. If you choose your topic hastily, you may later find it difficult to work with your topic. By taking your time and choosing carefully, you can ensure that this assignment is not only challenging but also rewarding.

Writers understand the importance of choosing a topic that fulfills the assignment requirements and fits the assignment's purpose and audience. Choosing a topic that genuinely interests you is also crucial. You instructor may provide a list of suggested topics or ask you to develop a topic on your own. You may find inspiration for topic ideas in your everyday life, by browsing magazines, or looking at lists of topics or themes in online databases such *Opposing Viewpoints*, *CQ Researcher Online*, *Bloom's Literary Reference Online*, and *Literature Resource Center*. In addition to Prewriting Techniques, use tools on the Web, such as Wridea, to help you brainstorm your topic.

You may benefit from identifying several possibilities before committing to one idea. Building a list of potential topics will help you to identify additional, related topics. In this chapter, you will follow a writer named Jorge, who is studying healthcare administration, as he prepares a research paper. Jorge was assigned to write a research paper on current debates about healthy living for an introductory course in health care. Although a general topic was selected for the students, Jorge had to decide which specific issues interested him. He brainstormed the following list of possibilities:

- Health Maintenance Organizations (HMOs) in the news
- Sexual education programs
- Hollywood and eating disorders
- Americans' access to public health information
- Medial portrayals of health care reform
- Depictions of drugs on television
- The effect of the Internet on mental health
- Popularized diets (such as low-carbohydrate diets)
- Fear of pandemics (bird flu, H1N1, SARS)
- Electronic entertainment and obesity
- Advertisements for prescription drugs
- Public education and disease prevention
- Race Relations
- Success

Focusing on a Topic

After identifying potential topics, you will need to evaluate your list and choose one topic to pursue as the focus of your research paper. Discussing your ideas with your instructor, peers, and tutors will help ensure

that you choose a manageable topic that fits the requirements of the assignment. The following are some questions to consider:

- Will you be able to find enough information about the topic?
- Can you take an arguable position on the topic?
- Is the topic too broad or too narrow for the scope of the assignment? If so, can you modify the topic so it is more manageable?

You will also need to narrow your topic so you can formulate a concise, manageable thesis about it. Most writers find that the topics they listed during brainstorming or idea mapping are broad—too broad for the scope of the assignment. Working with an overly broad topic, such as sexual education programs or popularized diets, can be frustrating and overwhelming. Each topic has so many facets that it would be impossible to cover them all in a college research paper. However, more specific choices, such as the pros and cons of sexual education in kids' television programs or the physical effects of the South Beach diet, are specific enough to write about without being so narrow that they can't sustain an entire research paper. A good research paper provides focused, in- depth information and analysis. If your topic is too broad, you will find it difficult to do more than skim the surface when you research it and write about it. To narrow your focus, explore your topic in writing. Also, conduct preliminary research, including discussing the topic with others.

You may be asking yourself, "How am I supposed to narrow my topic when I haven't even begun researching yet?" In fact, you may already know more than you realize. Review your list and identify your top two or three topics. Set aside some time to explore each one through Prewriting Techniques. Taking the time to focus on your topic may yield fresh angles. For example, Jorge knew that he was especially interested in the topic of diet fads, but he also knew that it was much too broad for his assignment.

He used freewriting to explore his thoughts so he could narrow his topic. Read Jorge's following ideas from freewriting.

> Our instructors are always saying that accurate, up-to-date information is crucial in encouraging people to make better choices about their health. I don't think the media does a very good job of providing that, though. Every time I go on the Internet, I see tons of ads for the latest 'miracle food'. One week it's acai berries, the next week it's green tea, and then six months later I see a news story saying all the fabulous claims about acai berries and green tea are overblown! Advice about weight loss is even worse. Think about all the diet books that are out there! Some say that a low-fat diet is best; some say you should cut down on carbs; and some make bizarre recommendations like eating half a grapefruit with every meal. I don't know how anybody is supposed to make an informed decision about what to eat when there's so much confusing, contradictory information. I bet even doctors, nurses, and dietitians have trouble figuring out what information is reliable and what is just the latest hype.

Another way that writers focus on a topic is by conducting preliminary research. Talk about your ideas with your classmates, friends, and family. Like freewriting, exploratory reading can help you identify interesting angles. Surfing the web is a good way to start. Find out what people are saying about your topic in online newspapers, magazines, blogs, and discussion boards. Keep in mind that the reliability of online sources varies greatly. In this exploratory phase of your research, you do not need to evaluate sources as closely as you will later; however, use common sense as you refine your paper topic. If you read a fascinating blog comment that gives you a new idea, search for some fully developed sources on that topic to see if

it's worth pursuing. If you are writing a research paper for a specialized course, look back through your notes and course activities to identify potential topics. Remind yourself of reading assignments and class discussions that especially engaged you. Doing so can help you identify topics to pursue. If the readings or viewings assigned in your course deal with your topic, then review and take notes on those materials. Librarians and instructors can help you to determine if there are enough sources available on your topic, or if there are so many sources that it would be wise to narrow your topic further.

Jorge's freewriting exercise helped him realize that the assigned topic of current debates about healthy living intersected with a few of his own interests—diet, nutrition, and obesity. Preliminary online research and discussions with his classmates strengthened his impression that many people are confused or misled by media coverage of these subjects. Jorge decided to focus his paper on a topic that had garnered a great deal of media attention—low-carbohydrate diets. He wanted to find out whether low-carbohydrate diets were as effective as their proponents claimed.

Examples

Writing at Work

At work, you may need to research a topic quickly to find general information. This information can be useful in understanding trends in a given industry or generating competition. For example, a company may research a competitor's prices and use the information when pricing their own product. You may find it useful to skim a variety of sources and take notes on your findings.

EXERCISE 2

Set a timer for five minutes. Use Prewriting Techniques to create a list of topics you would be interested in researching for a paper about the influence of the Internet on social networking. Which social networking sites do you and your friends use? Do you closely follow a particular social media website, such as Twitter? Would you like to learn more about a certain industry, such as online dating? Would you like to learn more about people's use of the Internet to build support for social causes? List as many ideas related to this topic as you can.

EXERCISE 3

Choose two topics from the list you created above. Spend five minutes freewriting about each of these topics. Choose the topic that you enjoyed freewriting about the most. Then, review your freewriting to identify possible areas of focus.

EXERCISE 4

Collaborative exercise: Swap lists of potential topics with a classmate. Select one or two topics on your classmate's list about which you would like to learn more. Explain to your classmate why you find those topics interesting. Ask your classmate which of the topics on your list s/he would like to learn more about and why.

Determining Paths of Inquiry

Your freewriting and preliminary research have helped you choose a focused, manageable topic for your research paper. To work with your topic successfully, you will need to determine what exactly you want to learn about it—and what you want to say about it. Before you begin conducting in-depth research, you will further define your focus by developing research questions and a working thesis.

By forming research questions about your topic, you are setting a goal for your research. Determine your main question—the primary focus of your paper—and several sub-questions that you will need to research in more depth to answer your main question. Your main research question should be substantial enough to form the guiding principle of your paper—but focused enough to guide your research. A strong research question requires you not only to find information but also to put together different pieces of information, interpret and analyze them, and figure out what you think. As you consider potential research questions, ask yourself whether they would be too hard or too easy to answer. Review the results of your prewriting, and skim through your preliminary research. From these, write both simple, factual questions and more complex questions that would require analysis and interpretation to answer.

Below are the research questions Jorge will use to focus his research. Notice that his main research question has no obvious, straightforward answer. Jorge will need to research his sub-questions, which address narrower topics, to answer his main question.

- Topic: Low-carbohydrate diets
- Main question: Are low-carbohydrate diets as effective as they have been portrayed to be by media

sources?

- Sub-questions:
  - Who can benefit from following a low-carbohydrate diet?
  - What are the supposed advantages to following a low-carbohydrate diet?
  - When did low-carbohydrate diets become a 'hot' topic in the media?
  - Where do average consumers get information about diet and nutrition?
  - Why has the low-carb approach received so much media attention?
  - How do low-carb diets work?

A working thesis concisely states a writer's initial answer to the main research question. It does not merely state a fact or present a subjective opinion. Instead, it expresses a debatable idea or claim that you hope to prove through research. Your working thesis is called a working thesis for a reason: it is subject to modification. You may adapt your thinking in light of your research findings. Let your working thesis serve as a guide to your research, but do not hesitate to change your path as you learn about your topic.

One way to determine your working thesis is to consider how you would complete statements that begin, "I believe…" or "My opinion is…". These first-person phrases are useful starting points even though you may eventually omit them from sentences in your research paper. Generally, formal research papers use an assertive, objective voice and, therefore, do not include first-person pronouns. Some readers associate *I* with informal, subjective writing. Some readers think the first-person point of view diminishes the impact of a claim. For these reasons, some instructors will tell you not to use *I* in research papers.

Jorge began his research with a strong point of view based on his preliminary writing and research. Read his working thesis statement, below, which presents the point he will argue. Notice how it states Jorge's tentative answer to his research question.

- Main Research Question: Are low-carb diets as effective as they have sometimes been portrayed to be by the mass media?
- Working Thesis Statement: Low-carb diets do not live up to the media hype surrounding them.

Examples

Writing at Work

Before you begin a new project at work, you may have to develop a project summary document that states the purpose of the project, explains why it would be a wise use of company resources, and briefly outlines the steps involved in completing the project. This type of document is similar to a research proposal for an academic purpose. Both define and limit a project, explain its value, discuss how to proceed, and identify what resources you will use.

EXERCISE 5

Using the topic you have selected, write your main research question and at least four sub-questions. Check that your main research question is appropriately complex for your assignment.

EXERCISE 6

Write a working thesis statement that presents your preliminary answer to the research question you wrote above. Think about whether your working thesis statement presents an idea or claim that could be supported or refuted by evidence from research.

Managing Your Research

Step 1 "Choosing a Topic," helped you begin to plan the content of your research paper—your topic, research questions, and preliminary thesis. It is equally important to plan out the process of researching and writing the paper. Although some types of writing assignments can be completed relatively quickly, developing a good research paper is a complex process that takes time and attention. Careful planning helps ensure that you will keep your project running smoothly and produce your best work. Think about how you will complete each step and what resources you will use. Resources may include anything from online databases and digital technologies to interview subjects and writing tutors.

Scheduling Research and Writing

Set up a project schedule that shows when you will complete each step. To develop your schedule, use a calendar and work backward from the date your final draft is due. Generally, it is wise to divide half of the available time on the research phase of the project and half on the writing phase. For example, if you have a month to work, plan for two weeks for each phase. If you have a full semester, plan to begin research early and to start writing by the middle of the term. You might think that no one really works that far ahead, but try it. You will probably be pleased with the quality of your work and with the reduction in your stress level.

Plan your schedule realistically, and consider other commitments that may sometimes take precedence. A business trip or family visit may mean that you are unable to work on the research project for a few days. Make the most of the time you have available. Plan for unexpected interruptions, but keep in mind that a short time away from the project may help you come back to it with renewed enthusiasm. Another strategy many writers find helpful is to finish each day's work at a point when the next task is an easy one. That makes it easier to start again.

As you plan, break down major steps into smaller tasks if necessary. For example, Step 3, Conducting Research, involves locating potential sources, evaluating their usefulness and reliability, reading, and taking notes. Defining these smaller tasks makes the project more manageable by giving you concrete goals to achieve.

Jorge had six weeks to complete his research project. Working backward from a due date of May 2, he mapped out a schedule for completing his research by early April so that he would have ample time to write. Jorge chose to write his schedule in his weekly planner to help keep himself on track. Review Jorge's schedule. Key target dates are shaded. Note that Jorge planned times to use available resources by visiting the library and writing center and by meeting with his instructor.

Sample Schedule for Writing a Research Paper

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
March 20	21	22 Choose Topic	23 Preliminary research	24 Write research questions and working thesis	25 Write research proposal	26
27	28 Research proposal due	29 Look for sources online	30 Library	31 Evaluate sources; make source cards	April 1 Take notes →	2 →
3 →	4 →	5 Finish note cards	6 Organize notes →	7 →	8 Write outline	9 →
10	11 Outline due	12 Write draft →	13 →	14 →	15 *Off - Trip to NYC*	16 *Off - Trip to NYC*
17	18 Conference with Prof. Habib 2:00	19 Finish writing draft	20	21 Revise draft →	22 →	23 Library?
24	25	26 Finish revising draft	27 Edit draft	28 Writing Center 4:30	29 Finish editing draft	30 Create Works Cited page
May 1	2 Final draft due	3	4	5	6	7

Staying Organized

Although setting up a schedule is relatively easy, sticking to one is challenging. Even if you are the rare person who never procrastinates, unforeseen events may interfere with your ability to complete tasks on time. A self-imposed deadline may slip your mind despite your best intentions. Organizational tools (e.g., calendars, checklists, note cards, software) and setting up a buddy system with a classmate can help you stay on track.

Throughout your project, organize both your time and resources systematically. Review your schedule frequently and check your progress. It helps to post your schedule in a place where you will see it every day. Email systems usually include a calendar feature where you can record tasks, arrange to receive daily reminders, and check off completed tasks. Electronic devices such as smartphones have similar features. There are online task-management tools you may use for free on the Web, such as Google Tasks, HiTask, Nirvana, and Remember the Milk. Some people enjoy using the most up-to-date technology to help them stay organized. Other people prefer simple methods, such as crossing off items on a checklist. The key to staying organized is finding a system you like enough to use daily. The particulars of the method are not important as long as you are consistent.

Organize project documents in a binder or digital folder. Label these clearly. Use note cards, an electronic document, an online database folder (this will require you to set up a free account on the database), or free downloadable software such as Zotero to record bibliographical information for sources you want to use in your paper. Tracking this information during the research process will save you time when Creating a List of References.

Example

Writing at Work

When you create a project schedule at work, you set target dates for completing certain tasks and identify the resources you plan to use on the project. It is important to build in some flexibility. Materials may not be received on time because of a shipping delay. An employee on your team may be called away to work on a higher-priority project. Essential equipment may malfunction. You should always plan for the unexpected.

EXERCISE 7

Working backward from the date your final draft is due, create a project schedule. You may choose to write a sequential list of tasks, record tasks on a calendar, or set up your project's timeline using an online task-management tool, such as Google Tasks, HiTask, Nirvana, and Remember the Milk. Select a format you think will help you stay on track from day to day. Use a calendar accessible on your smartphone, record your schedule in a weekly planner, post it by your desk, or set your email or task-management tool to send you reminders. Review your schedule to be sure you have broken each step into smaller tasks and assigned a target completion date to each key task. Review your target dates to make sure they are realistic.

Allow more time than you think you will need.

Anticipating Challenges

Do any of these scenarios sound familiar? You have identified a book that would be a great resource for your project, but it is currently checked out of the library. You planned to interview a subject-matter expert on your topic, but she calls to cancel. You have begun writing your draft, but now you realize that you will need to modify your thesis and conduct additional research. Or, you have finally completed your draft when your computer crashes, and days of hard work disappear in an instant. These troubling situations are all too common. No matter how carefully you plan your schedule, you may encounter a glitch or setback. Managing your project effectively means anticipating potential problems, taking steps to minimize them where possible, and allowing time in your schedule to handle any setbacks.

Many times a situation becomes a problem due only to lack of planning. For example, if a book is checked out of your college's library, you can request it through interlibrary loan to have it delivered to your campus in a few days. Alternatively, you might locate another equally useful source. If you have allowed enough time for research, a brief delay will not become a major setback.

You can manage other potential problems by staying organized and maintaining a take-charge attitude. Take the time to save a backup copy of your work on a portable flash drive. Or, instead of using the hard drive of one computer to save your work, create your word-processing files using cloud storage such as Dropbox or Google Drive, which you can access with a username and password from any computer with an Internet connection. If you don't have a reliable Internet connection off campus, then visit a computer lab on campus or a public library with desktop computers, or you can go to a coffee shop with a laptop; it is important to find a space where you can concentrate and that is open during times that work with your schedule. As you conduct research, maintain detailed records and notes of sources—doing so will make citing sources in your draft infinitely easier. If you run into difficulties with your research or your writing, ask your instructor or a librarian for help, or meet with a peer or writing tutor.

Example

Writing at Work

In the workplace, documents prepared at the beginning of a project often include a detailed plan for risk management. When you manage a project, it makes sense to anticipate and prepare for potential setbacks. For example, to roll out a new product line, a software development company must strive to complete tasks on a schedule in order to meet the new product release date. The project manager may need to adjust the project plan if one or more tasks fall behind schedule.

EXERCISE 8

Identify five potential problems you might encounter in the process of researching and writing your paper. Write them on a separate sheet of paper. For each problem, write at least one strategy for solving the problem or minimizing its effect on your project.

Gathering Your Sources

Now that you have planned your research project, you are ready to begin the research. This phase can be both exciting and challenging. As you read this section, you will learn ways to locate sources efficiently, so you will have enough time to read the sources, take notes, and think about how to use them in your research paper. In addition to finding sources, research entails determining the relevance and reliability of sources, organizing findings, as well as deciding whether and how to use sources in your paper. The technological advances of the past few decades—particularly the rise of online media—mean that, as a twenty-first-century student, you have countless sources of information available at your fingertips. But how can you tell whether a source is reliable? This section will discuss strategies for finding and evaluating sources so that you can be a media-savvy researcher.

Depending on your assignment, you will likely search for sources by using:

- Internet search engines to locate sources freely available on the web.
- A library's online catalog to identify print books, ebooks, periodicals, DVDs, and other items in the library's collection. The catalog will help you find journals by title, but it will not list the journal's articles by title or author.

- Online databases to locate articles, ebooks, streaming videos, images, and other electronic resources. These databases can also help you identify articles in print periodicals.

Your instructor, as well as writing tutors and librarians, at your college can help you determine which of these methods will best fit your project and learn to use the search tools available to you. You can also find research guides and tutorials on library websites and *YouTube* channels that can help you identify appropriate research tools and learn how to use them. As you gather sources, you will need to examine them with a critical eye. Smart researchers continually ask themselves two questions: "Is this source relevant to my purpose?" and "Is this source reliable?" The first question will help you avoid wasting valuable time reading sources that stray too far from your specific topic and research questions. The second question will help you find accurate, trustworthy sources.

Example

Writing at Work

Businesses, government organizations, and nonprofit organizations produce published materials that range from brief advertisements and brochures to lengthy, detailed reports. In many cases, producing these publications requires research. A corporation's annual report may include research about economic or industry trends. A charitable organization may use information from research in materials sent to potential donors. Regardless of the industry you work in, you may be asked to assist in developing materials for publication. Often, incorporating research in these documents can make them more effective in informing or persuading readers.

Identifying Primary and Secondary Sources

When you chose a paper topic and determined your research questions, you conducted preliminary research to stimulate your thinking. Your research plan included some general ideas for how to go about your research—for instance, interviewing an expert in the field or analyzing the content of popular magazines. You may even have identified a few potential sources. Now it is time to conduct a more focused, systematic search for informative primary and secondary sources. Writers classify research resources in two categories: primary sources and secondary sources.

Primary sources are direct, firsthand sources of information or data. For example, if you were writing a paper about the First Amendment right to freedom of speech, the text of the First Amendment in the Bill of Rights would be a primary source. Other primary sources include the following:

- Data
- Works of visual art
- Literary texts
- Historical documents such as diaries or letters

- Autobiographies, interviews, or other personal accounts

Secondary sources discuss, interpret, analyze, consolidate, or otherwise rework information from primary sources. In researching a paper about the First Amendment, you might read articles about legal cases that involved First Amendment rights, or editorials expressing commentary on the First Amendment. These sources would be considered secondary sources because they are one step removed from the primary source of information. The following are examples of secondary sources:

- Literary criticism
- Biographies
- Reviews
- Documentaries
- News reports

Your topic and purpose determine whether you must cite both primary and secondary sources in your paper. Ask yourself which sources are most likely to provide the information that will answer your research questions. If you are writing a research paper about reality television shows, you will need to use some reality shows as a primary source, but secondary sources, such as a reviewer's critique, are also important. If you are writing about the health effects of nicotine, you will probably want to read the published results of scientific studies, but secondary sources, such as magazine articles discussing the outcome of a recent study, may also be helpful.

Some sources could be considered primary or secondary sources, depending on the writer's purpose for using them. For instance, if a writer's purpose is to inform readers about how the No Child Left Behind (NCLB) legislation has affected elementary education in the United States, then a *Time* magazine article on the subject would be a secondary source. However, suppose the writer's purpose is to analyze how the news media has portrayed the effects of NCLB. In that case, articles about the legislation in news magazines like *Time*, *Newsweek*, and *US News & World Report* would be primary sources. They provide firsthand examples of the media coverage the writer is analyzing.

Once you have thought about what kinds of sources are most likely to help you answer your research questions, you may begin your search for sources. The challenge here is to conduct your search both efficiently and thoroughly. On the one hand, effective writers use strategies to help them find the sources that are most relevant and reliable while steering clear of sources that will not be useful; on the other hand, they are open to pursuing different lines of inquiry that come up along the way than those that seemed relevant at the start of research. As a process of discovery, good research requires critical thinking about, and often revising of, writers' plans and ideas.

Reading Popular and Scholarly Periodicals

When you search for periodicals, be sure to distinguish among different types. Mass-market publications, such as newspapers and popular magazines, differ from scholarly publications in their accessibility, audience, and purpose. Newspapers and magazines are written for a broader audience than scholarly journals. Their content is usually quite accessible and easy to read. Trade magazines that target readers within a particular industry may presume the reader has background knowledge, but these publications are still

reader-friendly for a broader audience. Their purpose is to inform and, often, to entertain or persuade readers as well.

Scholarly or academic journals are written for a much smaller and more expert audience. The creators of these publications are experts in the subject and assume that most of their readers are already familiar with the main topic of the journal. The target audience is also highly educated. Informing is the primary purpose of a scholarly journal. While a journal article may advance an agenda or advocate a position, the content will still be presented in an objective style and formal tone. Entertaining readers with breezy comments and splashy graphics is not a priority.

Because of these differences, scholarly journals are more challenging to read. That doesn't mean you should avoid them. On the contrary, they can provide in-depth information unavailable elsewhere. Because knowledgeable professionals carefully review the content before publication in a process called "peer-review," scholarly journals are far more reliable than much of the information available in popular media. Seek out academic journals along with other resources. Just be prepared to spend a little more time processing the information.

Example

Writing at Work

Periodicals databases are not just for students writing research papers. They also provide a valuable service to workers in various fields. The owner of a small business might use a database such as *Business Source Premiere* to find articles on management, finance, or trends within a particular industry. Health care professionals might consult databases such as *MedLine* to research a particular disease or medication. Regardless of what career path you plan to pursue, periodicals databases can be a useful tool for researching specific topics and identifying periodicals that will help you keep up with the latest news in your industry.

Using Sources from the Open Web

When faced with the challenge of writing a research paper, some students rely on popular search engines, such as Google, as their only source of information. Typing a keyword or phrase into a search engine instantly pulls up links to dozens, hundreds, or even thousands of related websites—what could be easier? While the Web is useful for retrieving information, you should be wary of limiting your research to sources from the open Web.

For example, "Wikis", including online encyclopedias, such as *Wikipedia*, and community- driven question-and-answer sites, such *Yahoo Answers*, are very easy to access on the Web. They are free, and they appear among the first few results when using a search engine. Because these sites are created and revised by a large community of users, they cover thousands of topics, and many are written in an informal and straightforward writing style. However, these sites may not have a reliable control system for

researching, writing, and reviewing posts. While wikis may be a good starting point for finding other, more trustworthy, more fully developed sources, usually they should not be your final sources.

Despite its apparent convenience, researching on the open Web has the following drawbacks to consider:

- Results do not consider the reliability of the sources. The first few hits that appear in search results often include sites whose content is not always reliable. Search engines cannot tell you which sites have accurate information.
- Results may be influenced by popularity or advertisers. Search engines find websites that people visit often and list the results in order of popularity rather than relevance to your topic.
- Results may be too numerous for you to use. Search engines often return an overwhelming number of results. Because it is difficult to filter results for quality or relevance, the most useful sites may be buried deep within your search results. It is not realistic for you to examine every site.
- Results do not include many of the library's high quality electronic resources that are only available through password-protected databases or on campus.
- Because anyone can publish anything on the Web, the quality of the information varies greatly and you will need to evaluate web resources carefully.

Nevertheless, a search on the open Web can provide a helpful overview of a topic and may pull up genuinely useful sources. You may find specialized search engines recommended on your college library's website. For example, http://www.usa.gov will search for information on United States government websites. If you are working at your personal computer, use the Bookmarks or Favorites feature of your web browser to save and organize sites that look promising.

To get the most out of a search engine, use strategies to make your search more efficient. Depending on the specific search engine you use, the following options may be available:

- Limit results to websites that have been updated within a particular time frame.
- Limit results by language or region.
- Limit results to scholarly works available online. Google Scholar is an example.
- Limit results by file type.
- Limit results to a particular site or domain type, such as .edu (school and university sites) or .gov (government sites). This is a quick way to filter out commercial sites that often lead to less objective results.

Types and Formats of Library Sources

Information accessible through a college library comes in a variety of types and formats of sources. Books, DVDS, and various types of periodicals can be found in physical form at the library. Many of these same materials are available in electronic format in the form of ebooks, electronic journal articles, and streaming videos. Your college library may have some resources in both print and electronic formats while others may be available exclusively in one format. The following lists different types of resources available at college libraries. In addition to the resources noted, library holdings may include primary sources such as historical documents, letters, diaries, and images.

Types of Sources

- Reference works provide a summary of information about a particular topic. Almanacs, encyclopedias, atlases, medical reference books, and scientific abstracts are examples of reference works. In most cases, reference books may not be checked out of a library. Note that reference works are many steps removed from original primary sources and are often brief, so these should be used only as a starting point when you gather information.
  - Examples: *The World Almanac and Book of Facts 2010*; *Diagnostic and Statistical Manual*, published by the American Psychiatric
- Nonfiction books provide in-depth coverage of a topic. Trade books, biographies, and how-to guides are usually written for a general audience. Scholarly books and scientific studies are usually written for an audience that has specialized knowledge of a topic.
  - Examples: *The Low-Carb Solution: A Slimmer You in 30 Days*; *Carbohydrates, Fats and Proteins: Exploring the Relationship Between Macronutrient Ratios and Health Outcomes*.
- Periodicals are published at regular intervals—daily, weekly, monthly, or quarterly. Newspapers, magazines, and academic journals are different kinds of periodicals. Some periodicals provide articles on subjects of general interest while others are more specialized.
  - Examples: *The New York Times*; *PC Magazine*; *JAMA: The Journal of the American Medical Association*.
- Government publications by federal, state, and local agencies publish information on a variety of topics. Government publications include reports, legislation, court documents, public records, statistics, studies, guides, programs, and forms.
  - Examples: *The Census 2000 Profile*; *The Business Relocation Package*, published by the Philadelphia Chamber of Commerce.
- Business publications and publications by nonprofit organizations are designed to market a product, provide background about the organization, provide information on topics connected to the organization, or promote a cause. These publications include reports, newsletters, advertisements, manuals, brochures, and other print documents.
  - Examples: a company's instruction manual explaining how to use a specific software program; a news release published by the Sierra
- Documentaries are the moving-image equivalent of nonfiction books. They cover a range of topics and can be introductory or scholarly.Newsreels can be primary sources about then-current events. Feature- length programs or episodes of a series can be secondary sources about historical phenomena or life stories. You may view a documentary in amovie theater, on television, on an open website, or in a subscription- accessed database such as Films on Demand.
  - Examples: *Freedom Riders*, directed by Stanley Nelson; *Finding Your Roots*, with Henry Louis Gates, Jr.

As you gather information, strive for a balance of accessible, easy-to-read sources and more specialized, challenging sources. Relying solely on lightweight books and articles written for a general audience will drastically limit the range of useful, substantial information. However, restricting oneself to dense, scholarly works could make the research process overwhelming. An effective strategy for unfamiliar topics is to

begin your reading with works written for the general public, and then move to more scholarly works as you learn more about your topic.

Using Databases

While library catalogs can help you locate print and electronic book-length sources, as well as some types of non-print holdings, such as CDs, DVDs, and audiobooks, the best way to locate shorter sources, such as articles in magazines, newspapers, and journals, is to search online databases accessible through a portal to which your college's library subscribes. In many cases, the full texts of articles are available from these databases. In other instances, articles are indexed, meaning there is a summary and publication information about the article, but the full text is not immediately available in the database; instead, you may find the indexed article in a print periodical in your college's library holdings, or you can submit an online request for an interlibrary loan, and a librarian will email a digitized copy of the article to you.

When searching for sources using a password-protected portals, it's important to understand where and how to look up your topic. On its homepage, the LAVC Library, contains a general search bar called the "One Search" tool, which allows you to search many (but not all) databases at once. If you don't find useful sources using the portal's general search bar, then you may retrieve better results by going to specific databases within the portal. Additionally, for specific guidance on using a password-protected portal to find sources for a literary research paper, watch videos in the GPC Libraries' "Literature Research Series" on *YouTube*. As these tutorials show, on a portal such as GALILEO, you can choose specific databases by going to "Databases A-Z" or "Databases by Subject." Databases may be general, including many types of resources on a broad range of subjects, or they may be specialized, focusing on a particular format of resource or a specific subject area. The following list describes some commonly used indexes and databases accessible through libraries' research portals.

- Academic Search Complete includes articles on a wide variety of topics published in various forums, both scholarly and popular.
- Opposing Viewpoints includes articles, statistics, and recommended websites related to a wide range of controversial issues.
- CQ Researcher Online has full-text articles about issues in the news
- Lexis Nexis has articles from newspapers and other periodicals, news transcripts, and business and legal information.
- Business Source Complete comprises business-related content from magazines, journals, and trade publications.
- Films on Demand has streaming video of documentaries and historic newsreels.
- Artstor has high-quality images of works of visual art of various media, as well as information on the creators, subjects, materials, and holdings of artworks.
- JSTOR includes full-text scholarly secondary sources, including books and articles, as well as primary sources on a wide variety of topics, mostly in the humanities and social sciences.
- History Reference Center has full-text articles from reference books, encyclopedias, and scholarly journals, as well as images and streaming videos on most of the world's cultures and time periods.
- Literature Resource Center includes full-text print and electronic sources relevant to literature, such as biographies of authors, reviews of works, overviews of plots and characters, analyses of themes,

and scholarly criticism.
- Science and Technology Collection has full-text articles from journals in various scientific and technical fields.
- MEDLINE, Proquest Nursing, and Consumer Health Source contain articles in medicine and health.

Sometimes you will know exactly which source you are looking for, for example, if your instructor or another writer references that source. Having the author (if available), title, and other information about the source included in an end-of-text citation will help you to find that source.

As you go through the process of gathering sources, you will likely need to find specific sources referenced by others to build your list of useful sources; use the steps above to help you do this. However, keep in mind that, especially when you first start researching, you will also need to find sources about your topic having little or no idea what sources are out there. Therefore, rather than authors and titles, you will need to enter keywords, or subject search terms, related to your topic. The next section instructs you on how to do that.

Entering Search Terms

One of the most important steps in conducting research is to "learn how to speak database," as the sock puppet explains to the student in this video tutorial, titled "How to Use a Database," created by the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga (UTC) Library. As the video shows, to find reliable sources efficiently, you must identify single words or phrases that represent the major concepts of your research—that is, your keywords, or subject search terms. Your starting points for developing search terms are the topic and the research questions you identify, but you should also think of synonyms for those terms. Furthermore, as you begin searching for sources, you should notice additional terms in the subjects listed in the records of your results. These subjects will help you find additional sources.

As Jorge used his library's catalog and databases, he worked to refine his search by making note of subjects associated with sources about low-carb dieting. His search helped him to identify the following additional terms and related topics to research:

- Low-carbohydrate diet
- Insulin resistance reducing diets
- Glycemic index
- Dietary carbohydrates

Searching the library's online resources is similar in many ways to searching the Internet, except some library catalogs and databases require specific search techniques. For example, some databases require that you use Boolean operators to connect your search terms. In other databases, Boolean operators are optional, but can still help you get better search results. Here are some of the ways you can use Boolean operators:

- Connect keywords with AND to limit results to citations that include both keywords—for example, carbohydrates AND diet.
- Connect keywords with OR to search for results that contain either of two terms. For example,

searching for diet OR nutrition locates articles that use “diet” as a keyword as well as articles that use “nutrition” as a keyword.
- Connect keywords with NOT to search for the first word without the second. This can help you eliminate irrelevant results based on words that are similar to your search term. For example, searching for obesity NOT childhood locates materials on obesity but excludes materials on childhood obesity.
- Enclose a phrase in quotation marks to search for an exact phrase, such as “morbid obesity.”

Many databases offer tools for improving your search. Make your search in library catalogs and databases more effective by using the following tips:

- Use limiters (often located on the left side of the search results) to further refine your results after searching.
- Change the sort of your results so the order of the articles best fits your needs. Sorting by date allows you to put the most recent or the oldest articles at the top of the results list. Other types of sorts include relevance, alphabetical by author’s name or alphabetical by article title.
- Use the Advanced Search functions of your database to further refine your results or to create more complex combinations of search terms.
- Use the Help section of the database to find more search strategies that apply to that particular database.

Here is an example of using Boolean operators in an Advanced Search:

Consulting a Reference Librarian

Sifting through library stacks and database search results to find the information you need can be like trying to find a needle in a haystack. Knowing the right keywords can sometimes make all the difference in conducting a successful search. If you are not sure how you should begin your search, or if your search is yielding too many, or too few, results, then you are not alone. Many students find this process challenging, although it does get easier with experience. One way to learn better search strategies is to consult a reference librarian and watch online tutorials that research experts have created to help you. If you have trouble finding sources on a topic, consult a librarian.

Reference librarians are intimately familiar with the systems that libraries use to organize and classify information. They can help you locate a particular book in the library stacks, steer you toward useful reference works, and provide tips on how to use databases and other electronic research tools. Take the time to see what resources you can find on your own, but if you encounter difficulties, ask for help. Many academic librarians are available for online chatting, texting, and emailing as well as face-to-face reference consultations. To make the most of your reference consultation, be prepared to explain, to the librarian, the assignment and your timeline as well as your research questions and ideas for keywords. Because they

are familiar with the resources available, librarians may be able to recommend specific resources that fit your needs and tailor your keywords to the search tools you are using.

EXERCISE 9

At the Library of Congress's website, search for results on a few terms related to your topic. Review your search results to identify six to eight additional terms you might use when you search for sources using your college library's catalog and databases.

EXERCISE 10

Visit your library's website or consult with a reference librarian to determine which databases would be useful for your research. Depending on your topic, you may rely on a general database, a specialized database for a particular subject area, or both. Identify at least two relevant databases. Conduct a keyword search in these databases to find potentially relevant sources on your topic. Also, search your college's online library catalog. If the catalog or database you are using provides abstracts of sources, then read them to determine how useful the sources are likely to be. Print out, email to yourself, or save your search results.

EXERCISE 11

In your list of results, identify three to five sources to review more closely. If the full text is available online, set aside time to open, save, and read it. If not, use the "Find It" tool to see if the source is available through your college's library. Visit the library to locate any sources you need that are only available in print. If the source is not available directly through your school's library, then use the library's online tool to request an interlibrary loan of the source: librarians will send the source in digital form to your email address for you to open and save, or they will send it in print form to your campus library for you to check out.

Evaluating and Processing Your Sources

Determining Whether a Source Is Relevant

At this point in your research process, you may have identified dozens of potential sources. It is easy for writers to get so caught up in checking out books and printing out articles that they forget to ask themselves how they will use these resources in their research. Now is a good time to get a little ruthless. Reading and taking notes takes time and energy, so you will want to focus on the most relevant sources.

You may benefit from seeking out sources that are current, or up to date. Depending on your topic, sources may become outdated relatively soon after publication, or they may remain useful for years. For instance, online social networking sites have evolved rapidly over the past few years. An article published in 2002 about this topic will not provide current information. On the other hand, a research paper on elementary education practices might refer to studies published decades ago by influential child psychologists. When using websites for research, look on the web-page to see when the site was last updated. Many non-functioning links are a sign that a website is not regularly updated. Do not be afraid to ask your instructor, tutors, and librarians for suggestions if you find that many of your most relevant sources are not especially reliable, or that your most reliable sources are not relevant.

To weed through your collection of books and articles, skim their contents. Read quickly with your research questions and subtopics in mind. The following tips explain how to skim to get a quick sense of what topics are covered. If a book or article is not especially relevant, put it aside. You can always come back to it later if you need to.

- Tips for Skimming Books

    1. Read the book cover and table of contents for a broad overview of the topics covered.
    2. Use the index to locate more specific topics and see how thoroughly they are covered.
    3. Flip through the book and look for subtitles or key terms that correspond to your research.

- Tips for Skimming Articles

    1. Journal articles often begin with an abstract or summary of the contents. Read it to determine the article's relevance to your research.
    2. Skim the introduction and conclusion for summary material.
    3. Skim through subheadings and text features such as sidebars.
    4. Look for keywords related to your topic.

Determining Whether a Source Is Reliable

All information sources are not created equal. Sources can vary greatly in terms of how carefully they are researched, written, edited, and reviewed for accuracy. Common sense will help you identify obviously questionable sources, such as tabloids that feature tales of alien abductions, or personal websites with glaring typos. Sometimes, however, a source's reliability—or lack of it—is not so obvious. To evaluate your research sources, you will use critical thinking skills consciously and deliberately.

Sources you encounter will be written for distinct purposes and with particular audiences in mind, which may account for differences such as the following:

- How thoroughly writers cover a given topic
- How carefully writers research and document facts How editors review the work
- What biases or agendas affect the content

A journal article written for an academic audience for the purpose of expanding scholarship in a given field will take an approach quite different from a magazine feature written to inform a general audience. Textbooks, hard news articles, and websites approach a subject from different angles as well. To some extent, the type of source provides clues about its overall depth and reliability. Use the following descriptions of types of sources to help you determine the quality of your sources.

- High Quality Sources provide the most in-depth information. They are written and reviewed by subject-matter experts. Examples: books published by University presses and articles in scholarly journals, such as *Mosaic: A Journal for the Interdisciplinary Study of Literature*; trade books and magazines geared toward an educated general audience, such as *Smithsonian Magazine*; government documents; documents by reputable organizations, such as universities and research institutes.
- Varied Quality Sources are often useful; however, they do not cover subjects in as much depth as high-quality sources, and they are not always rigorously researched and reviewed. Some, such as popular magazine articles or company brochures, may be written to market a product or a cause. Textbooks and reference books are usually reliable, but they may not cover a topic in great depth. Use them with caution.Examples: news stories and feature articles (print or online) from reputable newspapers, magazines, or organizations, such as *The New York Times* or the *Public Broadcasting Service*; popular magazine articles, which may or may not be carefully researched and fact checked; documents by businesses and nonprofit organizations.
- Questionable Sources are often written primarily to attract a large readership or to present the author's opinions, and they are not subject to careful review. Generally, avoid using these as final sources. If you want to use a source that fits into this category, then carefully evaluate it using criteria below. Examples: loosely regulated or unregulated media content, such as Internet discussion boards, blogs, free online encyclopedias, talk shows, television news shows with obvious political biases, personal websites, and chat rooms.

Even when you are using a type of source that is generally reliable, you will still need to evaluate the author's credibility and the publication itself on an individual basis. To examine the author's credibility—that is, how much you can believe of what the author has to say—examine his or her credentials. What career experience or academic study shows that the author has the expertise to write about this topic? Keep in mind that expertise in one field is no guarantee of expertise in another, unrelated area. For instance, an author may have an advanced degree in physiology, but this credential is not a valid qualification for writing about psychology. Check credentials carefully.

Just as important as the author's credibility is the publication's overall reputability. Reputability refers to a source's standing and reputation as a respectable, reliable source of information. An established and well-known newspaper, such as *The New York Times* or *The Wall Street Journal*, is more reputable than a col-

lege newspaper put out by comparatively inexperienced students. A website that is maintained by a well-known, respected organization and regularly updated is more reputable than one created by an unknown author or group.

Whenever you consult a source, always think carefully about the author's or authors' purpose in presenting the information. Few sources present facts completely objectively. In some cases, the source's content and tone are significantly influenced by biases or hidden agendas. Bias refers to favoritism or prejudice toward a particular person or group. For instance, an author may be biased against a certain political party and present information in a way that subtly—or not so subtly—makes that organization look bad. Bias can lead an author to present facts selectively, edit quotations to misrepresent someone's words, and distort information. Hidden agendas are goals that are not immediately obvious but influence how an author presents the facts. For instance, an article about the role of beef in a healthy diet would be questionable if it were written by a representative of the beef industry—or by the president of an animal- rights organization. In both cases, the author would likely have a hidden agenda.

As Jorge conducted his research, he read several research studies in which scientists found significant benefits to following a low-carbohydrate diet. He also noticed that many studies were sponsored by a foundation associated with the author of a popular series of low-carbohydrate diet books. Jorge read these studies with a critical eye, knowing that a hidden agenda might be shaping the researchers' conclusions.

In sum, to evaluate a source, you should consider not only how current the source is but also criteria such as the type of source, its intended purpose and audience, the author's (or authors') qualifications, the publication's reputation, any indications of bias or hidden agendas, and the overall professionalism of the source's language, ideas, and design. You should consider these criteria as well as your overall impressions of sources' quality. Read carefully, and notice how well authors present and support their statements. Stay actively engaged—do not simply accept sources' words as truth.

Example

Writing at Work

The critical thinking skills you use to evaluate research sources as a student are equally valuable when you conduct research on the job. If you follow certain periodicals or websites, you have probably identified publications that consistently provide reliable information. Reading blogs and online discussion groups is a great way to identify new trends and hot topics in a particular field, but these sources should not be your final sources if you're doing substantial research.

EXERCISE 12

Choose a source you found that you think is relevant but you're unsure if it's reliable. Answer the following questions about the source:

1. Can you establish that the author is credible and the publication is reputable?
2. Does the author support ideas with specific facts and details that are carefully documented? Is the source of the author's information clear? When you use secondary sources, look for sources that are not too removed from primary research.
3. Does the author leave out any information that you would expect to see in a discussion of this topic?
4. Does the source include any factual errors or instances of faulty logic?
5. Do the author's conclusions logically follow from the evidence that is presented? Can you see how the author gets to one point from another?
6. Is the writing clear and free from errors, cliches, and empty buzzwords?
7. Is the tone objective, balanced, and reasonable? Does the source convey any biases? Be on the lookout for extreme, emotionally-charged language.
8. Based on what you know about the author, is he or she likely to have any hidden agendas?
9. Is the source's design professional? Are graphics informative, useful, and easy to understand? If the source is a website, is it well-organized, easy to navigate, and free of clutter like flashing ads and unnecessary sound effects?
10. Is the source contradicted by information you found in other sources? If so, it is possible that your sources are presenting similar information but taking different perspectives, which requires you to think carefully about which sources you find more convincing and why. Be suspicious, however, of any source that presents facts you cannot confirm elsewhere.

Keeping Track of Sources

As you determine which sources you will rely on most, it is important to establish a system for keeping track of your sources and taking notes. There are several ways to go about it, and no one system is necessarily superior. Here's what matters: you keep materials in order; record bibliographical information you will need later; and take detailed, organized notes.

Think ahead to a moment a few weeks from now, when you've written your research paper and are almost ready to submit it for a grade. There is just one task left—writing your list of sources. As you begin typing your list, you realize you need to include the publication information for a book you cited frequently. Unfortunately, you already returned it to the library several days ago. You do not remember the URLs for some of the websites you used or the dates you accessed them—information that also must be included in your bibliography. With a sinking feeling, you realize that finding this information and preparing your bibliography will require hours of work.

This stressful scenario can be avoided. Taking time to organize source information now will ensure that you are not scrambling to find it at the last minute. Throughout your research, record bibliographical information for each source as soon as you begin using it. You may use pen-and-paper methods, such as a notebook or note cards, or maintain an electronic list. (If you prefer the latter option, many office software packages include separate programs for recording bibliographic information.) The following table shows the specific details you should record for commonly used source types. Use these details to develop a working bibliography—a preliminary list of sources that you will later use to develop the references section of your paper. It will save you time later on to record, from the start, all information you will need about your sources to create a Works Cited page. The following lists what you should record for some common types of sources. Your research may involve other types of sources not listed below. For more information on formatting citations**,** consult the MLA Guide on the Purdue University Online Writing Lab website at http://owl.english.purdue.edu.

- Book: the author(s), title, subtitle, publisher, city of publication, and year of publication.
- Work (e.g., article) in an anthology (i.e., book): the work's author(s), title, and subtitle; the book's title, subtitle, editor(s); any edition and volume numbers of the book; the book's publisher, city of publication, and year of publication; the pages on which the work appears in the book.
- Periodical: the author(s), title of the article, title of the publication, date of publication, volume and issue number, and range of page numbers of the article.
- Online source: the author(s); the title of the work or web page; the title of the website; the organization that sponsors the website; the database name; the date of publication or date of last update; the date you accessed the source.
- Interview: the name of the person interviewed; the method of communication (e.g., in-person, video chat, email, or phone call); the date of the interview.

As you conduct research, you may wish to record additional details, such as a book's call number, the contact information for a person you interviewed, or the URL of an online source. That will make it easier for you to quickly locate the source again. You may also wish to assign each source a code (e.g., a number, letter, symbol, or color) to use when taking notes.

Taking Notes Efficiently

Writers sometimes get caught up in taking extensive notes, so much so that they lose sight of how their sources help them to answer their research questions. The challenge is to stay focused and organized as you gather information from sources. Before you begin taking notes, take a moment to step back and remind yourself of your goal as a researcher: to find information that will help you answer your research questions. That goal will determine what information you record and how you organize it. When you write your paper, you will present your conclusions about the topic supported by research. Therefore, you do not need to write down every detail of your sources; some of the information in relevant sources will be irrelevant to your research questions.

There are several formats you can use to take notes. No technique is necessarily better than the others—it is more important to choose a format you are comfortable using. Choose a note-taking method from among those listed below that works best for you, and use it as you gather sources. Using the techniques

discussed in this section will prepare you for the next step in writing your research paper: organizing and synthesizing the information you find.

- Use index cards. This traditional format involves writing each note on a separate index card. It takes more time than copying and pasting into an electronic document, which encourages you to be selective in choosing which ideas to record. Recording notes on separate cards makes it easy to later organize your notes according to major topics. Some writers color-code their cards to make them still more organized.
- Maintain a research notebook. Instead of using index cards or electronic note cards, you may wish to keep a notebook or electronic folder, allotting a few pages (or one file) for each of your sources. This method makes it easy to create a separate column or section of the document where you add your responses to the information you encounter in your research.
- Annotate your sources. This method involves making handwritten notes in the margins of sources that you have printed or photocopied. If using electronic sources, you can make comments within the source document. For example, you might add comment boxes to a PDF version of an article. This method works best for experienced researchers who have already thought a great deal about the topic because it can be difficult to organize your notes later when starting your draft.
- Use note-taking software. There are many options for taking and organizing notes electronically. These include word-processing software that you can use offline on a computer. They also include tools like Diigo, Evernote, and Mindomo, available on the Web for free or reduced prices if you will use the tool for educational purposes. Although you may need to set aside time to learn how to use them, digital tools offer you possibilities that handwritten note cards do not, such as searching your notes, copying and pasting your notes into your paper, and saving and sharing your notes online.

Whether you use old-fashioned index cards or organize your notes digitally, you should keep all your notes in one place, and use topic headings to group related details. Doing so will help you identify connections among different sources. It will also help you make connections between your notes and the research questions and subtopics you identified earlier. Throughout the process of taking notes, be scrupulous about making sure you have correctly attributed each idea or piece of information to its source. Always include source information or use a code system (e.g., numbers, letters, symbols, or colors) so you know exactly which claims or evidence came from which sources.

Effective researchers make choices about which types of notes are most appropriate for their purpose. Your notes may fall into three categories:

- Summary notes sum up the main ideas in a source in a few sentences or a short paragraph. A summary is considerably shorter than the original text and captures only the major ideas. Use summary notes when you do not need to record specific details but you intend to refer to broad concepts the author discusses.
- Paraphrased notes restate a fact or idea from a source using your own words and sentence structure.
- Direct quotations use the exact wording used by the original source and enclose the quoted material in quotation marks. It is a good strategy to copy direct quotations when an author expresses an idea in an especially lively or memorable way. However, do not rely exclusively on direct quotations in

your note taking.

Summarizing and paraphrasing as you take notes is usually a better strategy than copying direct quotations because it forces you to think through the claims and evidence in your source and to understand it well enough to restate it. In short, these methods of note-taking help you to stay engaged with your topic instead of simply copying and pasting text from sources. Using them will help you when you draft your paper.

Paraphrase ideas carefully, and check your paraphrased notes against the original text to make sure you have restated the author's ideas accurately.

Use quotation marks to set off any words for phrases taken directly from the source. With direct quotations, again, make sure your notes accurately reflect the content of the original text: check that quoted material is copied verbatim. If you omit words from a quotation, use ellipses to show the omission, and make sure the omission does not change the author's meaning. If you add your own responses and ideas to your notes, mark them as such so that your own thinking about the topic stands out from ideas you summarized or paraphrased.

EXERCISE 13

Review your research, then set a timer for ten minutes and freewrite about your topic, using your questions and thesis to guide your writing. Complete this exercise without looking over your notes or sources. Base your writing on the overall impressions and concepts you have absorbed while conducting research. If additional, related questions come to mind, jot them down.

Applying Your Research

At this point in your project, you are preparing to move from the research phase to the writing phase. You have gathered much of the information you will use, and soon you will be ready to begin writing your draft. This section helps you transition smoothly from one phase to the next.

Beginning writers sometimes attempt to transform a pile of note cards into a formal research paper without any intermediary step. This approach presents problems. The writer's original question and thesis may be buried in a flood of disconnected details taken from researched sources. The first draft may present redundant or contradictory information. Worst of all, the writer's ideas and voice may be lost.

An effective research paper focuses on the writer's ideas—from the question that sparked the research process to how the writer answers that question based on the research findings. Before beginning a draft, or even an outline, good writers pause and reflect. They ask themselves questions such as the following:

- How has my thinking changed based on my research? What have I learned?
- Was my working thesis on target? Do I need to rework my thesis based on what I have learned?
- How does the information in my sources mesh with my research questions and help me answer

those questions?
- Have any additional important questions or subtopics come up that I will need to address in my paper?
- How do my sources complement each other? What ideas or facts recur in multiple sources?
- Where do my sources disagree with each other, and why?

In this section, you will reflect on your research and review the source material you have gathered. You will determine what you now think about your topic. You will synthesize, or put together, different pieces of information that help you answer your research questions. Finally, you will determine the organizational structure that works best for your paper and begin planning your outline.

Selecting Useful Details

At this point in the research process, you have gathered evidence, ideas, and information from a wide variety of sources. Now it is time to think about how you will use your source materials as a writer. When you conduct research, you keep an open mind and seek out many promising sources. You take notes on any information that looks like it might help you answer your research questions. Often, new ideas and terms come up in your reading, and these, too, find their way into your notes. You may record claims or examples that catch your attention and seem relevant to your research questions. By now, you have probably amassed an impressively detailed collection of notes. However, you will not use all of your notes in your paper.

Effective writers are selective. They determine which information is most relevant and appropriate for their purpose. They include details that develop or explain their ideas—and they leave out details that do not. The writer, not the notes, is the controlling force. The writer shapes the content of the research paper. While gathering sources, you used strategies to filter out irrelevant and unreliable sources and details. Now you will apply your critical-thinking skills to the details you recorded—analyzing how it is relevant, determining the ways in which it meshes with your ideas and forms patterns.

As Jorge reviewed his research, he realized that some of the information was not especially useful for his purpose. His notes included several statements about the relationship between soft drinks that are high in sugar and childhood obesity—a subtopic that was too far outside of the main focus of the paper. Jorge decided to cut this material.

Do not feel anxious if you still have trouble seeing the big picture. Systematically looking through your notes will help you. Begin by identifying the notes that clearly support your thesis. Mark or group these, either physically or using the cut-and-paste function in your word-processing program. As you identify the crucial details that support your thesis, make sure you analyze them critically. Ask the following questions to focus your thinking:

- Is this detail from a reliable, high-quality source? Is it appropriate for me to cite this source in an academic paper? The bulk of the support for your thesis should come from reliable, reputable sources. You've already thought about and made choices in the quality of sources you gathered earlier in the research process. If most of the details that support your thesis are from less-reliable sources, you may need to do additional research or modify your thesis.
- Is the link between this information and my thesis obvious—or will I need to explain it to my readers?

Remember, you have spent more time thinking and reading about this topic than your audience. Some connections might be obvious to both you and your readers. More often, however, you will need to provide the analysis or explanation that shows how the information supports your thesis. As you read through your notes, jot down ideas you have for making those connections clear.

- What personal biases or experiences might affect the way I interpret this information? No researcher is 100 percent objective. We all have personal opinions and experiences that influence our reactions to what we read and learn. Good researchers are aware of this human tendency. They keep an open mind when they read opinions or facts that contradict their beliefs.

It can be tempting to ignore information that does not support your thesis or that contradicts it outright. However, such information is important. At the very least, it gives you a sense of what has been written about the topic. More importantly, it can help you question and refine your own thinking so that writing your research paper is a true learning process. Remember, your working thesis is not set in stone. You can and should change your working thesis throughout the research writing process if the evidence you find does not support your tentative thesis. Never try to force evidence to fit your argument. For example, suppose your tentative thesis is "Mars cannot support life-forms." Yet, a week into researching your topic, you find an article in The New York Times detailing new findings of bacteria under the Martian surface. Instead of trying to argue that bacteria are not life forms, you would do better to alter your thesis to "Mars cannot support complex life-forms." In sum, you should carefully consider how information that challenges your thesis fits into the big picture of your research. You may decide that the source is unreliable or the information is irrelevant, or you may decide that it is an important point you need to bring up. What matters is that you give careful consideration to various perspectives and current research on the topic.

Example

Writing at Work

- When you create workplace documents based on research, selectivity remains important. A project team may spend months conducting market surveys to prepare for rolling out a new product, but few managers have time to read the research in its entirety. Most employees want the research distilled into a few well-supported points. Focused, concise writing is highly valued in the workplace.

Finding Connections between Sources

As you find connections between your ideas and information in your sources, also look for commonalities between your sources. Do most sources seem to agree on a particular idea? Are some facts mentioned repeatedly in many different sources? What key terms or major concepts come up in most of your sources regardless of whether the sources agree on the finer points? Identifying these connections will help you

identify important ideas to discuss in your paper. Look for subtler ways your sources complement one another, too. Does one author refer to another's book or article? How do sources that are more recent build upon the ideas developed in earlier sources?

Be aware of any redundancies in your sources. If you have amassed solid support from a reputable source, such as a scholarly journal, there is no need to cite the same facts from an online encyclopedia article that is many steps removed from any primary research. If a given source adds nothing new to your discussion and you can cite a stronger source for the same information, use the stronger source.

Determine how you will address any contradictions found among different sources. For instance, if one source cites a startling fact that you cannot confirm anywhere else, it is safe to dismiss the information as unreliable. However, if you find significant disagreements among reliable sources, you will need to review them and evaluate each source. Which source presents a sounder argument or more solid evidence? It is up to you to determine which source is the most credible and why.

Reevaluating Your Working Thesis

A careful analysis of your notes will help you reevaluate your working thesis and determine whether you need to revise it. Remember that your working thesis was the starting point—not necessarily the end point—of your research. You should revise your working thesis if your ideas have changed. Even if your sources generally confirmed your preliminary thinking on the topic, it is still a good idea to tweak the wording of your thesis to incorporate the specific details you learned from research.

Jorge realized that his working thesis oversimplified the issues. He still believed that the media was exaggerating the benefits of low-carb diets. However, his research led him to conclude that these diets did have some advantages. Read Jorge's revised thesis:

> Although following a low-carbohydrate diet can benefit some people, these diets are not necessarily the best option for everyone who wants to lose weight or improve their health.

EXERCISE 14

Review your research questions and working thesis again. This time, keep them nearby as you review your research notes. Identify information that supports your working thesis. Identify details that call your thesis into question. Determine whether you need to modify your thesis. Use your research questions to identify key ideas in your paper. Begin categorizing your notes according to which topics are addressed. You may find yourself adding important topics or deleting unimportant ones as you proceed. Write out your revised thesis and at least two or three big ideas.

Synthesizing Source Material

By now, your ideas about your topic are taking shape. You have a sense of what major ideas to address in your paper, what points you can easily support, and what questions or subtopics might need a little more thought. In short, you have begun the process of synthesizing source material—that is, of putting the pieces together into a coherent whole.

It is normal to find this part of the process a little difficult. Some questions or concepts may still be unclear to you. You may not yet know how you will tie all of your research together. Synthesizing is a complex, demanding mental task, and even experienced researchers struggle with it at times. A little uncertainty is often a good sign. It means you are challenging yourself to work thoughtfully with your topic instead of simply restating the same information.

You have already considered how your notes fit with your working thesis. Now, take your synthesis a step further. Analyze how your notes relate to your major research question and the sub questions you identified at the start of the research process. Organize your notes with headings that correspond to those questions. As you proceed, you might identify some important subtopics that were not part of your original plan, or you might decide that some questions are not relevant to your paper.

Categorize information carefully, and continue to think critically about the material. Ask yourself whether the connections between ideas are clear. Remember, your ideas and conclusions will shape the paper. They are the glue that holds the rest of the content together. As you work, begin jotting down the big ideas you will use to connect the dots for your reader. (If you are not sure where to begin, try answering your major research question and sub questions. Add and answer new questions as appropriate.) You might record these big ideas on paper sticky notes or type them into a word-processing document or other digital format.

Jorge looked back on the list of research questions that he had written down earlier. He changed a few to match his new thesis, and he began the following rough outline for his paper:

- Topic: Low-carbohydrate diets
- Main question: Are low-carbohydrate diets as effective as they have been portrayed to be by media sources?
- Thesis: Although following a low-carbohydrate diet can benefit some people, these diets are not necessarily the best option for everyone who wants to lose weight or improve their health.
- Main points:
    - How do low-carb diets work?
        - Low-carb diets cause weight loss by lowering insulin levels, causing the body to burn stored fat.
- When did low-carbohydrate diets become a ‘hot’ topic in the media?
    - The Atkins diet was created by Richard Atkins in 1972, but it didn’t gain wide-scale attention until 2003. The South Beach diet and other low-carb diets became popular around the same time,

and led to a low-carb craze in America from 2003 to 2004.

- What are the supposed advantages to following a low-carbohydrate diet?
  - They are said to help you lose weight faster than other diets and allow people to continue eat protein and fats while dieting.
- What are some of the negative effects of a low-carb diet?
  - Eating foods higher in saturated fats can increase your cholesterol levels and lead to heart disease. Incomplete fat breakdown can lead to a condition called ketosis, which puts a strain on the liver and can be fatal.

Planning How to Organize Your Paper

You may be wondering how your ideas are supposed to shape the paper, especially since you are writing a research paper based on your research. Integrating your ideas and your information from research is a complex process, and sometimes it can be difficult to separate the two. Some paragraphs in your paper will consist mostly of details from your research. That is fine, as long as you explain what those details mean or how they are linked. You should also include sentences and transitions that show the relationship between different claims and evidence from your research by grouping related ideas or pointing out connections or contrasts. The result is that you are not simply presenting information; you are synthesizing, analyzing, and interpreting it.

The final step to complete before beginning your draft is to choose an organizational structure. For some assignments, this may be determined by the instructor's requirements. For instance, if you are asked to explore the impact of a new communications device, a cause-and-effect structure is obviously appropriate. In other cases, you will need to determine the structure based on what suits your topic and purpose. For more information about the structures used in writing, see the Canvas module on Rhetorical Patterns.

The purpose of Jorge's paper was primarily to persuade. With that in mind, he planned the following outline.

- I. Introduction
  - A. Background
  - B. Thesis
- II. Purported Benefits of Low-Carbohydrate Diets
  - A. United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) nutrition guidelines
  - B. Potential flaws in USDA nutrition guidelines
    1. Effects of carbohydrates on blood sugar, insulin
    2. Relationship to metabolism and obesity
- III. Research on Low-Carbohydrate Diets and Weight Loss
  - A. Short-term effectiveness for weight-loss
  - B. Long-term effectiveness not established

- IV. Other Long-Term Health Outcomes
  - A. Cholesterol and heart disease
  - B. Blood pressure
  - C. Diabetes
- V. Conclusion

Example

Writing at Work

The structures described in this section and in the chapter on Rhetorical Modes can also help you organize information in different types of workplace documents. For instance, medical incident reports and police reports follow a chronological structure. If the company must choose between two vendors to provide a service, you might write an email to your supervisor comparing and contrasting the choices. Understanding when and how to use each organizational structure can help you write workplace documents efficiently and effectively.

EXERCISE 15

Review the organizational structures discussed in Rhetorical Modes. Working with the notes you organized earlier, follow these steps to begin planning how to organize your paper. Create an outline that includes your thesis, major subtopics, and supporting points. The major headings in your outline will become sections or paragraphs in your paper. Remember that your ideas should form the backbone of the paper. For each major section of your outline, write out a topic sentence stating the main point you will make in that section. You may find that some points are too complex to explain in a sentence. Consider whether any major sections of your outline need to be broken up, and jot down additional topic sentences as needed. Review your notes and determine how the different pieces of information fit into your outline as supporting points.

EXERCISE 16

Collaborative exercise: Exchange outlines of your research papers with a classmate. Examine your classmate's outline to see if any questions come to mind and if you see any levels that would benefit from additional support, elaboration, or clarification. Return outlines to each other and compare observations.

Writing Your Draft

At last, you are ready to begin writing the rough draft of your research paper. Putting your thinking and research into words is exciting. It can also be challenging. In this section, you will learn strategies for drafting your research paper, such as integrating material from your sources, citing information correctly, and avoiding misuse of your sources.

The Structure of a Research Paper

Research papers generally follow the same basic structure: an introduction that presents the writer's thesis; a body section that develops the thesis with supporting points and evidence; and a conclusion that revisits the thesis and provides additional insights or suggestions for further research.

Your writing voice will come across most strongly in your introduction and conclusion as you work to attract your readers' interest and establish your thesis. These sections usually do not cite sources at length. They focus on the big picture, not specific details. In contrast, the body of your paper will cite sources extensively. As you present your ideas, you will support your points with details from your research

Writing Your Introduction

There are several approaches to writing an introduction, each of which fulfills the same goals. The introduction should get the readers' attention, provide background information, and present the writer's thesis. Many writers like to begin with one of the following catchy openers:

- A surprising fact
- A thought-provoking question
- An attention-getting quote
- A brief anecdote that illustrates a larger concept
- A connection between your topic and your readers' experiences

The next few sentences place the opening in context by presenting background information. From there,

the writer builds toward a thesis, which is traditionally placed at the end of the introduction. Think of your thesis as a signpost that lets readers know in what direction the paper is headed.

Jorge decided to begin his research paper by connecting his topic to readers' daily experiences. Read the first draft of his introduction. The thesis is the last sentence. Note how Jorge progresses from the opening sentences, to background information, to his thesis.

Introduction Draft

Beyond the Hype: Evaluating Low-Carb Diets

Over the past decade, increasing numbers of Americans have jumped on the low-carb bandwagon. Some studies, such as those conducted by Lisa Sanders and David L. Katz and by Julie Hirsch, estimate that approximately forty million Americans, or about twenty percent of the population, are attempting to restrict their intake of food high in carbohydrates. Proponents of low-carb diets say they are not only the most effective way to lose weight, but they also yield health benefits such as lower blood pressure and improved cholesterol levels. Meanwhile, some doctors claim that low-carb diets are overrated and caution that their long-term effects are unknown. Although following a low-carbohydrate diet can benefit some people, these diets are not necessarily the best option for everyone who wants to lose weight or improve their health.

Writers often work out of sequence when writing a research paper. If you find yourself struggling to write an engaging introduction, you may wish to write the body of your paper first. Writing the body sections first will help you clarify your main points. Writing the introduction should then be easier. You may have a better sense of how to introduce the paper after you have drafted some or all of the body.

EXERCISE 17

Draft the introductory paragraph of your research paper. Use one of the common techniques for writing an engaging introduction. Be sure to include background information about the topic that leads to your thesis.

Writing Your Conclusion

In your introduction, you tell readers where they are headed. In your conclusion, you recap where they have been. For this reason, some writers prefer to write their conclusions soon after they have written their introduction. However, this method may not work for all writers. Other writers prefer to write their conclusion at the end of the paper, after writing the body paragraphs. No process is absolutely right or absolutely wrong; find the one that best suits you.

No matter when you compose the conclusion, it should revisit your thesis and sum up your main ideas. The conclusion should not simply echo the introduction or rely on bland summary statements, such as "In this paper, I have demonstrated that…." In fact, avoid repeating your thesis verbatim from the introduction. Restate it in different words that reflect the new perspective gained through your research. That helps keep your ideas fresh for your readers. An effective writer might conclude a paper by asking a new

question the research inspired, revisiting an anecdote presented earlier, or reminding readers of how the topic relates to their lives.

Using Primary and Secondary Research

As you write your draft, be mindful of how you are using primary and secondary source material to support your points. Recall that primary sources present firsthand information. Secondary sources are one step removed from primary sources. They present analyses or interpretations of primary sources. How you balance primary and secondary source material in your paper will depend on the topic and assignment.

Some types of research papers must use primary sources extensively to achieve their purpose. Any paper that analyzes a primary text or presents the writer's own experimental research falls in this category. Here are a few examples:

- A paper for a literature course analyzing several poems by Emily Dickinson
- A paper for a political science course comparing televised speeches delivered by two presidential candidates
- A paper for a communications course discussing gender biases in television commercials
- A paper for a business administration course that discusses the results of a survey the writer conducted with local businesses to gather information about their work-from-home and flextime policies
- A paper for an elementary education course that discusses the results of an experiment to compare the effectiveness of two different methods of mathematics instruction

For these types of papers, primary research is the main focus. If you are writing about a work (including non-print works, such as a movie or a painting), it is crucial to gather information and ideas from the original work, rather than relying solely on others' interpretations. And, of course, if you take the time to design and conduct your own field research, such as a survey, a series of interviews, or an experiment, you will want to discuss it in detail. Interviews may provide interesting responses that you want to share with your readers.

Even if your paper is largely based on primary sources, you may use secondary sources to develop your ideas. For instance, an analysis of Alfred Hitchcock's films would focus on the films themselves as primary sources, but it might also cite commentary and interpretations by critics. A paper that presents an original experiment would include some discussion of similar prior research in the field.

For some assignments, it makes sense to rely more on secondary sources than primary sources. If you are not analyzing a text or conducting your own field research, then you will need to use secondary sources extensively. As much as possible, use secondary sources that are closely linked to primary research, such as a journal article that presents the results of the authors' scientific study or a book that cites interviews and case studies. These sources are more reliable and add more value to your paper than sources that are further removed from primary research. For instance, a popular magazine article on junk-food addiction might be several steps removed from the original scientific study on which it is loosely based. As a result, the article may distort, sensationalize, or misinterpret the scientists' findings.

Jorge knew he did not have the time, resources, or experience needed to conduct original experimental research for his paper. Because he was relying on secondary sources to support his ideas, he made a

point of citing sources that were not far removed from primary research.

Incorporating Source Material into Your Body Paragraphs

One of the challenges of writing a research paper is successfully integrating your ideas with material from your sources. Your paper must explain what you think, or it will read like a disconnected string of facts and quotations. However, you also need to support your ideas with research, or they will seem insubstantial. How do you strike the right balance?

You have already taken a step in the right direction if you have drafted your introduction and conclusion. The introduction and conclusion function like the frame around a picture. They define and limit your topic and place your research in context. However, you may choose to wait to write your introduction and conclusion until after writing your body paragraphs. Either way, as you draft your body paragraphs, you must express your critical thinking about the ideas and information that you incorporate from your sources. You must offer claims of your own that either challenge or extend points from your sources.

In the body paragraphs of your paper, you will need to integrate ideas carefully at the paragraph level and at the sentence level. Use topic sentences and concluding sentences of body paragraphs to make sure readers understand the significance of any facts, details, or points you cite. In particular, you must continually explain how source material relates to your thesis. Indicate your interpretation of, and attitude toward, source material within and between sentences in which you summarize, paraphrase, or quote material from your sources. You will also include sentences that transition between ideas from your research, either within a paragraph or from one paragraph to the next. At the sentence level, you will need to think carefully about how you introduce your summarized, paraphrased, and quoted material.

You have already learned about summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting sources when taking notes. Here, you will learn how to use these techniques in the body of your paper to weave in source material to develop your ideas.

Introducing Cited Material Effectively

Including a signal phrase in your text, such as “Jackson wrote” or “Copeland found,” often helps you integrate source material smoothly. This citation technique also helps convey that you are actively engaged with your source material. Unfortunately, during the process of writing your research paper, it is easy to fall into a rut and use the same few dull verbs repeatedly, such as “Jones said,” “Smith stated,” and so on. Punch up your writing by using strong verbs that help your reader understand how the source material presents ideas. There is a world of difference between an author who “suggests” and one who “claims,” one who “questions” and one who “criticizes.” You do not need to consult your thesaurus every time you cite a source, but do think about which verbs will accurately represent the ideas and make your writing more engaging.

The following list includes some possibilities:

- argue
- ask
- assert

- assess
- believe
- claim
- compare
- conclude
- contrast
- determine
- evaluate
- explain
- find
- hypothesize
- insist
- measure
- point out
- propose
- question
- recommend
- study
- suggest
- sum up
- warn

Summarizing Sources

When you summarize material from a source, you zero in on the main points and restate them concisely in your own words. This technique is appropriate when only the major ideas are relevant to your paper or when you need to simplify complex information into a few key points for your readers. Be sure to review the source material as you summarize it. Identify the main idea and restate it as concisely as you can—preferably in one sentence. Depending on your purpose, you may also add another sentence or two condensing any important details or examples. Check your summary to make sure it is accurate and complete.

In his draft, Jorge summarized research materials that presented scientists' findings about low-carbohydrate diets. Read the following passage from a trade magazine article and Jorge's summary of the article.

Assessing the Efficacy of Low-Carbohydrate Diets
(from Adrienne Howell, Ph.D.)

> Over the past few years, a number of clinical studies have explored whether high-protein, low-carbohydrate diets are more effective for weight loss than other frequently recommended diet plans, such as diets that drastically curtail fat intake (Pritikin) or that emphasize consuming lean meats, grains, vegetables, and a moderate amount of unsaturated fats (the Mediterranean diet). A 2009 study found that obese teenagers who followed a low-carbohydrate diet lost an average of 15.6 kilograms over a six-month period, whereas teenagers following a low-fat diet or a Mediterranean diet lost an average of 11.1 kilograms and 9.3 kilograms respectively. Two 2010 studies that measured weight loss for obese adults following these same three diet plans found

> similar results. Over three months, subjects on the low-carbohydrate diet plan lost anywhere from four to six kilograms more than subjects who followed other diet plans.

Sample Summary

> Adrienne Howell points out that in three recent studies, researchers compared outcomes for obese subjects who followed either a low-carbohydrate diet, a low-fat diet, or a Mediterranean diet and found that subjects following a low-carbohydrate diet lost more weight in the same time.

A summary restates ideas in your own words—but for specialized or clinical terms, you may need to use terms that appear in the original source. For instance, Jorge used the term obese in his summary because related words such as heavy or overweight have a different clinical meaning.

Paraphrasing Sources

When you paraphrase material from a source, restate the information from an entire sentence or passage in your own words, using your own original sentence structure. A paraphrased source differs from a summarized source in that you focus on restating the ideas, not condensing them. Again, it is important to check your paraphrase against the source material to make sure it is both accurate and original. Inexperienced writers sometimes use the thesaurus method of paraphrasing—that is, they simply rewrite the source material, replacing most of the words with synonyms. This constitutes a misuse of sources. A true paraphrase restates ideas using the writer's own language and style.

In his draft, Jorge frequently paraphrased details from sources. At times, he needed to rewrite a sentence more than once to ensure he was paraphrasing ideas correctly. Read the following passage from a website. Then read Jorge's initial attempt at paraphrasing it, followed by the final version of his paraphrase.

Original Source (from Tracy Niethercott)

> Some insulin users in particular find that their blood glucose is far easier to control when they limit the carbs in their diet.

Initial Paraphrase

> According to one source, some people find they can control their blood glucose when they limit the carbs they eat (Neithercott).

After reviewing the paraphrased sentence, Jorge realized he was following the original source too closely. He did not want to quote the full passage verbatim, so he again attempted to restate the idea in his own style.

Revised Paraphrase

> Some people with diabetes are better able to control their blood sugar when they reduce their carbs intake (Neithercott).

Quoting Sources Directly

Most of the time, you will summarize or paraphrase source material instead of quoting directly. Doing so shows that you understand your research well enough to write about it confidently in your own words.

However, direct quotes can be powerful when used sparingly and with purpose.
Quoting directly can sometimes help you make a point in a colorful way. If an author's words are especially vivid, memorable, or well phrased, quoting them may help hold your reader's interest. Direct quotations from an interviewee or an eyewitness may help you personalize an issue for readers. And when you analyze primary sources, such as a historical speech or a work of literature, quoting extensively is often necessary to illustrate your points. These are valid reasons to use quotations.
Less experienced writers, however, sometimes overuse direct quotations in a research paper because it seems easier than paraphrasing. At best, this reduces the effectiveness of the quotations. At worst, it results in a paper that seems haphazardly pasted together from outside sources. Use quotations sparingly for greater impact. When you do choose to quote directly from a source, follow these guidelines:

- Make sure you have transcribed the original statement accurately.
- Represent the author's ideas honestly. Quote enough of the original text to reflect the author's point accurately.
- Never use a stand-alone, or "dropped in," quotation. Always integrate the quoted material into your own sentence.
- Use ellipses (…) if you need to omit a word or phrase. Use brackets [ ] if you need to replace a word or phrase or add any explanation or clarification of the original.
- Make sure any omissions or changed words do not alter the meaning of the original text. Omit or replace words only when absolutely necessary to shorten the text or to make it grammatically correct within your sentence.
- Remember to include correctly formatted citations that follow the assigned style guide.

Jorge wanted to use the following information from an article on the American Heart Association's website.

- Original Source (from the American Heart Association)

  A high carbohydrate diet that includes fruits, vegetables, nonfat dairy products and whole grains also has been shown to reduce blood pressure.

Because this particular sentence would be difficult to paraphrase properly, Jorge decided to quote it instead.

- Quotation from the Source

  According to the American Heart Association, "A high carbohydrate diet that includes fruits, vegetables, nonfat dairy products and whole grains also has been shown to reduce blood pressure."

Notice how Jorge smoothly integrated the quoted material by starting the sentence with an introductory, or "signal," phrase.

Example

Writing at Work

It is important to accurately represent a colleague's ideas or communications in the workplace. When writing professional or academic papers, be mindful of how the words you use to describe someone's tone or ideas carry certain connotations. Do not say a source argues a particular point unless an argument is, in fact, presented. Use lively language, but avoid language that is emotionally charged. Doing so will ensure you have represented your colleague's words in an authentic and accurate way.

EXERCISE 18

Write a one-sentence summary of a useful passage in one of your sources.

EXERCISE 19

To practice paraphrasing, choose an important idea or detail from your notes. Without looking at the original source, restate the idea in your own words. Check your paraphrase against the original text in the source. Make sure both your language and your sentence structure are original. Revise your paraphrase if necessary.

Documenting Your Source Material

A reader interested in your subject wants not only to read what you wrote but also to be aware of the works that you used to create it. Readers may want to enter the discussion on your topic, using some of the same sources that you have. They also may want to examine your sources to see if you know your subject, if you

missed anything, or if you offer anything new and interesting. Your sources may offer the reader additional insight on the subject being considered. It also demonstrates that you, as the author, are up-to-date on what is happening in the field or on the subject. In sum, giving credit where it is due contributes to research on your topic and enhances your credibility.

Throughout the writing process, be scrupulous about documenting information taken from sources. Again, there are multiple reasons for doing so:

- To give credit to others for their ideas
- To allow your reader to follow up and learn more about the topic if desired
- To build your own reputation as a writer

It is important to indicate the source both in your essay and in a bibliography, list of references, or Works Cited,to prevent the possibility of plagiarism. If you follow the appropriate style guide (e.g., APA and MLA), pay attention to detail, and clearly indicate your sources, then this approach to formatting and citation offers a proven way to demonstrate your respect for others and earn their respect in return.

Citing Sources in Your Paper

You need to cite all your information: if someone else wrote it, said it, drew it, demonstrated it, or otherwise expressed it, you need to cite it. The exception to this statement is common, widespread knowledge, but if you are ever in doubt, go ahead and document the material.

If you are using MLA style, then your citation of the source in the body of the essay will point to the Works Cited page at the end. You must cite your sources as you use them, mentioning the author or title of the source by name if you summarize its ideas and giving the author or title of the source as well as the page number (if available) in parentheses if you paraphrase or directly quote the source. The reference to the author or title is like a signal to readers that information has been incorporated from a separate source. It also provides readers with the information they need to locate the source in the Works Cited at the end of your essay where they can find the complete reference.

Rules for In-Text Citations:

The following examples illustrate basic rules for documenting sources within the text of your paper in MLA style:

- Author named in the introduction to the paraphrase or quote: Jacob Leibowitz found that low-carbohydrate diets often helped subjects with Type II diabetes maintain a healthy weight and control blood-sugar (56). Leibowitz states, “People with Type II diabetes should follow a low-carbohydrate diet in order to prevent weight gain and unbalanced blood-sugar levels” (56).
- Author named in parentheses: One source indicates that low-carbohydrate diets often helped subjects with Type II diabetes maintain a healthy weight and control blood-sugar (Leibowitz 56). A noted nutritionist advises diabetics: “People with Type II diabetes should follow a low-carbohydrate diet in order to prevent weight gain and unbalanced blood-sugar levels” (Leibowitz 56).
- Unknown author: One website points out that a low-carbohydrate diet may aggravate a heart condi-

tion by raising a person's bad cholesterol ("Cholesterol and the Low-carb Diet").

- Unknown or No Page Reference: The risks of following a low-carbohydrate diet outweigh any benefits according to one researcher (Jones). Gerald Jones believes that "a balanced diet is still the safest and most effective approach to good health."
- A source quoted in another source (an indirect quotation): "For the chronically overweight," states Martin Rogers, "a low-carbohydrate diet may provide a viable option for weight loss" (qtd. in Evans 46).

EXERCISE 20

Review in-text citations in your draft. Look for places where you introduce source material using a signal phrase in your sentence. Highlight the verbs used in your signal phrases, and make note of any that seem to be overused throughout the paper. Identify places where a stronger verb could be used. Revise your draft accordingly.

Creating a List of References

Each of the sources you cite in the body of your paper should appear in a list of references at the end of your paper. If you're using MLA style, then your Works Cited should list the sources alphabetically by last name, or by title if the author is not identified. While in-text citations provide the most basic information about the source, your Works Cited will include more complete publication details. There are a number of ways to learn how to properly cite your sources in your Works Cited:

- The MLA Guide at Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL)
- A current edition of The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.
- Online videos found by searching for "MLA style" on YouTube.
- For an overview of citing sources in MLA style see Canvas module "Working with Sources"

One of the many advantages of using sources from databases is that the databases themselves,or the platforms which host them,usually include a citation of the source at the bottom of the HTML full text of the source or a "Cite" tool accessible from the record of the source in the list of search results. When using these automatically-generated citations, be sure to select and copy the citation in the style that you have been assigned to use. Also, be sure to review the citation that the database or platform has generated, as it may include some errors in it. An error that consistently occurs using a "Cite" tool is the capitalization of titles; in the United States, the first letters of the first and last words of titles are always capitalized, and so are the first letters of all words in-between except for articles (a, an, the), conjunctions (and, but, or), and prepositions (at, by, for, in, of, on, etc.). The "Cite" tool does not distinguish between parts of speech when

capitalizing words in titles, so you will need to change some letters in titles to lowercase in order to properly format your citations.

Avoiding Plagiarism

Your research paper presents your thinking about a topic, supported and developed by other people's ideas and information. It is crucial to always distinguish between the two—as you conduct research, as you plan your paper, and as you write. Failure to do so can lead to plagiarism.

If you incorporate the words or ideas of a source into your own writing without giving full credit, then you are plagiarizing that source. In both professional and academic settings, the penalties for plagiarism are severe. In the professional world, plagiarism may result in loss of credibility, diminished compensation, and even loss of employment, including future opportunities. That is, employees may be fired for plagiarism and do irreparable damage to their professional reputation. In a class, a student's plagiarism may result in a range of sanctions, from the loss of points on an assignment to a failing grade in the course to expulsion from college.

The concepts and strategies discussed in this section connect to a larger issue—academic integrity. You maintain your integrity as a member of an academic community by representing your work and others' work honestly and by using other people's work only in legitimately accepted ways. It is a point of honor taken seriously in every academic discipline and career field. Even when cheating and plagiarism go undetected, they still result in a student's failure to learn necessary research and writing skills. In short, it is never worth the risk to plagiarize. For more information about Academic Integrity, consult your college's Student Handbook.

Working with Sources Carefully

Disorganization and carelessness sometimes lead to plagiarism. For instance, writers may be unable to provide complete, accurate citations if they did not record bibliographical information. Writers may cut and paste passages from websites into their papers and later forget where the material came from. Writers who procrastinate may rush through drafts; this easily leads to sloppy paraphrasing and inaccurate quotations. Any of these actions can create the appearance of plagiarism and lead to negative consequences. Carefully organizing your time and notes is the best guard against these forms of plagiarism. As discussed above, you should maintain a detailed working bibliography and thorough notes throughout the research process. As you incorporate source material into your draft, check original sources again to clear up any uncertainties. Schedule plenty of time for writing your draft so there is no temptation to cut corners.

Intentional and Accidental Plagiarism

Plagiarism is the act of misrepresenting someone else's work as your own. Sometimes a writer plagiarizes work on purpose—for instance, by purchasing an essay from a website and submitting it as original course work. In other cases, a writer may commit accidental plagiarism due to carelessness, haste, or misunderstanding. To avoid unintentional plagiarism, follow these guidelines:

- Understand what types of information must be cited.
- Understand what constitutes fair use of a source.
- Keep source materials and notes carefully organized.

- Follow guidelines for summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting sources.

When to Cite

Whether it is quoted or paraphrased, any idea or fact taken from an outside source must be cited, in both the body of your paper and your list of references. The only exceptions are facts or general statements that are common knowledge. Common-knowledge facts or general statements are commonly supported by and found in multiple sources. For example, a writer would not need to cite the statement that most breads, pastas, and cereals are high in carbohydrates; this is well known and well documented. However, if a writer explained in detail the differences among the chemical structures of carbohydrates, proteins, and fats, a citation would be necessary. When in doubt, cite your source!

Fair Use

In recent years, issues related to the fair use of sources have been prevalent in popular culture. Recording artists, for example, may disagree about the extent to which one has the right to sample another's music. For academic purposes, however, the guidelines for fair use are reasonably straightforward. Writers may quote from or paraphrase material from previously published works without formally obtaining the copyright holder's permission. Fair use means that the writer legitimately uses brief excerpts from source material to support and develop his or her own ideas. For instance, a columnist may excerpt a few sentences from a novel when writing a book review. However, quoting or paraphrasing another's work at excessive length, to the extent that large sections of the writing are unoriginal, is not fair use.

As he worked on his draft, Jorge was careful to cite his sources correctly and not to rely excessively on any one source. Occasionally, however, he caught himself quoting a source at great length. In those instances, he highlighted the paragraph in question so that he could go back to it later and revise. Read the example, along with Jorge's revision.

Initial Use of Source Material

> Heinz found that "subjects in the low-carbohydrate group (30%carbohydrates; 40% protein, 30% fat) had a mean weight loss of 10 kg (22 lbs) over a 4-month period." These results were "noticeably better than results for subjects on a low-fat diet (45% carbohydrates, 35% protein, 20% fat)" whose average weight loss was only "7 kg (15.4 lbs) in the same period." From this, it can be concluded that "low-carbohydrate diets obtain more rapid results." Other researchers agree that "at least in the short term, patients following low-carbohydrate diets enjoy greater success" than those who follow alternative plans (Johnson and Crowe).

After reviewing the paragraph, Jorge realized that he had drifted into unoriginal writing. Most of the paragraph was taken verbatim from a single article. Although Jorge had enclosed the material in quotation marks, he knew it was not an appropriate way to use the research in his paper.

Revised Use of Source Material

> Low-carbohydrate diets may indeed be superior to other diet plans for short-term weight loss. In a study comparing low-carbohydrate diets and low-fat diets, Heinz found that subjects who followed a low-carbohydrate plan (30% of total calories) for four months lost, on average, about three kilograms more than subjects who followed a low-fat diet for the same time. Heinz concluded that these plans yield quick results, an idea sup-

> ported by a similar study conducted by Johnson and Crowe. What remains to be seen, however, is whether this initial success can be sustained for longer periods.

As Jorge revised the paragraph, he realized he did not need to quote these sources directly. Instead, he paraphrased their most important findings. He also made sure to include a topic sentence stating the main idea of the paragraph and a concluding sentence that transitioned to the next major topic in his essay.

Example

Writing at Work

Citing other people's work appropriately is just as important in the workplace as it is in school. If you need to consult outside sources to research a document you are creating, follow the general guidelines already discussed, as well as any industry-specific citation guidelines. For more extensive use of others' work—for instance, requesting permission to link to another company or organization's website on your own employer's website—always follow your employer's established procedures.

Revising Your Draft

Given all the time and effort you have put into your research paper, you will want to make sure that your final draft represents your best work. This requires taking the time to revise and edit your paper carefully. You may feel that you need a break from your paper before you revise and edit it. That is understandable—but leave yourself with enough time to complete this important stage of the writing process. In this section, you will learn the following specific strategies that are useful for revising and editing a research paper:

- How to evaluate and improve the overall organization and cohesion
- How to maintain an appropriate style and tone
- How to use checklists to identify and correct any errors in language, citations, and formatting

Revising Your Paper's Organization and Cohesion

When writing a research paper, it is easy to become overly focused on editorial details, such as the proper format for bibliographic entries. These details do matter. However, before you begin to address them, it is important to spend time reviewing and revising the content of the paper. A good research paper is both organized and cohesive. Organization means that your argument flows logically from one point to the next. Cohesion means that the elements of your paper work together smoothly and naturally. In a cohesive research paper, information from research is seamlessly integrated with the writer's ideas.

When you revise to improve organization, you look at the flow of ideas throughout the essay as a whole and within individual paragraphs. You check to see that your essay moves logically from the introduction to

the body paragraphs to the conclusion, and that each section reinforces your thesis. Writers choose transitions carefully to show the relationships between ideas—for instance, to make a comparison or elaborate on a point with examples. Make sure your transitions suit your purpose, and avoid overusing the same ones. You can reference the Table of Common Transitional Words and Phrases to help find a variety of transition words.

Jorge reread his draft paragraph by paragraph. As he read, he highlighted the main idea of each paragraph so he could see whether his ideas proceeded in a logical order. For the most part, the flow of ideas was clear. However, he did notice that one paragraph did not have a clear main idea. It interrupted the flow of the writing. During revision, Jorge added a topic sentence that clearly connected the paragraph to the one that had preceded it. He also added transitions to improve the flow of ideas from sentence to sentence. Read the following paragraphs: the first example is Jorge's first draft without any changes, and the second paragraph shows his revisions.

First Draft:

> Picture this: you're standing in the aisle of your local grocery store when you see a chubby guy nearby staring at several brands of ketchup on display. After deliberating for a moment, he reaches for the bottle with the words "Low Carb!" displayed prominently on the label. (You can't help but notice that the low carb ketchup is higher priced.) Is he making a smart choice that will help him lose weight and enjoy better health—or is he just buying into the latest diet fad? Some researchers estimate that approximately forty million Americans, or about one fifth of the population, have attempted to restrict their intake of foods high in carbohydrates (Sanders and Katz; Hirsch). Proponents of low carb diets say they are the most effective way to lose weight. They yield health benefits such as lower blood pressure and improved cholesterol levels. Some doctors claim that low carbohydrate diets are overrated and caution that their long term effects are unknown. Although following a low carbohydrate diet can have many benefits—especially for people who are obese or diabetic—these diets are not necessarily the best option for everyone who wants to lose weight or improve their health.

Revised Paragraph:

> Picture this: you're standing in the aisle of your local grocery store when you see a chubby guy nearby staring at several brands of ketchup on display. After deliberating for a moment, he reaches for the bottle with the words "Low Carb!" displayed prominently on the label. (You can't help but notice that the low carb ketchup is higher priced.) Is he making a smart choice that will help him lose weight and enjoy better health—or is he just buying into the latest diet fad? Proponents of low carb diets say they are not only the most effective way to lose weight but also yield health benefits such as lower blood pressure and improved cholesterol levels. Meanwhile, some doctors claim that low carbohydrate diets are overrated and caution that their long term effects are unknown. Although following a low carbohydrate diet can have many benefits—especially for people who are obese or diabetic—these diets are not necessarily the best option for everyone who wants to lose weight or improve their health.

When you revise to improve cohesion, you analyze how the parts of your paper work together. You look for anything that seems awkward or out of place. Revision may involve deleting unnecessary material or rewriting parts of the paper so that the out-of-place material fits in smoothly. In a research paper, problems with cohesion usually occur when a writer has trouble integrating source material. If facts or quotations have been awkwardly dropped into a paragraph, they distract or confuse the reader instead of working to support the writer's point. Overusing paraphrased and quoted material has the same effect.

As Jorge reread his draft, he looked to see how the different pieces fit together to prove his thesis. He realized that he had too much information on the popularity of low-carb diets and the debate over their effect on weight loss, when his focus only emphasized the various health risks of low-carb diets, so he had to eliminate some material. He also realized that some of his supporting information needed to be integrated more carefully. Read the following paragraph, first without Jorge's revisions and then with them.

Initial Paragraph:

> One likely reason for these lackluster long-term results is that a low carbohydrate diet—like any restrictive diet—is difficult to adhere to for any extended period. Most people enjoy foods that are high in carbohydrates, and no one wants to be the person who always turns down that slice of pizza or birthday cake. In commenting on the Gardner study, experts at the Harvard School of Public Health noted that women in all four diet groups had difficulty following the plan. They further comment that because it is hard for dieters to stick to a low-carbohydrate eating plan, the initial success of these diets is short lived. Medical professionals caution that low carbohydrate diets are difficult for many people to follow consistently and that, to maintain a healthy weight, dieters should try to develop nutrition and exercise habits they can incorporate in their lives in the long term (Mayo Foundation). "For some people, [low carbohydrate diets] are great, but for most, any sensible eating and exercise plan would work just as well" (Kwon 78).

Revised Paragraph:

> One likely reason for these lackluster long-term results is that a low carbohydrate diet—like any restrictive diet—is difficult to adhere to for any extended period. In commenting on the Gardner study, experts at the Harvard School of Public Health noted that women in all four diet groups had difficulty following the plan. They further comment that because it is hard for dieters to stick to a low-carbohydrate eating plan, the initial success of these diets is short lived. Medical professionals caution that low carbohydrate diets are difficult for many people to follow consistently and that, to maintain a healthy weight, dieters should try to develop nutrition and exercise habits they can incorporate in their lives in the long term (Mayo Foundation).

Jorge decided that his comment about pizza and birthday cake came across as subjective and was not necessary to make his point, so he deleted it. He also realized that not only was the quotation at the end of the paragraph "dropped in," but also it was awkward and ineffective. How would his readers know who Kwon was or why her opinion should be taken seriously? Adding a signal phrase helped Jorge integrate this quotation smoothly and establish the credibility of his source.

Example

Writing at Work

Understanding cohesion can also benefit you in the workplace, especially when you have to write and deliver a presentation. Speakers sometimes rely on cute graphics or funny quotations to hold their audience's attention. If you choose to use these elements, make sure they work well with the substantive content of your presentation. For example, if you are asked to give

a financial presentation and the financial report shows that the company lost money, then funny illustrations would not be relevant or appropriate for the presentation.

EXERCISE 21

Read your paper paragraph by paragraph. Highlight your thesis and the topic sentence of each paragraph. Using the thesis and topic sentences as starting points, outline the ideas you presented—just as you would do if you were outlining a chapter in a textbook. Do not look at the outline you created during prewriting. You may write in the margins of your draft or create a formal outline on a separate sheet of paper. Next, reread your paper more slowly, looking for how ideas flow from sentence to sentence. Identify places where adding a transition or recasting a sentence would make the ideas flow more logically. Review the topics on your outline. Is there a logical flow of ideas? Identify any places where you may need to reorganize ideas.

EXERCISE 22

Collaborative exercise: Exchange papers with a classmate. Apply the steps in Exercise 21 to your peer's draft. Share and discuss your observations about the draft's organization and clarity with your peer.

EXERCISE 23

Read the body paragraphs of your paper first. Each time you come to a place that cites information from sources, ask yourself what purpose this information serves. Check that it helps support a point and that it is clearly related to the other sentences in the paragraph. Identify unnecessary information from sources that you can delete. Identify places where you need to revise your writing so that readers understand the significance of the details cited from sources. Skim the body paragraphs once more, looking for any paragraphs that seem packed with citations. Review these paragraphs carefully for cohesion. Review your introduction and conclusion. Make sure the information presented works with ideas in the body of the paper.

EXERCISE 24

Collaborative exercise: Exchange papers with a classmate. Identify places your peer needs to revise so that readers understand the significance of the details cited from sources. Share and discuss your observations about the draft's incorporation of source material with your peer.

Revising to Improve Style and Tone

Once you are certain that the content of your paper fulfills your purpose, you can begin revising to improve style and tone. Together, your style and tone create the voice of your paper, or how you come across to readers. Style refers to the way you use language as a writer—the sentence structures you use and the word choices you make. Tone is the attitude toward your subject and audience that you convey through your word choice.

Although accepted writing styles will vary within different disciplines, the underlying goal is the same—to come across to your readers as a knowledgeable, authoritative guide. Writing about research is like being a tour guide who walks readers through a topic. A stuffy, overly formal tour guide can make readers feel put off or intimidated. Too much informality or humor can make readers wonder whether the tour guide really knows what he or she is talking about. Extreme or emotionally charged language comes across as unbalanced.

To help prevent being overly formal or informal, determine an appropriate style and tone at the beginning of the research process. Consider your topic and audience because these can help dictate style and tone. For example, a paper on new breakthroughs in cancer research should be more formal than a paper on ways to get a good night's sleep. A strong research paper comes across as straightforward, appropriately academic, and serious.

Using plural nouns and pronouns or recasting a sentence can help you keep your language gender neutral while avoiding awkwardness. For example, the following sentence is gender-biased: "When a writer cites a source in the body of his paper, he must list it on his references page." The following is less gender biased but awkward: "When a writer cites a source in the body of his or her paper, he or she must list it on his or her references page." Making the subject third-person plural avoids bias and awkwardness: "Writers must list any sources cited in the body of a paper on the references page."

As you revise your paper, make sure your style is consistent throughout. Look for instances where a word, phrase, or sentence just does not seem to fit with the rest of the writing. It is best to reread for style after you have completed the other revisions so you are not distracted by any larger content issues. Revising strategies to use include the following:

- Read your paper aloud. Sometimes your ears catch inconsistencies that your eyes miss.
- Share your paper with another reader whom you trust to give you honest feedback. It is often difficult

to evaluate one's own style objectively—especially in the final phase of a challenging writing project. Another reader may be more likely to notice instances of wordiness, confusing language, or other issues that affect style and tone.

- Line edit your paper slowly, sentence by sentence. You may even wish to use a sheet of paper to cover everything on the page except the paragraph you are editing—that forces you to read slowly and carefully. Mark any areas where you notice problems in style or tone, and then take time to rework those sections.

On reviewing his paper, Jorge found that he had generally used an appropriate academic style and tone. However, he noticed one glaring exception—his first paragraph. He realized there were places where his overly informal writing could come across as unserious or, worse, disparaging. Revising his word choice and omitting a humorous aside helped Jorge maintain a consistent tone. Read his revision below.

Initial Opening Paragraph:

> Picture this: you're standing in the aisle of your local grocery store when you see a chubby guy nearby staring at several brands of ketchup on display. After deliberating for a moment, he reaches for the bottle with the words "Low-Carb!" displayed prominently on the label. (You can't help but notice that the low-carb ketchup is higher priced.) Is he making a smart choice that will help him lose weight and enjoy better health—or is he just buying into the latest diet fad?

Revised Opening Paragraph:

> Picture this: standing in the aisle of your local grocery store, you see an overweight man nearby staring at several brands of ketchup on display. After deliberating for a moment, he reaches for the bottle with the words "Low-Carb!" displayed prominently on the label. Is he making a smart choice that will help him lose weight and enjoy better health—or is he just buying into the latest diet fad?

Editing Your Paper

After revising your paper to address problems in content or style, you will complete one final editorial review. Perhaps you have already caught and corrected minor mistakes during previous revisions. Nevertheless, give your draft a final edit to make sure it is error-free. Given how much work you have put into your research paper, you will want to check for any errors that could distract or confuse your readers. Using the spell-checking feature in your word-processing program can be helpful, but this should not replace a full, careful review of your document. Be sure to check for any errors that may have come up frequently for you in the past. Your final edit should focus on two broad areas:

- Errors in citing and formatting sources
- Errors in grammar, mechanics, usage, and spelling

For in-depth information on these topics, see the chapter on Grammar, the Purdue University's Online Writing Lab, or a print writing manual, such as *The MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers.*

During the process of revising and editing, Jorge made changes in the content and style of his paper. He also gave the paper a final review to check for overall correctness and, particularly, correct style for his citations and formatting. Read the final draft of his paper.

Sample Research Paper

Jorge Ramirez
Professor Thompson
English 1101
1 May 2014

Beyond the Hype: Evaluating Low-Carb Diets

Picture this: standing in the aisle of your local grocery store, you see an overweight man nearby staring at several brands of ketchup on display. After deliberating for a moment, he reaches for the bottle with the words "Low-Carb!" displayed prominently on the label. Is he making a smart choice that will help him lose weight and enjoy better health—or is he just buying into the latest diet fad? Over the past decade, increasing numbers of Americans have jumped on the low-carb bandwagon. Regardless of whether or not low-carb diets are most effective for weight loss, their potential benefits for weight loss must be weighed against other long-term health outcomes such as hypertension, the risk of heart disease, and cholesterol levels. Research findings in these areas are mixed. For this reason, people considering following a low-carbohydrate diet to lose weight should be advised of the potential risks in doing so.

Research on how low-carbohydrate diets affect cholesterol levels is inconclusive. Some researchers have found that low-carbohydrate diets raise levels of HDL, or "good" cholesterol (Ebbeling et al. 2093). Unfortunately, they may also raise levels of LDL, or "bad" cholesterol, which is associated with heart disease (Ebbeling et al. 2094). A particular concern is that as dieters on a low-carbohydrate plan increase their intake of meats and dairy products—foods that are high in protein and fat—they are also likely to consume increased amounts of saturated fats, resulting in clogged arteries and again increasing the risk of heart disease. Studies have identified possible risks to cardiovascular health associated with low-carb diets, so the American Heart Association cautions that doctors cannot yet assess how following a low-carbohydrate diet affects patients' health over a long-term period.

Some studies have found that following a low-carb diet helped lower patients' blood pressure (Bell 32). Again, however, excessive consumption of foods high in saturated fats may, over time, lead to the development of clogged arteries and increase risk of hypertension. According to the American Heart Association,"a high carbohydrate diet that includes fruits, vegetables, nonfat dairy products and whole grains also has been shown to reduce blood pressure." Eliminating those foods in a low-carb diet may raise blood pressure because intake of sodium may increase and intake of minerals like calcium, potassium, and magnesium, all of which are important for maintaining healthy blood pressure, may be decreased. Choosing lean meats over those high in fat and supplementing the diet with high-fiber, low-glycemic index carbohydrates, such as leafy green vegetables, is a healthier plan for dieters to follow.

Perhaps most surprisingly, low-carbohydrate diets are not necessarily advantageous for patients with Type II diabetes. According to Tracey Neithercott, some people with diabetes are better able to control their blood sugar when they reduce their carb intake, but others are not, and there are no studies that prove one single approach is best for everyone. One problem is that there are no long-term studies of a large scale that have examined this issue in detail. Neithercott advises diabetics to monitor blood sugar levels carefully and to consult with their health care provider or a registered dietitian to develop a plan for healthy eating.

Low-carb diets have garnered a great deal of positive attention, and it is not entirely undeserved. These diets do lead to rapid weight loss, and they often result in greater weight loss over a period of months than other diet plans. Significantly overweight or obese people may find low-carb eating plans the most effective

for losing weight and reducing the risks associated with carrying excess body fat. However, because these diets are difficult for some people to adhere to and because their potential long-term health effects are still being debated, they are not necessarily the ideal choice for anyone who wants to lose weight. A moderately overweight person who wants to lose only a few pounds is best advised to choose whatever plan will help him stay active and consume fewer calories consistently—whether or not it involves eating low-carb ketchup.

Works Cited

Bell, John R. "Low Carb Beats Low Fat Diet for Early Losses but not Long Term." OBGYN News 41.12 (2006): 32. Medline with Full Text (at EBSCOhost). Accessed 15 Apr. 2014.

Ebbeling, Charles B., et al. "Effects of a Low-glycemic Load vs Low-fat Diet in Obese Young Adults: A Randomized Trial." Journal of the American Medical Association297.19 (2007): 2092-2102. Medline with Full Text (at EBSCOhost). Accessed 25 Apr. 2014.

"High Protein Diets." American Heart Association. American Heart Association, 2014. Accessed 25 Apr. 2014.

Neithercott, Tracey. "Are Carbs the Enemy? The Debate Over Eating and Diabetes." Diabetes Forecast: The Healthy Living Magazine. March 2011. Accessed 18 Apr. 2014.

Example

Writing at Work

Following MLA style guidelines may require time and effort. However, it is good practice to learn how to follow accepted conventions in any professional field. Many large corporations create a style manual with guidelines for editing and formatting documents produced by that corporation. Employees should follow the style manual when creating internal documents and documents for publication.

Checklist for Revision

Ask yourself the following about your draft to help you revise for:

- Organization
  - Overall:
    - Does my introduction proceed clearly from the opening to the thesis?
    - Does each body paragraph have a clear main idea that relates to the thesis?
    - Do the main ideas in the body paragraphs flow in a logical order? Is each paragraph con-

nected to the one before it?
        - Do I need to add or revise topic sentences or transitions to make the overall flow of ideas clearer?
        - Does my conclusion summarize my main ideas and revisit my thesis?
    - At the paragraph level:
        - Does the topic sentence clearly state the main idea?
        - Do the details in the paragraph relate to the main idea?
        - Do I need to recast any sentences or add transitions to improve the flow of sentences?
- Cohesion
    - Does the opening of the paper clearly connect to the broader topic and thesis?
    - Do entertaining quotations or anecdotes serve a purpose?
    - Have I included support from research for each main point in the body of my paper?
    - Have I included introductory material before any quotations so quotations do not stand alone in paragraphs?
    - Does paraphrased and quoted material clearly serve to develop my own points?
    - Do I need to add to or revise parts of the paper to help the reader understand how certain information from a source is relevant?
    - Are there any places where I have overused material from sources?
    - Does my conclusion make sense based on the rest of the paper?
    - Are any new questions or suggestions in the conclusion clearly linked to earlier material?
- Style and Tone
    - Does my paper avoid excessive wordiness?
    - Are my sentences varied in length and structure?
    - Have I used points of view (pronouns) effectively and appropriately for the assignment?
    - Have I used active voice whenever possible?
    - Have I defined specialized terms that might be unfamiliar to readers?
    - Have I used clear, straightforward language whenever possible and avoided unnecessary jargon?
    - Does my paper support my argument using a balanced tone—neither too indecisive nor too forceful?
    - Does my paper avoid vague or imprecise terms? Slang? Repetition of the same phrases ("Smith states…, Jones states…") to introduce quoted and paraphrased material? Exclusive use of masculine pronouns or awkward use of he or she? Use of language with negative connotations? Use of outdated or offensive terms?

Apply the following checklists to your paper before submitting your final draft:

- Grammar, Mechanics, Punctuation, Usage, and Spelling
    - My paper is free of grammatical errors, such as errors in subject-verb agreement and sentence fragments.
    - My paper is free of errors in punctuation and mechanics, such as misplaced commas or incorrectly formatted source titles.
    - My paper is free of common usage errors, such as "a lot" and "alright". For additional guidance,

see: word choice, commonly confused words.
    - My paper is free of spelling errors. I have proofread my paper for spelling in addition to using the spell-checking feature in my word-processing program.
    - I have checked my paper for any editing errors that I know I tend to make frequently.

- Citations
    - Within the body of my paper, each fact or idea taken from a source is credited to the correct source.
    - Each in-text citation includes the author's name (or, if no author is given, the organization name or source title).
    - I have used the correct format for in-text and parenthetical citations. If my source gives page numbers, I have included page numbers in parentheses directly after the quote or paraphrase taken from that page or pages.
    - Each source cited in the body of my paper has a corresponding entry in the Works Cited at the end of my paper.

- Formatting
    - All entries in my Works Cited are in alphabetical order by author's last name (or by title or organization if no author is listed).
    - My Works Cited is consistently double spaced (both within and between entries), and each entry uses proper indentation ("hanging indent": indented on the second and all subsequent lines).
    - Each entry in my Works Cited includes all the necessary information for that source type, in the correct sequence and format.
    - My paper includes a heading (with your name, course information, and date) in the upper left-hand corner of the first page; if no heading is used or your instructor requests it, substitute a title page for the heading.
    - My paper includes a title that reflects the topic of my paper.
    - My paper includes a running head (page numbers, or a header in the upper right-hand corner of each page of the paper).
    - The margins of my paper are set at one inch. The text is double spaced and set in a standard 12-point font.

EXERCISE 25

Re-read your paper line by line. Check for the issues noted in the questions about style and tone and the checklists about conventions, above, as well as any other sentence-level aspects of your writing that you have previously identified as areas for

improvement. Mark any places in your paper where you notice problems in style, tone, or clarity and then take time to rework those sections

PART II

SENTENCE STRUCTURE

Grammar

Syntax

Components of a Sentence

A complete sentence consists of a subject and a predicate. The subject is the word or group of words that names the person, place, thing, or idea that the sentence is about, and the predicate consists of the verb and any words that are necessary to complete its meaning. Both subject and predicate are necessary for the sentence to express a complete thought. In a way, every sentence can be compared to a story. Like a story, a sentence must be about someone or something, and that person or thing must have something said about it. In grammatical terms, a complete sentence is an independent clause, which is a group of words that contains a subject and a predicate and can stand on its own as a complete thought.

Examples

Example: "I could not play in the basketball game."

In this sentence the subject is "I", and the rest of the sentence is the predicate.

Now consider this clause:

Example: "Because I sprained my ankle."

Here also the subject is "I", and there is a predicate, "sprained my ankle", but this clause is "dependent" (or subordinate), which means that in order to express its meaning completely it must be joined to an independent clause, as follows:

Example: "Because I sprained my ankle, I could not play in the basketball game."

As this example illustrates, a "dependent" (or "subordinate") clause cannot stand on its own. It must be joined to an "independent" clause to make its meaning clear. All complete sentences must contain at least one "independent clause".

Compound Subjects

A sentence may have more than one person, place, thing, or idea as the subject. When this occurs, the sentence has a compound subject.

Examples

Example: The students and teachers left the building when the fire alarm sounded.

In this example, the phrase "students and teachers" is a compound subject.

Prepositional Phrases

A phrase is a group of words that cannot function as a clause because it lacks either a subject, a predicate, or both. A prepositional phrase is a modifying unit that indicates a relationship of some kind (often a relationship of space or time) between the object of the preposition and another word.

Examples

Example: The book was found underneath the couch.

In this example, "underneath the couch" is a prepositional phrase. The object of the preposition is "couch", and the preposition "underneath" indicates the relationship between the subject of the sentence (book) and the couch.

Common prepositions include in, on, of, under, near, by, with, and about.

Participial Phrases

Just as prepositional phrases are built on prepositions, participial phrases are built on either the past or present participle of a verb. They are used as modifiers and usually describe nouns. The participles commonly used in English are the present participle (the –ing form of verbs) and the past participle (the –ed form of regular verbs). Thus, "walking" and "walked" are the "present" and "past participles" of the verb "to walk". A participial phrase consists of the verb participle and any modifiers that go with it.

Examples

Example: walking over rocky ground.

In this example, "walking" is the participle and "over rocky ground" (a prepositional phrase) completes the participial phrase.

Since many participial phrases contain the participle of an action verb, students sometimes confuse a participial phrase with the main verb of a sentence. Look closely, though, and you will see that the action word in a participial phrase is never a complete verb. It is usually only a past or present participle that lacks the helping verb it would need to form a predicate.

Example: A young man staring at his cell phone bumped into me.

The subject of this sentence is "A young man", and there may seem to be two predicates, "staring at his cell phone" and "bumped into me". One of these, however, is only a participial phrase. How can you tell which one? If you remove the first of these two phrases, you get "A young man bumped into me". This is clearly a complete sentence with a verb, "bumped", in the past tense. However, if you remove the second phrase, you get "A young man staring at his cell phone". Is this a complete sentence? Compare it with this:

- A young man was staring at his cell phone.

Only when we add "was" do we have a complete sentence. Why? Because "staring" cannot function as a verb without the helping verb "was" or "is". So in our original sentence "staring at his cell phone" is a participial phrase used to describe the young man, and the predicate is "bumped into me".

EXERCISE 1

Read the following sentences. On your notebook, write down the subjects, and the prepositional phrases of each sentence:

1. The gym is open until nine o'clock tonight.
2. We went to the store to get some ice.
3. The student with the most extra credit will win a homework pass.
4. Maya and Tia found an abandoned cat by the side of the road.
5. The driver of that pickup truck skidded on the ice.
6. Anita won the race with time to spare.
7. The people who work for that company were surprised about the merger.
8. Working in haste means that you are more likely to make mistakes.
9. The soundtrack has over sixty songs in languages from around the world.

10. His latest invention does not work, but it has inspired the rest of us.

Types of Sentences

Most English sentences, no matter how long or complicated, make use of the following five basic sentence patterns:

Examples

Pattern 1: Subject–Verb

Example: The hammer fell.

The verb [fell] in this type of sentence is "intransitive", meaning that it does not require a direct object, as the transitive verbs do in patterns 4 and 5. Also, not being a linking verb (see patterns 2 and 3), it does not require a complement. It is possible, then, for a sentence using this pattern to be comprised of only a subject and a verb, as in this example. However, modifiers can always be added, making the sentence longer.

Consider this example:

- The hammer fell with great force.

In this example "with great force" is a prepositional phrase added to describe (or modify) how the hammer fell. But because this prepositional phrase is extra material that is not essential to the sentence's structure (the sentence is grammatically complete without it), this longer version is still an example of the basic "Subject-Verb" sentence pattern.

Examples

Pattern 2: Subject–Linking Verb–Noun

Example: The professor is an economist.

This pattern is distinguished by its use of a linking verb. The most common linking verb in English is "to be", which is conjugated as "is" in this example. In this pattern, the linking verb is used to re-name the subject by linking it to another noun, as

in this example where “the professor” is said to be “an economist”. This re-naming noun is known as the complement of the linking verb.

Examples

Pattern 3: Subject–Linking Verb–Adjective

Example: The athlete is tall.

As in pattern 2, this pattern uses a linking verb “is” to connect the subject with a complement, but here the complement is an adjective “tall” that describes the subject.

Examples

Pattern 4: Subject–Verb–Direct Object

Example: The pitcher threw the ball.

The verb in this pattern is “transitive”: it requires that the action be performed on something or someone. In other words, something or someone receives the action of the verb “threw”, in this example, and that thing or person is the direct object “the ball”, in this example.

Examples

Pattern 5: Subject–Verb–Indirect Object–Direct Object

Example: The lobbyists gave the Congressmen money.

In this pattern, the transitive verb takes both a “direct object” and an “indirect object”. In this example, the direct object is

"money" because "money" is the thing that was given and the indirect object is "Congressmen". The indirect object identifies to whom (or which) or for whom (or which) the action is done. The indirect object is usually a noun or pronoun, and in this pattern it comes before the direct object. Usually a sentence using this pattern can be re-written in a form that places the indirect object in a prepositional phrase that comes after the direct object, thus:

- The lobbyists gave money to the Congressmen.

Here the indirect object, "the Congressmen", becomes the object of the preposition "to".

Compound Sentences: Joining Clauses with Coordination

A compound sentence consists of two independent clauses joined by coordination. Coordination connects the two clauses in a way that emphasizes both clauses equally. Consider these two sentences:

Original sentences: I spent my entire paycheck last week. I am staying home this weekend.

In their current form, these sentences contain two separate ideas that may or may not be related. Am I staying home this week because I spent my paycheck, or is there another reason for my lack of enthusiasm to leave the house? To indicate a relationship between the two ideas, we can use the coordinating conjunction "so":

Revised sentence: I spent my entire paycheck last week, so I am staying home this weekend.

The revised sentence illustrates that the two ideas are connected. Notice that the sentence retains two independent clauses "I spent my entire paycheck; I am staying home this weekend" because each can stand alone as a complete idea.

Coordinating Conjunctions

A coordinating conjunction is a word that joins two independent clauses. The most common coordinating conjunctions are for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so. Note that a comma precedes the coordinating conjunction when it joins two independent clauses.

Table of Coordinating Conjunctions

Independent Clause	Coordinating Conjunction	Independent Clause	Revised Sentence
I will not be attending the dance.	for (indicates a reason or cause)	I have no one to go with.	I will not be attending the dance, for I have no one to go with.
Posters announcing the dance are everywhere.	and (joins two ideas)	Teachers have talked about it in class.	Posters announcing the dance are everywhere, and teachers have talked about it in class.
Jessie isn't going to be at the dance.	nor (indicates a negative)	Tom won't be there either.	Jessie isn't going to be at the dance, nor will Tom be there.
The fundraisers are hoping for a record-breaking attendance.	but, yet (both words indicate a contrast; but is more commonly used)	I don't think many people are going	The fundraisers are hoping for a record-breaking attendance, but I don't think many people are going.OR The fundraisers are hoping for a record-breaking attendance, yet I don't think many people are going.
I might go to the next fundraising event.	or (offers an alternative)	I might donate some money to the cause.	I might go to the next fundraising event, or I might donate some money to the cause.
Buying a new dress is expensive.	so (indicates a result)	By staying home I will save money.	Buying a new dress is expensive, so by staying home I will save money.

Tip

To help you remember the seven coordinating conjunctions, think of the acronym FANBOYS: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so. Remember that when you use a coordinating conjunction to connect independent clauses, a comma should precede the conjunction. (Exception: the comma is sometimes left out when the clauses are short and closely related. Example: John drove and I gave directions.)

Conjunctive Adverbs

Another method of joining two independent clauses with related and equal ideas is to use a "conjunctive adverb" and a "semicolon". Like coordinating conjunctions, conjunctive adverbs can join independent

clauses and indicate a particular relationship between them, but conjunctive adverbs create a stronger break between the clauses than coordinating conjunction do. Read the following sentences:

Original sentences: Bridget wants to take part in the next Olympics. She trains every day.

Since these sentences contain two equal and related ideas, they may be joined using a conjunctive adverb. Now, read the revised sentence:

Revised sentence: Bridget wants to take part in the next Olympics; therefore, she trains every day.

The revised sentence explains the relationship between Bridget's desire to take part in the next Olympics and her daily training. Notice that the conjunctive adverb comes after a semicolon that separates the two clauses and is followed by a comma.

The table below lists common conjunctive adverbs and demonstrates their function.

Table of Conjunctive Adverbs

Function	Conjunctive Adverb	Example
Addition	also, furthermore, moreover, besides	Alicia was late for class and stuck in traffic; furthermore, her shoe heel had broken and she had forgotten her lunch.
Comparison	similarly, likewise	Recycling aluminum cans is beneficial to the environment; similarly, reusing plastic bags and switching off lights reduces waste.
Contrast	instead, however, conversely	Most people do not walk to work; instead, they drive or take the train.
Emphasis	namely, certainly, indeed	The Siberian tiger is a rare creature; indeed, there are fewer than five hundred left in the wild.
Cause and Effect	accordingly, consequently, hence, thus	I missed my train this morning; consequently, I was late for my meeting.
Time	finally, next, subsequently, then	Tim crossed the barrier, jumped over the wall, and pushed through the hole in the fence; finally, he made it to the station.

EXERCISE 2

Combine each sentence pair into a single sentence using either a coordinating conjunction or a conjunctive adverb:

1. Pets are not allowed in Mr. Taylor's building. He owns several cats and a parrot.
2. New legislation prevents drivers from sending or reading text messages while driving. Many people continue to use their phones illegally.
3. The coroner concluded that the young man had taken a lethal concoction of drugs. By the time his relatives found him, nothing could be done.
4. Amphibians are vertebrates that live on land and in the water. Flatworms are invertebrates that live only in water.
5. Ashley carefully fed and watered her tomato plants all summer. The tomatoes grew juicy and ripe.
6. When he lost his car key, Simon attempted to open the door with a wire hanger, a credit card, and a paper clip. He called the manufacturer for advice.

Complex Sentences: Joining Clauses with Subordination

Subordination joins two sentences with related ideas by combining them into an independent clause (a complete sentence) and a dependent clause (a construction that relies on the independent clause, also called the main clause, to complete its meaning). While coordination allows a writer to give equal weight to the two ideas that are being combined, subordination enables a writer to emphasize one idea over the other. Take a look at the following sentences:

Original sentences: Tracy stopped to help the injured man. She would be late for work.

To illustrate that these two ideas are related, we can rewrite them as a single sentence using the subordinating conjunction even though.

Revised sentence: Even though Tracy would be late for work, she stopped to help the injured man.

In the revised version, we now have an independent clause "she stopped to help the injured man" that stands as a complete sentence, and a dependent clause "even though Tracy would be late for work" that is subordinate to the main clause. Notice that the revised sentence emphasizes the fact that Tracy stopped to help the injured man, rather than the fact that she would be late for work. We could also write the sentence this way:

Revised sentence: Tracy stopped to help the injured man even though she would be late for work.

The meaning remains the same in both sentences, with the subordinating conjunction "even though" introducing the dependent clause.

Tip

To punctuate sentences correctly, look at the position of the main clause and the subordinate clause. If a subordinate clause precedes the main clause, use a comma. If the subordinate clause follows the main clause, no punctuation is required. ***Exception****: subordinate clauses that begin with conjunctions that indicate concession (see table below) are sometimes preceded by a comma, even when they follow the main clause.*

Subordinating Conjunctions and Adverb Clauses

A subordinating conjunction is a word that joins a subordinate (dependent) clause to a main (independent) clause. Since the resulting subordinate clause modifies the verb in the main clause, the subordinate unit is called an adverb clause.

Function	Subordinating Conjunction	Example
Concession	although, while, though, whereas, even though	Sarah completed her report even though she had to stay late to get it done.
Condition	if, unless, until	Until we know what is causing the problem, we will not be able to fix it.
Manner (used to make a comparison)	as if, as though	The students in the conference room stopped talking at once, as though they had been stunned into silence.
Place	where, wherever	Where the trail split, our guide stopped, unsure of which route to take.
Reason	because, since, so that, in order that	Because the air conditioning was turned up so high, everyone in the office wore sweaters.
Time	after, before, while, once, when, as, as soon as	After the meeting had finished, we all went to lunch.

EXERCISE 3

Combine each sentence pair into a single sentence using a subordinating conjunction:

1. A snow storm disrupted traffic all over the east coast. There will be long delivery delays this week.
2. My neighbor had his television volume turned up too high. I banged on his door and asked him to keep the noise down.
3. Jessica prepared the potato salad and the sautéed vegetables. Ashley marinated the chicken.
4. Romeo poisons himself. Juliet awakes to find Romeo dead and stabs herself with a dagger.

Key Takeaways

- Coordination and subordination join two sentences with related ideas.
- Coordination joins sentences with related and equal ideas, whereas subordination joins sentences with related but unequal ideas.
- Sentences can be coordinated using either a coordinating conjunction and a comma or a conjunctive adverb and a semicolon.
- Subordinate adverb clauses are made by the use of a subordinating conjunction.
- In a sentence with an adverb clause, a comma is generally used to separate the main clause from the dependent clause if the dependent clause is placed at the beginning of the sentence.

Relative Pronouns and Adjective Clauses

While an adverb clause modifies the verb in an independent clause, an adjective clause modifies a noun. The modified noun may function in the sentence in any number of ways. It may be a subject, complement, direct object, or the object of a preposition.

Consider the following:

> Original Sentences: Jill and her friends camped near a silver mine. The mine had been abandoned for fifty years.

The second sentence modifies or tells about the silver mine, which is the object of a preposition (near) in the first sentence. We can turn the second sentence into a subordinate adjective clause and attach it to the first sentence.

> Combined Sentences: Jill and her friends camped near a silver mine that had been abandoned for fifty years.

The adjective clause is highlighted in yellow. That replaces the original subject of the second sentence (The mine) to form a subordinate adjective clause, and the clause is then attached to the first sentence, which becomes the main clause. The relative pronoun in this example is that. Like subordinating conjunctions, relative pronouns are used to make a clause dependent (or subordinate). But unlike subordinating conjunctions, relative pronouns take the place of another word, just as other pronouns do. And unlike adverb clauses, which can be located either before or after a main clause, an adjective clause must be located immediately after the noun that it modifies. If this rule is not followed, the adjective clause becomes a misplaced modifier (see Misplaced Modifiers). The following words can all function as relative pronouns: who, whom, whose, which, that, when, where.

Restrictive and Nonrestrictive Adjective Clauses

An adjective clause is restrictive if it is essential for identifying (restricting) the noun that it modifies. A nonrestrictive clause may be important to the sentence, but it is not essential for identifying the noun. This distinction is important because nonrestrictive clauses must be set off from the main clause with commas. Consider these examples:

- My brother Frank, who ran cross country in high school, beat everybody in the foot race.
- A young man who ran cross country in high school beat everybody in the foot race.

Both these sentences contain the same adjective clause “who ran cross country in high school”, but in the first example the clause modifies a subject identified with a proper noun “Frank” and the designation “my brother”. Consequently, the adjective clause is not essential to the identification of the subject. It is nonrestrictive and set off with two commas, one before the clause and one after it.

In the second example, the subject is simply “A young man.” Consequently, the adjective clause is necessary to the identification of who this particular young man is. The clause is restrictive and is not set off with commas (see comma use).

The table below illustrates relative pronouns and how they function to create adjective clauses.

Table of Relative Pronouns

Function of Relative Pronoun	Relative Pronoun	Example (with adjective clause highlighted)
Takes the place of a noun referring to people.	who	My roommate, who is from Brazil, is majoring n physics
Takes the place of a direct object referring to people.	whom	The band hired Slim Swayze, whom the lead singer had known in Ogden, to play the harmonica. Notes: "Whom" is generally used only in formal writing. "Who" is often used in its place in colloquial English. When "whom" is used in a restrictive clause, it may be deleted from the sentence. Example: The band leader hired a musician ~~whom~~ he had known in Ogden to play the harmonica.

EXERCISE 4

Use coordination and/or subordination to combine each set of simple sentences into a single sentence.

1. Heroin is an extremely addictive drug. Thousands of heroin addicts die each year.
2. Shakespeare's writing is still relevant today. He wrote about timeless themes. These themes include love, hate, jealousy, death, and destiny.
3. Gay marriage was first legal in the U.S in the six states of Iowa, Massachusetts, Connecticut, Vermont, New Hampshire, and Maine. Other states followed their example.
4. Prewriting is a vital stage of the writing process. Prewriting helps you organize your ideas. Types of prewriting include outlining, brainstorming, and idea mapping.
5. Mitch Bancroft is a famous writer. He also serves as a governor on the local school board. Mitch's two children attend the school.

Common Errors: Fragments and Run-On Sentences

Fragments

A fragment occurs when a group of words that does not form a complete sentence is punctuated as though it is a complete sentence. Here are three common types of fragments and ways to correct them:

The fragment may lack a predicate because the verb is incomplete:

Fragment: The runners staggering in the 100-degree heat.

Complete sentence: The runners were staggering in the 100-degree heat.

(Note: The present participle staggering is not a complete verb without the helping verb were. See Progressive Verb Tenses.)

The fragment may be a dependent (subordinate) clause that needs to be attached to an independent clause:

Takes the place of a noun referring to things. Generally used in nonrestrictive clauses.	which	*The Old Man and the Sea*, which I read last year, tells the story of a fisherman in the Gulf of Mexico
Takes the place of a noun referring to people or things. Used only in restrictive clauses.	that	The tourist blundered down a street that seemed to lead nowhere. Note: When "that" is used to replace a direct object, it may be deleted from the sentence. Example: The tacos ~~that~~ I ate were delicious.
Creates a clause that modifies a particular time.	when	Audrey and I recalled the time when we played together on the volleyball team.
Creates a clause that modifies a particular place.	where	Joe spent spring break in North Carolina, where his cousins live.

Fragment: Unless she could earn the money for tuition.

Complete sentence: Unless she could earn the money for tuition, she would have to drop out of school.

(Note: The fragment here is an adverb clause and does not express a complete thought unless it is attached to an independent clause. See Complex Sentences.)

Fragment: Which was the best thing to do.

Complete sentence: My sister decided to sell the house, which was the best thing to do.

(Note: The fragment here is an adjective clause and does not express a complete thought unless it is attached to an independent clause. See Complex Sentences.)

The fragment may be a subject with modifiers that needs a linking verb.

Fragment: Doubt and mistrust everywhere, fogging the minds of managers and workers alike.

Complete Sentence: Doubt and mistrust were everywhere, fogging the minds of managers and workers alike.

(Note: "Were" supplies the needed linking verb in this sentence (see Sentence Patterns). "Fogging" may seem like a verb, but it is only part of a participial phrase and cannot be a complete verb without a helping verb. See Components of a Sentence.)

Run-on Sentences

Sentences with two or more independent clauses that have been incorrectly combined are known as run-on sentences. A run-on sentence may be either a fused sentence or a comma splice.

Fused sentence: A family of foxes lived under our shed young foxes played all over the yard.

Notice that there are two sentences here, one about a family of foxes, which ends with the word shed, and another about the young foxes. These two sentences are simply run together without any punctuation, coordination, or subordination, creating a fused sentence.

Comma splice: We looked outside, the kids were hopping on the trampoline.

Here the break between the two sentences is marked with only a comma. Since a comma is not a legitimate way to connect independent clauses, this creates a comma splice.

Correcting Run-on Sentences with Punctuation

One way to correct run-on sentences is to correct the punctuation.

Indicates a condition of ownership between the modified noun and the subject of the adjective clause.	whose	An elderly woman whose car had been stolen sat on a bench in the police station.

For example, adding a period will correct the run-on by creating two separate sentences. Using a semicolon between the two complete sentences will also correct the error. A semicolon allows you to keep the two closely related ideas together in one sentence. When you punctuate with a semicolon, make sure that both parts of the sentence are independent clauses.

Run-on (fused sentence): The accident closed both lanes of traffic we waited an hour for the wreckage to be cleared.

Corrected sentence: The accident closed both lanes of traffic; we waited an hour for the wreckage to be cleared.

When you use a semicolon to separate two independent clauses, you may wish to add a conjunctive adverb to show the connection between the two thoughts. After the semicolon, add the conjunctive adverb and follow it with a comma (see Compound Sentences).

Run-on (comma splice): The project was put on hold, we didn't have time to slow down, so we kept working.

Corrected sentence: The project was put on hold; however, we didn't have time to slow down, so we kept working.

Coordinating conjunctions (remember FANBOYS) and subordination, discussed in the sections on Compound Sentences and Complex Sentences, can also be used to fix run-on sentences.

EXERCISE 5

Use what you have learned so far to identify common sentence errors. Label each sentence as a fragment (F), a run-on sentence (R), or a correct, complete sentence (C) in your own notebook. Then, rewrite corrected sentences.

1. _____ Being absent hurts a student's grade, he or she should be in class every day.
2. _____ Having been interested in science most of her life, she did well in Biology 101.
3. _____ Hurry with your breakfast, you will miss the bus.
4. _____ Several students had the right answer; however, most of them failed the exam.
5. _____ Several girls expressed concerns about course selections, therefore, changes were made.
6. _____ Jim practiced the violin daily, he wanted to excel in music.
7. _____ The child loved his mother, but he did not want to obey her.
8. _____ I had a severe case of the flu last year.
9. _____ And had spent the first three days of my illness in bed.
10. _____ Because I was sick of my bed and decided I'd lie on the sofa and watch television.
11. _____ Only getting up to take care of the necessities of life.
12. _____ Then I must have fallen asleep.
13. _____ When I was suddenly conscious again.

14. _____ The wind howled outside, the house was damp and chilly, and my fever soared.
15. _____ Then somewhere in the blackness ahead of me, I saw a spot of light.
16. _____ What has happened to the economy, many Americans want the answer to this question.
17. _____ He was late for his appointment, then he forgot to bring his briefcase with him.
18. _____ Voting is a privilege, this privilege should not be taken for granted.
19. _____ Be ready for any emergency, plan ahead.
20. _____ Because I was sure that I had died.
21. _____ A friend is always willing to help, friendship is invaluable.
22. ____ Although he was sick, James came to class.
23. _____ Running a temperature between 102 and 107.
24. _____ We were excited about the game, and we won.
25. _____ Be careful with your answer, your grade could be affected.

Key Takeaways

- A sentence is complete when it contains both a subject and verb (predicate). A complete sentence makes sense on its own.
- Every sentence must have a subject, which usually appears at the beginning of the sentence. A subject may be a noun (a person, place, or thing) or a pronoun.
- A compound subject contains more than one noun.
- A prepositional phrase describes, or modifies, another word in the sentence but cannot be the subject of a sentence.
- A verb is often an action word that indicates what the subject is doing. Verbs may be action verbs (transitive or intransitive), linking verbs, or helping verbs.
- Remembering the five basic sentence patterns is useful when correcting grammar errors.
- Fragments and run-on sentences are two common errors in sentence construction.
- Fragments can be corrected by adding a missing subject or verb or combining a dependent clause with an independent clause.
- Run-on sentences can be corrected by adding appropriate punctuation or using coordination or subordination.

Subject-Verb Agreement

Making Sure Subject and Verbs Agree

Learning Objectives

1. Recognize typical subject/verb agreement.
2. Learn how to match the subject and verb when other words come between them, how to work with compound subjects, how to use titles involving collective subjects, and how to use indefinite subjects.
3. Learn the rules for matching subjects coming after the verb, relative pronouns, gerunds, infinitives, and singular subjects that look plural.

Subjects and verbs must agree in two ways: number (singular or plural) and person (first, second, or third). These two general rules hold through all the different subject/verb guidelines. As a rule, plural subjects end in *–s* and plural verbs do not end in *–s*.

Pairing Verbs with Singular and Plural Subjects

Many sentences have subjects and verbs that appear side by side. The subjects in these sentences are often clearly singular or plural, and they clearly determine the needed verb form.

- Situation: Typical singular subject followed directly by the verb.
  - Example: The US government establishes national parks on an ongoing basis, such as the six parks formed in Alaska in 1980.
    - Watch Out For: Don't get confused into thinking that a singular subject needs a verb without an *–s*. The plural version would be "governments establish."
- Situation: Typical plural subject followed directly by the verb.
  - Example: National parks provide wonderful opportunities for people to commune with nature.
    - Watch Out For: The subject "parks" is plural and it agrees with "provide." The singular version would be "park provides."

Matching Subjects and Verbs That Are Separated by Other Words

When words fall between a subject and verb, the singular/plural state of the subject is sometimes confus-

ing. Always make sure you are matching the verb to the subject and not to one of the words between the two.

- Situation: Words fall between subject and verb.
  - Example: Six national parks in Alaska were formed in 1980.
    - Watch Out For: Mistaking “Alaska” for the subject would make it seem as if the verb should be “was formed.”

Joining Plural Verbs to Compound or Double Subjects

Compound subjects joined by the word “and” are plural since there is more than one of them. Double subjects joined by “or” or “nor” match to a verb based on the status of the subject closest to the verb.

- Situation: Compound subject with plural verb.
  - Example: Rock and grass combine to make Badlands National Park amazing.
    - Watch Out For: “Rock and grass” is a plural subject formed by two singular words. Don’t get confused and use “combines” for the verb because the individual subjects are singular.
- Situation: Non-compound double subject functioning as a singular subject
  - Example: Depending on where you look, rock or grass dominates your view.
    - Watch out for: Since the subjects are joined by “or,” they do not automatically become plural because there are two of them.

Pairing Singular Verbs with Titles and Collective Subjects

Regardless of the singular or plural nature of the words within a title, the title is considered one unit; thus it is a singular noun. Similarly, collective nouns, such as “committee,” function as singular nouns regardless of how many people or things might actually make up the collective noun.

- Situation: Title with singular verb.
  - Example: Everglades National Park preserves thousands of acres of wetlands.
    - Watch Out For: This title isn’t plural just because word “Everglades” is plural. The park is one thing and, therefore, is singular.
- Situation: Collective subject with singular verb.
  - The team meets twice a year at Far View Lodge in Mesa Verde National Park.
    - Watch Out For: Although you know that the “team” is made up of more than one person, you must view “team” as a single unit.

Teaming Singular Verbs with Indefinite Subjects

Whether an indefinite subject is singular or plural depends on whether the indefinite noun has a singular or plural meaning on its own or based on the rest of the sentence.

- Situation: Indefinite subject with singular meaning on its own.
  - Example: Each of the fossils in the Petrified Forest National Park tells a story.

        - Watch Out For: Even though there is more than one fossil, the word “each” is always singular. Many indefinite subjects are always singular. Examples include another, anyone, anything, each, everybody, everything, neither, nobody, one, other, and something.
- Situation: Indefinite subject with singular meaning based on the rest of the sentence.
    - Example: All of Arizona was once located in a tropical region.
        - Watch Out For: Since “Arizona” is singular, “all” is singular. Some indefinite subjects can be singular or plural. Examples include all, any, more, most, none, some, and such.
- Situation: Indefinite subject with plural meaning based on the rest of the sentence.
    - Example: All the petrified trees in the Petrified Forest National Park are millions of years old.
        - Watch Out For: Since “trees” is plural, “all” is plural.
- Situation: Indefinite subject with plural meaning on its own.
    - Example: Both scrub-land and rock formations are common in desert settings.
        - Watch Out For: Some indefinite subjects are always plural. Examples include both, few, fewer, many, others, several, and they.

Choosing Verbs When the Subject Comes after the Verb

The standard sentence format in English presents the subject before the verb. In reversed sentences, you need to find the subject and then make sure it matches the verb. To find the subject, fill the following blank with the verb and then ask the question of yourself: who or what?

- Situation: Subject comes after the verb.
    - Example: Throughout Mammoth Cave National Park run passages covering over 367 miles.
        - Watch Out For: Who or what runs? The passages do. Even though you might be tempted to think “Mammoth Cave National Park” is the subject, it is not doing the action of the verb. Since “passages” is plural, it must match up to a plural verb.

Deciding If Relative Pronouns Take a Singular or Plural Verb

Relative pronouns, such as “who”, “which”, “that”, and “one of”, are singular or plural based on the pronoun’s antecedent. You have to look at the antecedent of the relative clause to know whether to use a singular or plural verb.

- Situation: Relative pronoun that is singular.
    - Example: The Organ, which rises up seven hundred feet, is so named for its resemblance to a pipe organ.
        - Watch Out For: The word “organ” is singular and is the antecedent for “which.” So the word “which” is also singular. The word “which” is the subject for the relative clause “which rises up seven hundred feet” and, therefore, requires a singular verb (rises).
- Situation: Relative pronoun that is plural.
    - Example: Arches National Park in Utah offers sites that mesmerize the most skeptical people.
        - Watch Out For: The word “sites” is plural and is the antecedent for “that.” The word “that” is the subject for the relative clause “that mesmerize the most skeptical people.” So “that” is plural in this case and requires a plural verb (mesmerize).

Matching Singular Subjects to Gerunds and Infinitives

Gerunds are nouns formed by adding "-ing" to a verb. Gerunds can combine with other words to form gerund phrases, which function as subjects in sentences. Gerund phrases are always considered singular.

Infinitives are the "to" forms of verbs, such as "to run" and "to sing". Infinitives can be joined with other words to form an infinitive phrase. These phrases can serve as the subject of a sentence. Like gerund phrases, infinitive phrases are always singular.

- Situation: Gerund phrase as singular subject.
  - Example: Veering off the paths is not recommended on the steep hills of Acadia National Park.
    - Watch Out For: Don't be fooled by the fact that "paths" is plural. The subject of this sentence is the whole gerund phrase, which is considered to be singular. So a singular verb is needed.
- Situation: Infinitive phrase as singular subject.
  - Example: To restore Acadia National Park after the 1947 fire was a Rockefeller family mission.
    - Watch Out For: All words in an infinitive phrase join together to create a singular subject.

Recognizing Singular Subjects That Look Plural and Then Choosing a Verb

Some subjects appear plural when they are actually singular. Some of these same subjects are plural in certain situations, so you have to pay close attention to the whole sentence.

- Situation: Singular subjects that look plural.
  - Example: **Politics** plays a part in determining which areas are named as national parks.
    - Watch Out For: Many subjects are or can be singular, but look plural, such as "athletics", "mathematics", "mumps", "physics", "politics", "statistics", and "news". Take care when matching verbs to these subjects.
- Situation: Subject that looks plural, and is sometimes singular and sometimes plural.
  - Example: State and national politics sway Congress during national park designation talks.
    - Watch Out For: Just because words such as "politics" can be singular doesn't mean that they always are. In this case, the adjectives "state and national" clarify that different sources of politics are involved ("state politics" and "national politics"), so "politics" is plural in this case.

Key Takeaways

- A typical English sentence has a clear singular or plural subject followed by an equally clear singular or plural verb.
- Take extra care to match subjects and verbs when other words come between them by not using those extra words in

your determination.

- Compound subjects always use a plural verb.
- Titles and collective subjects always require singular verbs.
- Indefinite subjects are singular or plural based on their own meaning, the rest of the sentence, or both.
- When a subject comes after the verb, locate the subject by identifying who or what completed the action. Then apply the appropriate subject/verb agreement guideline.
- Use antecedents to decide whether relative pronouns are singular or plural. Then match them to verbs.
- Gerunds and infinitives are always singular and take singular verbs.
- Some subjects look plural whether they are singular or plural. With such subjects, take special care when making sure the subjects and verbs agree.

EXERCISE 1

Write sentences to meet each of the following criteria. For each sentence, be sure that the subjects and verbs agree.

1. Write a sentence that has words between the subject and verb.
2. Write a sentence with a compound subject.
3. Write a sentence that has a title of a song, movie, television show, or national park for a subject.
4. Write a sentence that has a collective noun for a subject.
5. Write a sentence that has an indefinite subject (another, anyone, anything, each, everybody, everything, neither, nobody, one, other, or something).
6. Write a sentence where the subject comes after the verb.
7. Write a sentence that uses a relative pronoun as a singular subject.
8. Write a sentence that uses a relative pronoun as a plural subject.
9. Write a sentence that has a gerund phrase for the subject.
10. Write a sentence that has an infinitive phrase for the subject.
11. Write a sentence that has a subject that looks plural but is actually singular.
12. Write a sentence that has a subject that looks plural and is sometimes singular but is plural in this situation.

Avoiding Fragments

Incorporating Core Sentence Components (Avoiding Fragments)

Learning Objectives

1. Recognize fragments.
2. Convert fragments to complete sentences.
3. Write complete sentences.

A complete sentence includes two core components: a subject and a predicate. Fragments are dependent clauses that cannot stand on their own. They result when you attempt to write a sentence without one of those two core components. You can use these strategies to recognize fragments:

- When you read a sentence, ask yourself, "Who (or what) did what?" If you can answer that question, you are reading a sentence. If not, you are reading a fragment.
  - Test these examples:
    - Where are you?
    - *I am asking you where you are.*
    - *I can answer the question, so it's a sentence.*
    - Sandra ate lunch early.
    - *Sandra ate her lunch early.*
    - *I can answer the question, so it's a sentence.*
    - After the shelf came loose.
    - *Something happened after the shelf came loose, but I don't know what.*
    - *I can't answer the question, so it's a fragment.*
    - Fell near the door.
    - *I know something fell, but I don't know who or what fell.*
    - *I can't answer the question, so it's a fragment.*
- Fill in this blank with your sentence: Did you know that (fill in the blank here)? If the completed question makes sense, you are reading a sentence. If it doesn't make sense, you are reading a fragment.
  - Test these examples:
    - Lost my earring.

        - *Did you know that lost my earring?*
        - *The test doesn't make sense, so the original is a fragment.*
        - The dog with the white paws near the gate.
        - *Did you know that the dog with the white paws near the gate?*
        - *The test doesn't make sense, so the original is a fragment.*
        - Someone left the window open.
        - *Did you know that someone left the window open?*
        - *The test makes sense, so the original is a sentence.*
        - Spaghetti squash is a great substitute for pasta.
        - *Did you know that spaghetti squash is a great substitute for pasta?*
        - *The test makes sense, so the original is a sentence.*

- When you have a group of sentences within a paragraph, read the sentences backward so that no sentence can gain information from the preceding sentence. This technique will help sentence fragments stand out since they will not make sense alone.

Ultimately all these strategies are designed to get you into the habit of asking whether your sentences stand on their own. If you have problems with writing fragments, perform these tests until recognizing what constitutes a sentence becomes second nature to you. When you recognize a fragment, you can turn it into sentence by adding the missing component. Try these examples:

- This fragment has no subject: Giggling and laughing all the way to school.
    - One possible way to add a subject and turn this fragment into a sentence:
        - The girls were giggling and laughing all the way to school.

- This fragment has no predicate: A brand new iPhone with all kinds of apps.
    - One possible way to add a predicate and turn this fragment into a sentence:
        - A brand new iPhone with all kinds of apps isn't cheap!

Key Takeaways

- A sentence must have both a subject and a predicate.
- You can use some simple tests to check to see if an intended sentence is actually a fragment.

EXERCISES 1

1. Choose three sentences from this section and remove the subjects to create fragments. Then replace the subjects with different subjects.
2. Choose three sentences from this section and remove the predicates to create fragments. Then replace the predicates with different predicates.

3. Decide whether each of the following items is a sentence or a fragment. For each fragment, identify whether the subject or predicate is missing and then rewrite each fragment so that it is a sentence.

    - Broke his leg when he fell off his bike.
    - Which way are you going to go?
    - With her long, dark hair; her flowing dress; and her high heels.
    - Walked for an hour after the rain started.
    - Beth lives east of the high school but north of where I live.

Subordination and Coordination

Using Subordination and Coordination

Learning Objectives

1. Learn how to use subordination to include main ideas and minor ideas in the same sentence.
2. Learn how to use coordination to include two or more ideas of equal weight in a single sentence.
3. Within a single sentence, learn to keep subordinate ideas to a minimum.

Subordination and coordination are used to clarify the relative level of importance or the relationship between and among words, phrases, or clauses within sentences. You can use subordination to arrange sentence parts of unequal importance and coordination to convey the idea that sentence parts are of equal importance.

Subordination

Subordination allows you to convey differences in importance between details within a sentence. You can use the technique within a single sentence or to combine two or more smaller sentences. You should always present the most important idea in an independent clause and use dependent clauses and phrases to present the less important ideas. Start each dependent clause with a subordinating conjunction (e.g., after, because, by the time, even though, if, just in case, now that, once, only if, since, though, unless, until, when, whether, while) or a relative pronoun (e.g., that, what, whatever, which, whichever, who, whoever, whom, whomever, whose). These starters signal the reader that the idea is subordinate.

Here's a sentence that uses a relative pronoun to convey subordination:

- I will come to your house or meet you at the gym, whichever works best for you.

The core idea is that I will either come to your house or meet you at the gym. The fact that you'll choose whichever option works best for you is subordinate, set apart with the relative pronoun "whichever."

In the next example, two smaller sentences are combined using the subordinating conjunction "because":

- Smaller sentence 1: The number of students who live at home and take online college classes has

risen in the past ten years.
- Smaller sentence 2: The rise has been due to increased marketing of university online programs.
- Larger sentence using subordination (version 1): The number of students living at home and taking online college classes has risen in the past ten years because of increased marketing of university online programs.
- Larger sentence using subordination (version 2): Because of increased marketing of university online programs, the number of students living at home and taking online courses has risen in the past ten years.

Coordination

Some sentences have two or more equal ideas. You can use coordination to show a common level of importance among parts of a sentence, such as subjects, verbs, and objects.

Examples

Subject example: Both green beans and asparagus are great with grilled fish.

Verb example: We neither talked nor laughed during the whole two hours.

Object example: Machine embroidery combines the beauty of high-quality stitching and the expediency of modern technology.

The ideas within each sentence carry equal weight. As examples of coordination, they can be connected with coordinating conjunctions (and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet) or correlative conjunctions (both...and, either...or, just as...so, neither...nor, not...but, not only...but also, whether...or).

Controlling Emphasis

You likely use subordination and coordination automatically. For example, if you say that something happened "Dale broke his leg while biking" because of something else "he broke his leg when he biked into a tree", you can use separate sentences, or you can use subordination within one sentence.

- Ideas presented in two sentences:
  - Dale broke his leg while biking this weekend. His leg broke when the bike hit a tree.
- Ideas presented in one sentence using subordination:
  - This weekend, Dale broke his leg when his bike hit a tree.
    - Dale broke his leg is the main idea. The fact that it happened when the bike hit a tree is the subordinating idea.

A natural way to use coordination is, for example, to discuss two things you plan to do on vacation. You can present the two ideas in separate sentences or in one sentence using coordination to signal equal emphases.

- Ideas presented in two sentences:
  - I'm planning to see the Statue of Liberty while I'm in New York. I'm also going to go to a Broadway play.
- Ideas presented in one sentence using coordination:
  - While I'm in New York, I am planning to see the Statue of Liberty and go to a Broadway play.

Subordination Pitfalls

You will want to avoid two common subordination mistakes: placing main ideas in subordinate clauses or phrases and placing too many subordinate ideas in one sentence.

Here's an example of a sentence that subordinates the main idea:

- LoDo, a charming neighborhood featuring great art galleries, restaurants, cafés, and shops, is located in the Lower Downtown District of Denver.

The problem here is that main idea is embedded in a subordinate clause. Instead of focusing on the distinctive features of the LoDo neighborhood, the sentence makes it appear as if the main idea is the neighborhood's location in Denver. Here's a revision:

- LoDo, located in the Lower Downtown District of Denver, is a charming neighborhood featuring great art galleries, restaurants, cafés, and shops.

A sentence with too many subordinate ideas is confusing and difficult to read.

Here's an example:

- Television executives, who make the decisions about which shows to pull and which to extend, need to consider more than their individual opinions so that they do not pull another *Star Trek* mess-up where they don't recognize a great show when they see it, while balancing the need to maintain a schedule that appeals to a broad audience, considering that new types of shows don't yet have a broad following.

And here's a possible revision:

- Television executives need to consider more than their individual opinions when they decide which shows to pull and which to extend. Many years ago, some of these very executives decided that *Star Trek* should be canceled, clearly demonstrating they do not always know which shows will become great. Television executives should also balance the need to maintain a schedule that appeals to a broad audience with an appreciation for new types of shows that don't yet have a broad following.

Key Takeaways

- Subordination refers to ideas in a sentence that are of less importance than the main idea. Subordinate ideas are typically connected to the rest of the sentence with a subordinating conjunction or a relative pronoun.
- Coordination refers to two or more ideas of equal weight in a single sentence. Coordinating ideas are usually joined to each other with coordinating conjunctions or correlative conjunctions.
- You can create emphasis using subordination and coordination within longer sentences.
- Problems with subordination include placing main ideas in subordinated clauses and phrases and including too many subordinate ideas in one sentence.

EXERCISES 1

1. Write a sentence about the thrill of deep-sea diving and include the subordinating idea that the scenery is often amazing.
2. Write a sentence including intercollegiate sports and intramural sports as coordinating ideas of equal weight.
3. Write a sentence using "new car" as an emphasized main idea and "red interior" as a less emphasized subordinating idea.
4. Write a sentence using "blogs" and "Facebook" as coordinating ideas with equal emphases.
5. Using ideas of your own, write a sentence that demonstrates the use of subordinating ideas.
6. Using ideas of your own, write a sentence that demonstrates the use of coordinating ideas.

Comma Splices and Fused Sentences

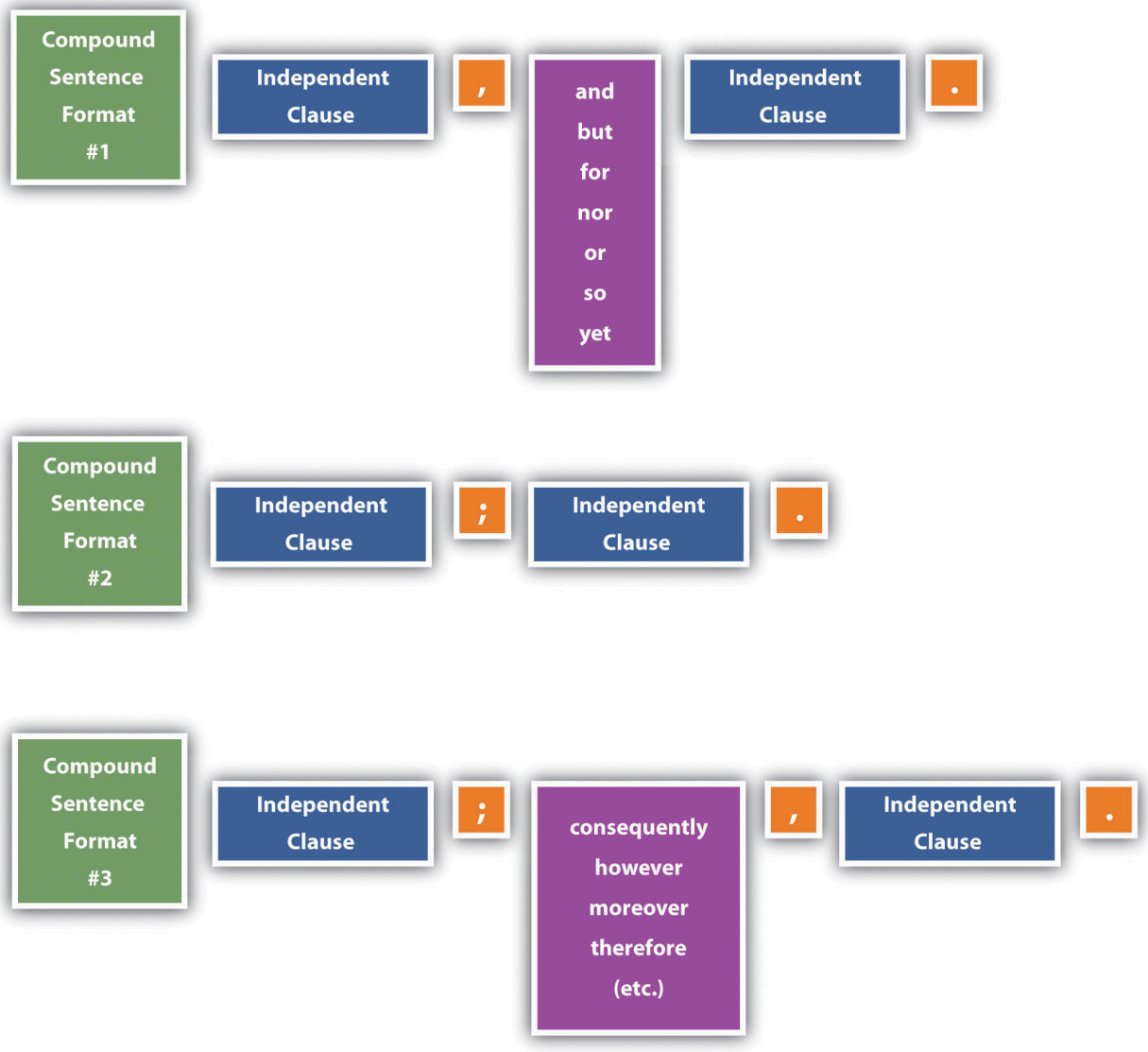
Eliminating Comma Splices and Fused Sentences

Learning Objectives

1. Use commas correctly in compound sentences.
2. Use semicolons correctly in compound sentences.
3. Recognize comma splices and fused sentences.

Two of the most common problems with compound sentences are comma splices and fused sentences. The key to understanding these problems is to recognize the possible compound sentence formats:

1. two independent clauses separated with a comma and coordinating conjunction (and, but, so, for, nor, or, yet);
2. two independent clauses separated with a semicolon by itself;
3. two independent clauses separated with a semicolon and a conjunctive adverb (however, therefore, consequently, moreover, etc.), used to clarify a specific logical relationship between the two independent clauses.



Understanding and Avoiding Comma Splices

Two different situations can result in comma splices.

Examples

- Problem: A comma joins independent clauses instead of the clauses being joined by a comma followed by a coordinat-

ing conjunction.

  - Example: Her name was Jean Louise Finch, she wanted everyone to call her "Scout."
  - Correction: Her name was Jean Louise Finch, but she wanted everyone to call her "Scout."

- Problem: A comma joins two independent clauses when a semicolon should be used.

  - Example: Atticus didn't want Scout to fight, however, she could not ignore injustices.
  - Correction: Atticus didn't want Scout to fight; however, she could not ignore injustices.

Understanding and Avoiding Fused Sentences

A fused sentence is also called a run-on sentence and occurs when two independent clauses are joined without any punctuation.

Example

- Mr. Cunningham is very poor he cannot pay Atticus for legal services.

  - Correction option 1: Add a coordinating conjunction and a comma: Mr. Cunningham is very poor, so he cannot pay Atticus for legal services.
  - Correction option 2: Place the independent clauses into two separate sentences: Mr. Cunningham is very poor. He cannot pay Atticus for legal services.
  - Correction option 3: Place a semicolon between the two clauses: Mr. Cunningham is very poor; he cannot pay Atticus for legal services.
  - Correction option 4: Place a semicolon between the two clauses, and use a conjunctive adverb for further clarification: Mr. Cunningham is very poor; therefore, he cannot pay Atticus for his legal services.
  - Correction option #5: Turn one of the independent clauses into a dependent clause: Mr. Cunningham cannot pay Atticus for his legal services because he is very poor.

OR

- Because he is very poor, Mr. Cunningham cannot pay Atticus for his legal services.

Key Takeaways

- When you use a coordinating conjunction in a compound sentence, you should place a comma before the conjunction.
- You can use a semicolon between two independent clauses without using a conjunctive adverb.
- If you use conjunctive adverbs, such as *however* or *therefore*, place a semicolon before the conjunctive adverb and a comma after it.

EXERCISES 1

1. Read each compound sentence. Identify each as correctly written, a comma splice, or a fused sentence. For the comma splices and fused sentences, write a corrected version.
    - The Gormans bought a new television, and they had it installed over the fireplace.
    - We are supposed to get a blizzard tonight we can't go to the movie.
    - My psychology teacher is leaving on a cruise on Monday; the psychology midterm has been canceled.
    - The wind was blowing like crazy, it grabbed my bag right out of my hand.
    - I didn't go to sleep until after 3:00 a.m., therefore I am exhausted today.
    - Janis traded her hours with Tony last night consequently, she has to work tonight.
2. Write three different versions of a correctly punctuated compound sentence made up of the following pairs of independent clauses, using each of the three formats described in this section (comma plus coordinating conjunction, semicolon only, and semicolon plus conjunctive adverb). Then write a comma splice and a fused sentence using the same pair of independent clauses. Finally, make one of the clauses dependent on the other, use a subordinating conjunction, and punctuate the sentence accordingly.
    - He was very hungry / He ate a big lunch
    - Thunder rumbled in the distance / The skies opened up
    - The candidate ran an excellent campaign / He won the election by ten points

Parallelism

Using Parallelism

Learning Objectives

- Recognize lack of parallelism.
- Present paired ideas in parallel format.
- Present items in a series in parallel format.

Parallelism is the presentation of ideas of equal weight in the same grammatical fashion. It's one of those features of writing that is a matter of grammar, style, rhetoric, and content. Used well, it can enhance your readers' (and even your own) understanding and appreciation of a topic. The most famous line from John F. Kennedy's Inaugural Address provides an example (a specific kind of reversal of phrasing known as antimetabole): "Ask not what your country can do for you. Ask what you can do for your country." You'll encounter parallelism not only in politics but in advertising, religion, and poetry as well:

- "Strong enough for a man, but made for a woman."
- "Do unto others as you would have others do unto you."
- "Some say the world will end in fire, / Some say in ice."

Here are a couple of examples of sentences in need of parallelism.

Example 1

- While it was raining, I had to run into the grocery store, the dry cleaners, and stop at the bookstore.

This sentence is not parallel because it includes three equally weighted ideas but presents two of them with action verbs and one without. By simply adding words such as "duck into" to the middle item, the sentence becomes parallel:

- While it was raining, I had to run into the grocery store, duck into the dry cleaners, and stop at the bookstore.

You could also correct this sentence by removing "stop at" from the third idea:

- While it was raining, I had to run into the grocery store, the dry cleaners, and the book store.

Example 2

- The test was long and requiring skills we hadn't learned.

This sentence is not parallel because it presents two like-weighted ideas using two different grammatical formats. Here is a parallel version:

- The test was long and required skills we hadn't learned.

Parallelism is most often an issue with paired ideas and items in a series as shown in the preceding two examples. A key idea to keep in mind is that you need to use common wording with both items, such as common articles (e.g., the, a, an) and common prepositions (e.g., by, for, of, on, to). The next two subsections provide more in-depth discussion of these two concepts.

Making Paired Items Parallel

In a sentence, paired items or ideas are often connected with either a comparative expression (e.g., easier than, as much as, bigger than), a coordinating conjunction (e.g., and, but, for, nor, or, so, yet), or a correlative conjunction (e.g., both…and, either…or, just as…so, neither…nor, not…but, not only…but also, whether…or). Read the following error examples. Think of a way to correct each sentence. Then look below the error to see possible corrections. Note that you can usually correct each error in more than one way.

Example 3

Comparative Expression:

- Our neighbor's house is bigger than the size of our house.

Possible Corrections:

- Our neighbor's house is bigger than our house.

OR

- The size of our neighbor's house is bigger than the size of our house.

Example 4

Coordinating Conjunction:

- Louie, my crazy shih tzu loves running after Frisbees and plays with leaves.

Possible Corrections:

- Louie, my crazy shih tzu, loves running after Frisbees and playing with leaves.

OR

- Louie, my crazy shih tzu, loves to run after Frisbees and to play with leaves.

Example 5

Correlative Conjunction:

- Not only was he rude, but also ate all the shrimp balls.

Possible Corrections:

- Not only was he rude, but also he ate all the shrimp balls.

OR

- Not only was he rude, but he also ate all the shrimp balls.

Making Items in a Series Parallel

Items in a series include ideas embedded in a sentence as well as those in numbered or bulleted lists. One way to check for parallelism is to say the sentence stem that precedes the first item and then, one at a time, add each subsequent series item to the stem. Assuming the stem works with the first item, subsequent items that do not work with the stem are not parallel with the first item.

Example 6

- After I get off work, I'm driving to the gym, doing five miles, and weights.
    - The stem prior to the first item: "After I get off work, I'm…"
    - The stem works with the first item: "After I get off work, I'm driving to the gym."
    - The stem works with the second item: "After I get off work, I'm doing five miles."
    - The stem does not work with the third item: "*After I get off work, weights.*"

A version of the sentence that is parallel:

- After I get off work, I'm driving to the gym, running five miles, and lifting weights.

Now the stem does work with the third item: "After I get off work, I'm lifting weights."

Read the two error examples (7, 8) and imagine how you could correct each one. Then check below the error for possible corrections.

Example 7

Embedded Series:

- On Saturday, my roommates and I are playing in a game of pick-up basketball, collecting coats for charity, work on our homework for three hours, and go to a party in the Village.

Possible Corrections:

- On Saturday, my roommates and I are going to play in a game of pick-up basketball, collect coats for charity, spend three hours on homework, and go to a party in the Village.

OR

- On Saturday, my roommates and I are playing in a game of pick-up basketball, collecting coats for charity, spending three hours on homework, and going to a party in the Village.

Example 8

Listed Series:

- The people I have met since starting college include the following:
    - Sarah Winston
    - Joe Fuller, a guy from the Chicago area
    - Adam Merce and Donna Taylor
    - Ian Messing from England
    - and CaLinda Harris, whom I met in math class

Possible Corrections:

- The people I have met since starting college include the following:
    - Sarah Winston
    - Joe Fuller
    - Adam Merce
    - Donna Taylor
    - Ian Messing
    - CaLinda Harris

OR

- The people I have met since starting college include the following:
    - Sarah Winston from near Toledo
    - Joe Fuller from the Chicago area
    - Adam Merce from Littleton

- Donna Taylor from Littleton
- Ian Messing from England
- CaLinda Harris from Morris, Indiana

Utilizing Parallel Structure

If you take the most impressive or startling item in a series and place it last, you can draw attention to it as well as to the whole series. Look at the difference in the following two sentences.

Most impressive item last: In the accident, he received cuts on his face, a mild concussion, a cracked rib, and a ruptured spleen.

Most impressive item buried within the series: In the accident, he received cuts on his face, a ruptured spleen, a cracked rib, and a mild concussion.

Using like or paired words along with ideas you are comparing can help you emphasize the comparison.

Examples 9

Example with like words:

- It's unusual to feel intense attraction and intense repulsion for the same person.

Example with paired words:

- You always seem to run to guitar lessons and crawl to piano lessons.

Key Takeaways

- Parallelism refers to common grammatical treatment of like-weighted items within a series.
- Parallelism is also a rhetorical and stylistic technique for arranging ideas in a pleasing and effective way.
- Paired ideas within a sentence should be parallel.
- Ideas within a series should be parallel whether embedded in a sentence or listed vertically.

- In almost all situations, more than one possible method exists for making a sentence or list parallel.

EXERCISE 1

Indicate whether relevant parts of each sentence are parallel. Then rewrite the problem sentences to make them parallel.

1. Even though I don't get paid as much, working in the psychology office is more meaningful than working at the fast food restaurant.
2. According to Lester, both going to a movie and midnight bowling are still being considered.
3. Abby, the attorney, and the child advocate named Becca held a meeting before the whole group arrived.
4. I have already packed casual pants, my favorite casual tops, dress pants, dress tops, some socks, plenty of underwear, and three pairs of shoes.
5. Some must-see sites in Texas include the following:
    - the Alamo in San Antonio
    - the Riverwalk, which is also in San Antonio
    - Big Bend
    - Schlitterbaum Water Park that kids love so much
    - King Ranch
    - South Padre Island

2. Write a sentence telling what you did this past weekend. Include an embedded series or a list in your sentence and make sure the items are parallel.
3. Write a sentence comparing two college classes. Make sure the comparison items are parallel.
4. With your classmate or on your own, find at least three examples of parallelism in advertising, politics, or religious texts. Be prepared to discuss why and how parallelism is used in these kinds of discourse.

Verb Tenses

Choosing Appropriate Verb Tenses

Learning Objectives

- Understand the simple verb tenses: past, present, and future
- Recognize the progressive, perfect, and perfect progressive verb tenses
- Correctly use the different verb tenses

The tense of a verb usually gives readers a sense of time. In other words, verb tense explains if the action in the sentence took place previously (past tense), is taking place right now (present tense), or will take place some time in the future (future tense). Tense also can indicate continual or recurring action (progressive), action that has completely taken place as of a certain time (perfect), and action that began in the past but continues or recurs through the present time (perfect progressive).

When writing an academic essay with sources, you may have noticed that simple present tense is the standard for reporting verbs. This is also a convention of MLA style, so you should avoid shifting from present to past tense, especially with reporting verbs.

EXERCISE 1

The quote below is from *The Best We Could Do*, a graphic novel by Thi Bui. Read the two examples and decide which one is correct. Give a reason for your choice.

- Thi Bui wrote, "Family is something I have created — and not just something I was born into"(21).
- Thi Bui writes, "Family is something I have created — and not just something I was born into" (21).

Verbs also have different forms for the different pronouns and numbers. In other words, first person (I, we) might require a different verb form from second person (singular you, plural you) and third person (he, she, it, they), and whether the pronoun is singular (I, you, he, she, it) or plural (we, you, they) can also make a difference in the verb form used.

Verb Tenses for the Regular Verb “Look” and the Irregular Verb “Eat”

Tense	Number and Person	Past	Present	Future
Simple Past: main verb + -ed or irregular variations Present: main verb Future: will or shall + main verb	First-person singular	I looked.	I look.	I will look.
		I ate.	I eat.	I will eat.
	First-person plural	We looked.	We look.	We will look.
		We ate.	We eat.	We will eat.
	Second-person singular	You looked.	You look.	You will look.
		You ate.	You eat.	You will eat.
	Second-person plural	You looked.	You look.	You will look.
		You ate.	You eat.	You will eat.
	Third-person singular	He looked.	He looks.	He will look.
		She ate.	She eats.	She will eat.
	Third-person plural	They looked.	They look.	They will look.
		They ate.	They eat.	They will eat.
Progressive Verb + -ing and a form of the verb “to be” Past: was, were Present: am, is, are Future: will be	First-person singular	I was looking.	I am looking.	I will be looking.
		I was eating.	I am eating.	I will be eating.
	First-person plural	We were looking.	We are looking.	We will be looking.
		We were eating.	We are eating.	We will be eating.
	Second-person singular	You were looking.	You are looking.	You will be looking.
		You were eating.	You are eating.	You will be eating.
	Second-person plural	You were looking.	You are looking.	You will be looking.
		You were eating.	You are eating.	You will be eating.
	Third-person singular	He was looking.	He is looking.	He will be looking.
		She was eating.	She is eating.	She will be eating.
	Third-person plural	They were looking.	They are looking.	They will be looking.
		They were eating.	They are eating.	They will be eating.
Perfect Past participle and a form of the verb “to be” Past: had Present: has, have Future: will have	First-person singular	I had looked.	I have looked.	I will have looked.
		I had eating.	I have eaten.	I will have eaten.
	First-person plural	We had looked.	We have looked.	We will have looked.
		We had eaten.	We have eaten.	We will have eaten.
	Second-person singular	You had looked.	You have looked.	You will have looked.
		You had eaten.	You have eaten.	You will have eaten.
	Second-person plural	You had looked.	You have looked.	You will have looked.
		You had eaten.	You have eaten.	You will have eaten.

Tense	Number and Person	Past	Present	Future
Perfect progressive Verb + -ing and a form of the verb “to be” Past: had been Present: has been, have been Future: will have been	Third-person singular	He had looked.	He has looked.	He will have looked.
		She had eaten.	She has eaten.	She will have eaten.
	Third-person plural	They had looked.	They have looked.	They will have looked.
		They had eaten.	They have eaten.	They will have eaten.
	First-person singular	I had been looking.	I have been looking.	I will have been looking.
		I had been eating.	I have been eating.	I will have been eating.
	First-person plural	We had been looking.	We have been looking.	We will have been looking.
		We had been eating.	We have been eating.	We will have been eating.
	Second-person singular	You had been looking.	You have been looking.	You will have been looking.
		You had been eating.	You have been eating.	You will have been eating.
	Second-person plural	You had been looking.	You have been looking.	You will have been looking.
		You had been eating.	You have been eating.	You will have been eating.
	Third-person singular	He had been looking.	He has been looking.	He will have been looking.
		She had been eating.	She has been eating.	She will have been eating.
	Third-person plural	They had been looking.	They have been looking.	They will have been looking.
		They had been eating.	They have been eating.	They will have been eating.

Key Takeaways

- The simple verb tenses are past, present, and future.
- Progressive tenses use a form of the verb “to be” along with the *–ing* form of the verb to indicate continual or recurring action.
- Perfect tenses use a form of the verb “to be” along with the past participle form of the verb to indicate action that took

place before a certain time.
- Perfect progressive tenses use a form of the verb "to be" along with the *–ing* form of the verb to indicate action that began in the past and continues or recurs through the present time.

EXERCISE 2

- Identify the verb tense used in each of the following sentences:

    1. I have heard that saying before.
    2. Joey seemed uncomfortable when he was at my house yesterday.
    3. You will be running in the second heat this afternoon.
    4. Lois is writing a letter to the editor.
    5. By ten o'clock tonight, we will have been walking for twenty hours.

- Write three sentences using simple tense, three using progressive tense, three using perfect tense, and three using perfect progressive tense. Make sure to include each of the following variations at least once: past, present, future, first person, second person, third person, singular, and plural.

PART III

LITERARY ANALYSIS

Literary Analysis

Writing an Analysis of a Poem, Story, or Play

If you are taking a literature course, it is important that you know how to write an analysis—sometimes called an interpretation or a literary analysis, or a critical reading or a critical analysis—of a story, a poem, and a play. Your instructor will probably assign such an analysis as part of the course assessment. On your mid-term or final exam, you might have to write an analysis of one or more of the poems and/or stories on your reading list. Or the dreaded "sight poem or story" might appear on an exam, a work that is not on the reading list, that you have not read before, but one your instructor includes on the exam to examine your ability to apply the active reading skills you have learned in class to produce, independently, an effective literary analysis. You might be asked to write instead of, or in addition to an analysis of a literary work, a more sophisticated essay in which you compare and contrast the protagonists of two stories, or the use of form and metaphor in two poems, or the tragic heroes in two plays.

Structuring a Literary Analysis

You might learn some literary theory in your course and be asked to apply theory—feminist, Marxist, reader-response, psychoanalytic, new historicist, for example—to one or more of the works on your reading list. But the seminal assignment in a literature course is the analysis of the single poem, story, novel, or play, and, even if you do not have to complete this assignment specifically, it will form the basis of most of the other writing assignments you will be required to undertake in your literature class. There are several ways of structuring a literary analysis, and your instructor might issue specific instructions on how he or she wants this assignment done. The method presented here might not be identical to the one your instructor wants you to follow, but it will be easy enough to modify. If your instructor expects something a bit different, it is a good default method as long as your instructor does not issue more specific guidelines. You want to begin your analysis with a paragraph that provides the context of the work you are analyzing and a brief account of what you believe to be the poem or story or play's main theme. At a minimum, your account of the work's context will include the name of the author, the title of the work, its genre, and the date and place of publication. If there is an important biographical or historical context to the work, you should include that, as well. Try to express the work's theme in one or two sentences. Theme, you will recall, is the insight into human experience the author offers to readers, usually revealed as the content, the drama, the plot of the poem, story, or play as it unfolds and the characters interact. Assessing theme can be a complex task. Authors usually show the theme; they don't tell it. They rarely say, at the end of the story, words to this effect: "and the moral of my story is…" They tell their story, develop their characters, provide some kind of conflict—and from all of this, a theme emerges. Because identifying theme can be challenging and subjective, it is often a good idea to work through the rest of the analysis, then return to the beginning and assess theme in light of your analysis of the work's other literary elements.

Example

Analysis of William Butler Yeats' poem, "Among School Children"

- "Among School Children" was published in Yeats' 1928 collection of poems, *The Tower*. It was inspired by a visit Yeats made in 1926 to a school in Waterford, an official visit in his capacity as a senator of the Irish Free State. In the course of the tour, Yeats reflects upon his own youth and the experiences that shaped the "sixty-year old, smiling public man" (line 8) he has become. Through his reflection, the theme of the poem emerges: a life has meaning when connections among apparently disparate experiences are forged into a unified whole.

Explaining the Elements

In the body of your literature analysis, you want to guide your readers through a tour of the poem, story, or play, pausing along the way to comment on, analyze, interpret, and explain key incidents, descriptions, dialogue, symbols, the writer's use of figurative language—any of the elements of literature that are relevant to a sound analysis of this particular work. Your main goal is to explain how these elements work to elucidate, augment, and develop the theme. The elements of literature are common across genres: a story, a narrative poem, and a play all have a plot and characters. But certain genres prefer certain literary elements. In a poem, for example, form, imagery and metaphor might be especially important; in a story, setting and point-of-view might be more important than they are in a poem; in a play, dialogue, stage directions, lighting serve functions rarely relevant in the analysis of a story or poem.

The length of the body of an analysis of a literary work will usually depend upon the length of the work being analyzed—the longer the work, the longer the analysis—though your instructor will likely establish a word limit for this assignment. Make certain that you do not simply paraphrase the plot of the story or play, or the content of the poem. This is a common weakness in student literary analyses, especially when the analysis is of a poem or a play.

Here is a good example from Amelia's analysis of "Araby" by James Joyce:

Example

Within the story's first few paragraphs occur several religious references which will accumulate as the story progresses. The narrator is a student at the Christian Brothers' School; the former tenant of this house was a priest; he left behind books

called *The Abbot* and *The Devout Communicant*. Near the end of the story's second paragraph, the narrator describes a "central apple tree" in the garden, under which is "the late tenant's rusty bicycle pump." We may begin to suspect the tree symbolizes the apple tree in the Garden of Eden and the bicycle pump, the snake which corrupted Eve, perhaps, until Joyce's fall-of-innocence theme becomes more apparent.

The narrator must continue to help his aunt with her errands, but, even when he is so occupied, his mind is on Mangan's sister, as he tries to sort out his feelings for her. Here Joyce provides vivid insight into the mind of an adolescent boy at once elated and bewildered by his first crush. He wants to tell her of his "confused adoration," but he does not know if he will ever have the chance. Joyce's description of the pleasant tension consuming the narrator is conveyed in a striking simile, which continues to develop the narrator's character, while echoing the religious imagery, so important to the story's theme: "But my body was like a harp, and her words and gestures were like fingers, running along the wires."

Writing a Conclusion

The concluding paragraph of your analysis should realize two goals. First, it should present your own opinion on the quality of the poem or story or play about which you have been writing. And, second, it should comment on the current relevance of the work. You should certainly comment on the enduring social relevance of the work you are explicating. You may comment, though you should never be obliged to do so, on the personal relevance of the work. Here is the concluding paragraph from Dao-Ming's analysis of Oscar Wilde's *The Importance of Being Earnest:*

Example

First performed in 1895, *The Importance of Being Earnest* has been made into a film, as recently as 2002 and is regularly revived by professional and amateur theatre companies. It endures not only because of the comic brilliance of its characters and their dialogue, but also because its satire still resonates with contemporary audiences. I am still amazed that I see in my own Asian mother a shadow of Lady Bracknell, with her obsession with finding for her daughter a husband who will maintain, if not, ideally, increase the family's social status. We might like to think we are more liberated and socially sophisticated than our Victorian ancestors, but the starlets and eligible bachelors who star in current reality television programs illustrate the extent to which superficial concerns still influence decisions about love and even marriage. Even now, we can turn to Oscar Wilde to help us understand and laugh at those who are earnest in name only.

Dao-Ming's conclusion is brief, but she does manage to praise the play, reaffirm its main theme, and explain its enduring appeal. And note how her last sentence cleverly establishes that sense of closure that is also a feature of an effective analysis.

You may, of course, modify the template that is presented here. Your instructor might favor a somewhat different approach to literary analysis. Its essence, though, will be your understanding and interpretation of the theme of the poem, story, or play and the skill with which the author shapes the elements of literature—plot, character, form, diction, setting, point of view—to support the theme.

A Model Analysis

Now read the short poem by Siegfried Sassoon, "Base Details," reprinted in Project Bartleby, and then read the sample essay with comments:

Let's have a look at Sassoon's poem of World War I: "Base Details".

First let's try to determine who is the speaker, the "I" of the poem. Notice that the speaker speculates: "If I were fierce, and bald, and short of breath…" Might we assume he is none of the three adjectives? So how old would he be? Start with a hypothesis and stick with it unless further details make your guess seem untenable. Then try a different hypothesis. For now let's assume that the speaker is young. What is his rank? Is he an officer? That is unlikely. He is probably an unlisted man, since his tone toward the majors is angry and sarcastic.

He calls them "scarlet." What is the denotation of "scarlet"? What are some connotations of "scarlet"? What does "petulant" mean? Why are the faces of the majors described as "puffy"? What is the main meaning here of "scrap"? Are other meanings intended?

What is the purpose of the poem? Look up the brief biographical details for Sassoon on the online "Oxford World War I Poets" website.

EXERCISE 1

Print a copy of the poem from Project Bartleby.

- Read the poem three times.
- Annotate the lines of the poem, including ideas from the biography of Sassoon.
- Read the following student essay on diction in "Base Details."

The Diction of "Base Details" (Student Essay adapted from Edward J. Gordon, *Writing About Imaginative Literature*, Harbrace: 1973).

Old men make and run wars; young men fight and die in them. In "Base Details," Siegfried Sassoon reveals through his diction a bitterness toward the fact that young men die in wars while the officers live safely behind the lines. The speaker in the poem is an ordinary soldier talking about the majors at the army base. By pretending what he would be like if he were an officer, he condemns war.

Through his choice of words, the soldier expresses an attitude of contempt for the officers behind the

lines who “speed glum heroes up the line to death.” He speaks with sarcasm of their fierceness and goes on to describe them as “bald, and short of breath.” If he were a major, he, too, would have a “puffy petulant face,/Guzzling and gulping in the best hotel.” The connotations of these words suggest men who are overweight and out of shape from drinking and eating too much. The reference to “scarlet Majors” recalls the red dress uniforms of British officers and the color of blood.

[Coherence would be even better here if the student points out explicitly how the majors figuratively have blood on their hands—the blood of the young soldiers under their command.]

The speaker then goes on to describe the attitude toward soldiers that is held by the officers. One speaks of losing many men in “this last scrap.” The understatement of that last word contrasts sharply with the mention in the same line of a heavy loss in battle. In the last two lines of the poem, a further contrast is set up between “youth stone dead” and the officer who will “toddle safely home and die—in bed.”

[The student should state the other meanings of “scrap” and point out their thematic significance. The student could also discuss the connotations of the word “toddle” and then relate the diction to the theme.]

When the entire poem is read, the title becomes ambiguous. The apparent meaning refers to the details of a military base. But “base” can also mean low and contemptible. “Detail” also has two meanings. It can mean a detachment of men sent out on a particular mission—”speed glum heroes up the line”—but it can also mean a minor matter, as if sending people off to die is not important to the officers. So the apparent meaning that we see as we begin reading, turns into a second meaning when we finish reading the poem.

The diction, then, makes a comment on the theme of the poem: old men who direct wars at a safe distance behind the lines seem to have little understanding of what it means to die in battle and appear on “the Roll of Honor.”

EXERCISE 2

Think-Pair-Share

- Look back at your annotation of the poem from Exercise 1. What did you write in your margin notes?
- Show a classmate what you wrote. Discuss some of the important details that you noticed, or ones that you may have missed.

- Share your insights with other classmates. How can diction have a profound impact on the audience in a poem such as "Base Details"?

Short Story Analysis

How to Analyze a Short Story

Students are often required to write a literary analysis. An analysis of a short story requires a basic knowledge of literary elements. This chapter provides guidance in composing an essay based on a short story.

EXERCISE 1

Imagine writing a short story (1-2 pages) about a memorable event that happened in your life.

- What was the event?
- Where/when did it happen?
- How did it change you?

What is a Short Story?

A short story is a work of short, narrative prose that is usually centered around one single event. It is limited in scope and has an introduction, body and conclusion. Although a short story has much in common with a novel, it is written with much greater precision. An analysis of a short story requires basic knowledge of literary elements, which include setting, character, plot, narrator, conflict, theme and style.

EXERCISE 2

Talk with a classmate and jot down some notes:

- What do you already know about the literary elements of setting, character, plot, narrator, conflict, theme and style?

Setting

A setting is a description of where and when the story takes place. In a short story there are fewer settings compared to a novel. The time is more limited.

- How is the setting created? Consider geography, weather, time of day, social conditions, etc.

- What role does setting play in the story? Is it an important part of the plot or theme? Or is it just a backdrop against which the action takes place?

Study the time period, which is also part of the setting.

- When was the story written?
- Does it take place in the present, the past, or the future?
- How does the time period affect the language, atmosphere or social circumstances of the short story?

EXERCISE 3

Consider a story that you recently read, or a movie that you watched:

- Ask yourself the questions related to setting about the story or the movie.
- Tell a classmate about the setting of the story or the movie.

Characterization

Characterization deals with how the characters in the story are described. In short stories there are usually fewer characters compared to a novel. They usually focus on one central character or protagonist.

- Who is the main character?
- Are the main character and other characters described through dialogue – by the way they speak (dialect or slang for instance)?
- Has the author described the characters by physical appearance, thoughts and feelings, and interaction (the way they act towards others)?
- Are they static/flat characters who do not change?
- Are they dynamic/round characters who DO change?
- What type of characters are they? What qualities stand out? Are they stereotypes?
- Are the characters believable?

EXERCISE 4

Continue your discussion with a classmate:

- Talk about the character in the story or movie from Exercise 3.
- Which question about characterization makes you think more deeply?

Plot and Structure

The plot is the main sequence of events that make up the story. In short stories the plot is usually centered around one experience or significant moment

- What is the most important event?
- How is the plot structured? Is it linear, chronological or does it move around?
- Is the plot believable?

EXERCISE 5

Talk to a different classmate.

- Tell your new partner about the plot and structure of the story or movie from Exercise 3.
- Is it important for the plot to be believable?

Narrator and Point of View

The narrator is the person telling the story. Is the narrator and the main character the same?

By point of view, we mean from whose eyes the story is being told. Short stories tend to be told through one character's point of view

- Who is the narrator or speaker in the story?
- Does the author speak through the main character?
- Is the story written in the first person "I" point of view?
- Is the story written in a detached third person "he/she" point of view?
- Is there an "all-knowing" 3rd person who can reveal what all the characters are thinking and doing at all times and in all places?

EXERCISE 6

Use the questions to lead your discussion. Now that you've talked to several classmates, you should have some deeper thoughts about the story/movie:

- Discuss the narrator and point of view.
- Look back at Exercise 1. Who was the narrator? How would it feel to change the point of view on a story from your own experience?

Conflict

A conflict or tension is usually the heart of the short story and is related to the main character. In a short story there is usually one main struggle.

- How would you describe the main conflict?
- Is it an internal conflict within the character?
- Is it an external conflict caused by the surroundings or environment the main character finds himself/herself in?

EXERCISE 7

Answer the questions based on the story or movie from Exercise 2.

- Which type of conflict is more interesting: internal or external?
- Provide a reason for your answer.

Climax

The climax is the point of greatest tension or intensity in the short story. It can also be the turning point where events take a major turn as the story races towards its conclusion.

- Is there a turning point in the story?
- When does the climax take place?

EXERCISE 8

In a Hollywood movie, there must be a climax. Think of one move that most people have seen.

- Compare your movie idea with a classmate. Did you think of the same movie?
- If you did have the same movie in mind, what was the climax? How did the events take a major turn at that point?

Theme

The theme is the main idea, lesson or message in the short story. It is usually an abstract idea about the human condition, society or life.

- How is the theme expressed?

- Are any elements repeated that may suggest a theme?
- Is there more than one theme?

EXERCISE 9

Do a quick google search for a list of the most common themes.

- Which theme is conveyed in the Hollywood movie from Exercise 8?
- Use the questions about theme to talk with a classmate.
- What could a theme be in a story about your own life? (See Exercise 1)

Style

The author's style has to do with the author's vocabulary, use of imagery, tone or feeling of the story. It has to do with her attitude towards the subject. In some short stories the tone can be ironic, humorous, cold or dramatic.

- Is the author's language full of figurative language?
- What images does she use?
- Do you notice a lot of symbolism? Metaphors (comparisons which do not use "as" or "like", similes (comparisons which use "as" or "like") ?

Examples

Excerpt from *The Moths* by Helena Maria Viramontes:

- "There comes a time when the sun is defiant. Just about the time when moods change, inevitable seasons of a day, transitions from one color to another, that hour or minute or second when the sun is finally defeated, finally sinks into the realization that it cannot with all its power to heal or burn, exist forever, there comes an illumination where the sun and earth meet, a final burst of burning red orange fury reminding us that although endings are inevitable, they are necessary for rebirths, and when that time came, just when I switched on the light in the kitchen to open Abuelita's can of soup, it was probably then that she died."

EXERCISE 10

Talk with a classmate about the example from Viramontes:

- Use the questions about style to guide your conversation.
- How does the imagery and tone impact you, the reader?

Your literary analysis of a short story will often be in the form of an essay where you may be asked to give your opinion of the short story at the end. Choose the elements that made the greatest impression on you. Point out which character/characters you liked best or least and always support your arguments.

RELATED ARTICLES

Sound

The sound of a poem can be musical or rhythmical and should be read aloud.

Rhythm (advanced)

Rhythm refers to the regular beat of the words in a poem. It is also a pattern the poet has arranged by way of stressed and unstressed syllables.

Glossary of Literary Terms

Adage A traditional or proverbial saying.**Allegory** A story in which the characters and events extend beyond the confines of their story to represent an object lesson to readers.**Alliteration** The repetition of a consonant sound – "storm strewn sea."

Anapaest The anapaestic meter consists of a series of two unstressed sounds followed by a single stressed sound – "The Assyrian came down like the wolf on the fold" (Lord Byron).

Antagonist A character whose dramatic role is to oppose the *protagonist.*

Archetype Also known as universal symbol, an archetype may be a character (the intrepid hero, damsel in distress, party animal), a theme (the triumph of good over evil), a symbol, or even a setting. Many literary critics are of the opinion that archetypes, which have a common and recurring representation in a particular human culture or entire human race, shape the structure and function of a literary work.

Archetypal plot A sequence of events forming a type of story that has recurred throughout the history of a civilization, and with which most people are familiar; for example, a battle between good and evil.

Assonance The repetition of vowel sounds, as in "rapid rattle" (Wilfred Owen).

Aural Describes how a poem appeals to our sense of sound, hearing.

Ballad A narrative poem, usually written in quatrains with abcb rhyme scheme (q.v.).

Blank verse Unrhymed iambic pentameter poetry.

Blocking agents In drama, characters who try to prevent other characters from achieving their goals.

Catharsis The purging of audience emotion in tragedy, the release of emotion, and final feeling of relief.

Comedy Form of drama characterized by some sense of optimism, fellowship, love, and good humor.

Conceit A metaphor that is unusually ingenious or elaborate. It is a common feature in the work of metaphysical poets, such as John Donne.

Contextual symbol A symbol that has a non-literal meaning only within the context of the work of art in which it is found.

Dactyl The dactylic meter is the opposite of the anaepestic. It consists of a series of single hard-stressed sounds followed by two soft-stressed sounds – "Just for a handful of silver he left us" (Robert Browning).

Deconstruction An interpretive movement in literary theory that reached its apex in the 1970s. Deconstruction rejects absolute interpretations, stressing ambiguities and contradictions in literature. Deconstruction grew out of the linguistic principles of De Saussure who noted that many Indo-European languages create meaning by binary opposites. Verbal oppositions such as good/evil, light/dark, male/female, rise/fall, up/down, and high/low show a human tendency common transculturally to create vocabulary as pairs of opposites, with one of the two words arbitrarily given positive connotations and the other word arbitrarily given negative connotations.

Dramatic monologue A poem which is "dramatic" because it is a speech presented to an audience (usually of only one person) and a "monologue" because no other character does any talking.

Dynamic character Sometimes referred to as a round character, a dynamic character is one whose values, attitudes, and/or ideals change as a result of the experience the character undergoes throughout the story.

Elegy A poem written to commemorate the death of a person who played a significant role in the poet's life.

Epic An epic in its most specific sense is a genre of classical poetry. It is a poem that is a long narrative about a serious subject, told in an elevated style of language, focused on the exploits of a hero or demi-god who represents the cultural values of a race, nation, or religious group, in which the hero's success or fail-

ure will determine the fate of that people or nation. Usually, the epic has a vast setting and covers a wide geographic area, it contains superhuman feats of strength or military prowess, and gods or supernatural beings frequently take part in the action. The poem begins with the invocation of a muse to inspire the poet and, the narrative starts *in medias res*. The epic contains long catalogs of heroes or important characters, focusing on highborn kings and great warriors rather than peasants and commoners.

Epiphany A change, sudden insight or awareness revealed to the main character.

Eye rhyme Words that look as if they should rhyme but do not – for example "good" and "mood." Also known as sight rhyme.

Fable A short and traditional story, involving archetypal characters and ending with a moral.

Feminism and literature Feminist critics aim to examine the relationships between the male and female characters and the distribution of power within those relationships.

Fiction Prose text in the form of a story that is primarily a product of human imagination.

First-person major-character narrator This type of narrator tells a story in which he or she is the main character, or main focus of attention.

First-person minor-character narrator This narrator is typically a gossip. He or she observes the actions of another person, often a friend, and then tells what that friend did, when, and to whom.

Flashback The technique of narrating an event that occurred before the point in the story to which the narrator has advanced.

Flat character A character, also known as a static character, who is offered the chance for positive change but who, for one reason or another, fails to embrace it.

Free verse Poetry without a set rhyme scheme or rhythm pattern.

Full rhyme The use of words that rhyme completely, such as "good" and "wood."

Genre A major literary form, such as drama, poetry, and the novel.

Haiku The Japanese haiku is a brief poem, consisting of a single image. The haiku consists of three lines of five, seven, and five syllables, respectively.

Half rhyme Describes words that almost rhyme such as "time" and "mine."

Hamartia A term from Greek tragedy that literally means "missing the mark." Originally applied to an archer who misses the target, a *hamartia* came to signify a tragic flaw, especially a misperception, a lack of some important insight, or some blindness that ironically results from one's own strengths and abilities.

Horatian satire Named after the Roman poet, Horace, this is a fairly gentle type of satire used to poke fun at people and their failings or foibles.

Hyperbole A metaphor that bases its comparison on the use of exaggeration, for example, "I'd walk a million miles for one of your smiles" (Al Jolson).

Iambic The iambic rhythm pattern in poetry consists of one unstressed sound or beat, followed by one stressed sound or beat – "The cúrfew tólls the knéll of párting dáy" (Thomas Gray).

Iambic diameter A line with two beats – "I can't."

Iambic pentameter A line with five beats – "I have been one acquainted with the night" (Robert Frost).

Iambic tetrameter A line with four beats – "I wandered lonely as a cloud" (William Wordsworth).

Iambic trimeter A line with three beats – "The only news I know/Is bulletins all day" (Emily Dickinson).

Imagery In literature, an image is a word picture. It can be a phrase, a sentence, or a line. It is used to enhance the reader's appreciation of the figurative more than the literal meaning of a poem, story, or play – "The fog comes/on little cat feet" (Carl Sandberg).

Imagists A group of poets whose aim between 1912 and 1917 was to write poetry that accented imagery or, their preferred term, “imagism” to communicate meaning.

In media res Latin for “in the middle of the action,” the point at which an epic, such as “The Odyssey,” typically opens.

Irony Cicero referred to irony as “saying one thing and meaning another.” Irony comes in many forms. **Verbal irony** is a trope in which a speaker makes a statement in which its actual meaning differs sharply from the meaning that the words ostensibly express. **Dramatic irony** involves a situation in a narrative in which the reader knows something about present or future circumstances that the character does not know. In that situation, the character acts in a way we recognize to be grossly inappropriate to the actual circumstances, or the character expects the opposite of what the reader knows that fate holds in store, or the character anticipates a particular outcome that unfolds itself in an unintentional way. Probably the most famous example of dramatic irony is the situation facing Oedipus in the play *Oedipus Rex*. **Situational irony** is a trope in which accidental events occur that seem oddly appropriate, such as the poetic justice of a pickpocket getting his own pocket picked.

Juvenalian satire Named after the Roman poet Juvenal, this form of satire uses bitter sarcasm more than humor, and is often tinged with cruelty.

Limited omniscient narrator A narrator who limits himself or herself to relaying to readers the thoughts and actions of the main character only.

Litotes The deliberate use of understatement, usually to create an ironic or satiric effect – “I am not as young as I used to be.”

Malapropism A blunder in diction, grotesquely substituting one word with a similar sound for the proper word. Mrs. Malaprop, (Fr. *Mal à propos*), a character in R. B. Sheridan’s comedy *The Rivals*, was famously guilty of such errors in diction: e.g., “As headstrong as an *allegory* [alligator] on the banks of the Nile”; Shakespeare’s Mistress Quickly in *2 Henry IV* (Falstaff “is *indicted* to dinner”); and Capt. Jack Boyle in O’Casey’s *Juno and the Paycock (*“The whole world’s in a state of *chassis*” [chaos]) are earlier and later characters given to malapropisms.

Marxist literary theory Like feminist critics, Marxist critics examine the imbalance of power relationships among characters in literature, in terms of social class.

Metaphor A comparison intended to clarify or intensify the more complex of the objects of the comparison.

Metonymy A form of metaphor in which a phrase is understood to represent something more; for example, to use the phrase “saber rattling” to mean “threatening war.”

Meter A term used to describe the rhythm and measure of a line of poetry.

Narrative The storyline in a literary work.

Narrator Storyteller.

Non-sequential plot The author holds back an important incident that occurred before the chronological ending of the story, typically to create suspense.

Novel A narrative work of fiction typically involving a range of characters and settings, linked together through plot and sub-plots.

Novella A short work of fiction that falls in length somewhere between the novel and the short story.

Objective narrator The objective narrator establishes setting in a precise but rather detached style, and then lets the conversation tell the story, using an objective point of view.

Octave An eight-line stanza.

Ode A long formal poem that typically presents a poet's philosophical views about such subjects as nature, art, death, and human emotion.

Omniscient narrator A narrator capable of telling readers the thoughts of all the characters and the actions of all the characters at any time. An omniscient narrator is like a god who can provide readers with all the information they could ever want.

Onomatopoeia A word or phrase usually found in a poem the sound of which suggests its meaning – "bang," "thwack."

Oral Describes a spoken as opposed to written literary tradition.

Paradox A phrase which seems self-contradictory but, in fact, makes powerful sense despite its lack of logic – "I must be cruel only to be kind" (Shakespeare).

Pastoral Relating to the countryside, especially in an idealized form.

Pastoral elegy A form of elegy that typically contrasts the serenity of the simple life of a shepherd with the cruel world which hastened the death of the poet's friend.

Personification A form of metaphor that compares something non-human with something that is human – "Two Sunflowers/Move in the Yellow Room" (William Blake).

Petrarchan sonnet A sonnet with a rhyme scheme: abbaabbacdecde.

Plot In a literary fiction work, "plot" refers to the events, the order in which they occur, and the relationship of the events to each other.

Poetry One of the major literary genres, usually written in a series of discrete lines which highlight the artistic use of language.

Point of view The stance from which the storyteller or narrator tells the story.

Prose The written text of fiction and non-fiction, as distinct from poetry.

Protagonist The main character in a literary work. See also *antagonist*.

Quatrain A four-line stanza.

Reader response theory A theory of literature that asserts that the reader creates meaning and that, because all people are different, all readings will be different.

Regular verse A literary work written in lines that have the same rhythm pattern and a regular rhyme scheme.

Rhyme scheme The rhyming pattern of a regular-verse poem.

Rhyming couplet A two-line stanza in which the last words in each line rhyme.

Satire A literary form in which a writer pokes fun at those aspects of his society, especially those people and those social institutions that the author thinks are corrupt and in need of change.

Scapegoat A person who is banished or sacrificed in the interests of his or her community. The term is often applied to a tragic hero.

Sequential plot One in which the events are narrated in the order in which they occurred in time.

Sestet A six-line stanza.

Shakespearean sonnet A sonnet with a rhyme scheme: ababcdcdefefgg.

Short story A prose fiction narrative that usually occurs in a single setting and concerns a single main character.

Sight rhyme Words that look as if they should rhyme but do not – for example "mood" and "good." Also known as eye rhyme.

Simile A type of metaphor that makes the comparison explicit by using either the word "like" or the word "as" – "Elderly American ladies leaning on their canes listed toward me like towers of Pisa" (Nabokov).

Sonnet A 14-line regular-verse poem, usually written in iambic pentameter.

Spondee A double-hard-stressed phrase such as “shook foil” (Gerard Manley Hopkins, “God’s Grandeur”).

Static character A static character, also known as a flat character, is one who is offered the chance for positive change but who, for one reason or another, fails to embrace it.

Stereotype A recognizable *type* of person rather than a fully developed character. A stereotypical character is one who can be identified by a single dominant trait; for example, the braggart soldier, the country bumpkin.

Symbolism The use within a literary work of an element that has more than a literal meaning – “All the world’s a stage” (Shakespeare).

Synecdoche The use of a part to represent a whole, as in the expression “lend me a hand.”

Tercet A three-line stanza.

Theatre of the absurd A phrase used to describe a group of plays written during and after the 1950s. The term “absurd” is used because the plots and the characters (though not the themes) are unconventional when examined in the context of conventional tragedy and comedy.

Theme The message or insight into human experience that an author offers to the readers. Broad themes might include family, love, war, nature, death, faith, time, or some aspects of these.

Tone The attitude or personality that a literary work projects; for example, serious and solemn, or lighthearted and amusing.

Tragedy A play that tells the story of a significant event or series of events in the life of a significant person.

Tragic hero The main character in a Greek or Roman tragedy. In contrast with the **epic hero** (who embodies the values of his culture and appears in an epic poem), the tragic hero is typically an admirable character who appears as the focus in a tragic play, but one who is undone by a *hamartia*—a tragic mistake, misconception, or flaw. That hamartia leads to the downfall of the main character.

Trochaic The opposite of iambic. The rhythm of the lines of a trochaic poem consist not of a series of soft-stressed-hard-stressed sounds, but a series of hard-stressed-soft-stressed sounds – “There they are my fifty men and women” (Robert Browning).

Valediction Bidding farewell to someone or something.

Verse A unit of a varying number of lines with which a poem is divided. Also called a stanza.

Villanelle A 19-line poem divided into five tercets and one quatrain. Probably the most famous English villanelle is Dylan Thomas’s “Do Not Go Gentle Into That Good Night.”

PART IV

CRITICAL THINKING AND READING

Annotating a Text

Suggestions for Annotating a Text

- Annotate – v. To make notes on a written work for explanation or critical commentary.

Why do we annotate?

To better understand and to think critically about what you are reading. While the amount of annotation may vary widely from page to page, any notes you add to a text will help you to read it more critically. In addition, any attempt to annotate a text will strengthen your understanding of a reading, ultimately helping you return to the reading with confidence later. This is very important for E.S.L. students who need additional support with vocabulary, cultural references, and idiomatic language.

Here are some ways to annotate a text:

- Chapter summaries/titles:
  - At the end of each chapter, section, or article, write a brief summary of the main idea, plot, or simply what occurred. This does not have to be long or greatly detailed, but should include all relevant ideas or incidents. This practice will help you improve your understanding of a chapter in just a few of your own words.
- Underline:
  - Within the text of any written piece, and as you read, underline or otherwise note anything that strikes you as important, significant, or memorable. If possible, write brief comments within the side margins that indicate your motivation in underlining. In works of non-fiction, focus on important ideas, themes, and the main ideas used by the writer. Underline isolated words and phrases that are important.
- Vocabulary/unusual diction:
  - You should circle or highlight words that are unfamiliar or unusual to you. Look up words these words in a dictionary and write a short definition in the margin of the text. You can also write the definition in your own language, but you should have the definition written down in English first. You can also write down synonyms.
- Questions:
  - Actively engage the text and further/confirm your understanding of each chapter by writing questions in the margin. This will help you think deeper and more critically about the text. If you have time, make multiple choice, fill in the blank, matching, and true/false questions as well to prepare for a test or quiz.

The Process:

There are a number of procedural expectations that make annotation practical and effective.

- Use a consistent system. Use the same abbreviations and symbols every time you annotate (See Below).
- Use different colors to mark the text to separate important information. For example, yellow for vocabulary, green for main ideas, blue for unknown expressions, and so on.
- Do underlining, brackets [ ], highlighting, and circling as you read.
- At chapter or section ends, stop to index page numbers on your front cover list of character information and traits as well as on your back cover list of themes, images, allusions, etc. Also, write chapter summaries at that time.
- Write questions in the margins to actively engage with the text and to think critically about what you've read.
- Be neat and be disciplined, and always REVIEW your annotations!

Some suggested Abbreviations/Symbols:

b/c = because
+ = and
w/ = with
w/o = without
b/t = between
e.g. = for example
ex = example
info = information
b4 = before
↑ = increase, improvement, rising
↓ = decrease, decline, falling
* = important
** = very important
# = of the utmost importance; crucial to understanding
> = use caret to point to an exact location

For Literature:

PLOT = plot item
cf = conflict
Cx = climax
RES = resolution
TP = turning point
RA = rising action
FA = falling action
S = setting
POV = point of view (mention type: 1st person, limited omniscient, etc.)
Th = theme

Critical Thinking: A Must!

Learning Objectives

- define critical thinking
- identify the role that logic plays in critical thinking
- apply critical thinking skills to problem-solving scenarios
- apply critical thinking skills to evaluation of information

Introduction

Consider these thoughts about the critical thinking process, and how it applies not just to our school lives but also our personal and professional lives.

Thinking Critically and Creatively

Critical thinking skills are perhaps the most fundamental skills involved in making judgments and solving problems. You use them every day, and you can continue improving them.

The ability to think critically about a matter—to analyze a question, situation, or problem down to its most basic parts—is what helps us evaluate the accuracy and truthfulness of statements, claims, and information we read and hear. It is the sharp knife that, when honed, separates fact from fiction, honesty from lies, and the accurate from the misleading. We all use this skill to one degree or another almost every day. For example, we use critical thinking every day as we consider the latest consumer products and why one particular product is the best among its peers. Is it a quality product because a celebrity endorses it? Because a lot of other people may have used it? Because it is made by one company versus another? Or perhaps because it is made in one country or another? These are questions representative of critical thinking.

The academic setting demands more of us in terms of critical thinking than everyday life. It demands that we evaluate information and analyze myriad issues. It is the environment where our critical thinking skills can be the difference between success and failure. In this environment we must consider information in an analytical, critical manner. We must ask questions—What is the source of this information? Is this source an expert one and what makes it so? Are there multiple perspectives to consider on an issue? Do multiple sources agree or disagree on an issue? Does quality research substantiate information or opinion? Do I have any personal biases that may affect my consideration of this information?

It is only through purposeful, frequent, intentional questioning such as this that we can sharpen our critical thinking skills and improve as students, learners and researchers.

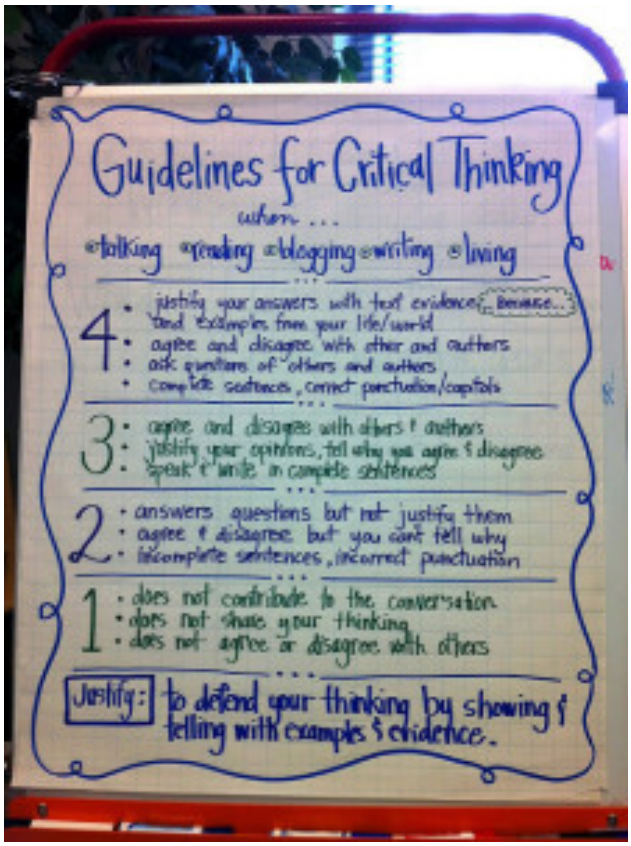
—Dr. Andrew Robert Baker, *Foundations of Academic Success: Words of Wisdom*

Defining Critical Thinking

Thinking comes naturally. You don't have to make it happen—it just does. But you can make it happen in different ways. For example, you can think positively or negatively. You can think with "heart" and you can think with rational judgment. You can also think strategically and analytically, and mathematically and scientifically. These are a few of multiple ways in which the mind can process thought.

What are some forms of thinking you use? When do you use them, and why?

As a college student, you are tasked with engaging and expanding your thinking skills. One of the most important of these skills is critical thinking. Critical thinking is important because it relates to nearly all tasks, situations, topics, careers, environments, challenges, and opportunities. It's not restricted to a particular subject area.



Critical thinking is clear, reasonable, reflective thinking focused on deciding what to believe or do. It means asking probing questions like, "How do we know?" or "Is this true in every case or just in this instance?" It involves being skeptical and challenging assumptions, rather than simply memorizing facts or blindly accepting what you hear or read.

Imagine, for example, that you're reading a history textbook. You wonder who wrote it and why, because you detect certain assumptions in the writing. You find that the author has a limited scope of research focused only on a particular group within a population. In this case, your critical thinking reveals that there are "other sides to the story."

Who are critical thinkers, and what characteristics do they have in common? Critical thinkers are usually curious and reflective people. They like to explore and probe new areas and seek knowledge, clarification, and new solutions. They ask pertinent questions, evaluate statements and arguments, and they distinguish between facts and opinion. They are also willing to examine their own beliefs, possessing a manner of humility that allows them to admit lack of knowledge or understanding when needed. They are open to changing their mind. Perhaps most of all, they actively enjoy learning, and seeking new knowledge is a lifelong pursuit.

This may well be you!

No matter where you are on the road to being a critical thinker, you can always more fully develop your skills. Doing so will help you develop more balanced arguments, express yourself clearly, read critically, and absorb important information efficiently. Critical thinking skills will help you in any profession or any circumstance of life, from science to art to business to teaching.

- Critical Thinking is:
  - Skepticism
  - Examining assumptions
  - Challenging reasoning
  - Uncovering biases
- Critical Thinking is NOT
  - Memorizing
  - Group Thinking
  - Blind acceptance of authority

Critical Thinking in Action

The following video, from Lawrence Bland, presents the major concepts and benefits of critical thinking.

Critical Thinking and Logic

Critical thinking is fundamentally a process of questioning information and data. You may question the information you read in a textbook, or you may question what a politician or a professor or a classmate says. You can also question a commonly-held belief or a new idea. With critical thinking, anything and everything is subject to question and examination.

Logic's Relationship to Critical Thinking

The word logic comes from the Ancient Greek "logike", referring to the science or art of reasoning. Using logic, a person evaluates arguments and strives to distinguish between good and bad reasoning, or between truth and falsehood. Using logic, you can evaluate ideas or claims people make, make good decisions, and form sound beliefs about the world.[1]

Questions of Logic in Critical Thinking

Let's use a simple example of applying logic to a critical-thinking situation. In this hypothetical scenario, a man has a PhD in political science, and he works as a professor at a local college. His wife works at the college, too. They have three young children in the local school system, and their family is well known in the community.

The man is now running for political office. Are his credentials and experience sufficient for entering public office? Will he be effective in the political office? Some voters might believe that his personal life and current job, on the surface, suggest he will do well in the position, and they will vote for him.

In truth, the characteristics described don't guarantee that the man will do a good job. The information is somewhat irrelevant. What else might you want to know? How about whether the man had already held a political office and done a good job? In this case, we want to ask, How much information is adequate in order to make a decision based on logic instead of assumptions?

The following questions, presented in Figure 1, below, are ones you may apply to formulating a logical, reasoned perspective in the above scenario or any other situation:

1. What's happening?

---

1. [2]
2. [1]

- Gather the basic information and begin to think of questions.

2. Why is it important?
    - Ask yourself why it's significant and whether or not you agree.
3. What don't I see?
    - Is there anything important missing?
4. How do I know?
    - Ask yourself where the information came from and how it was constructed.
5. Who is saying it?
    - What's the position of the speaker and what is influencing them?
6. What else? What if?
    - What other ideas exist and are there other possibilities?

Questions a Critical Thinker Asks

Problem-Solving With Critical Thinking

For most people, a typical day is filled with critical thinking and problem-solving challenges. In fact, critical thinking and problem-solving go hand-in-hand. They both refer to using knowledge, facts, and data to solve problems effectively. But with problem-solving, you are specifically identifying, selecting, and defending your solution. Below are some examples of using critical thinking to problem-solve:

- Your roommate was upset and said some unkind words to you, which put a crimp in your relationship. You try to see through the angry behaviors to determine how you might best support your roommate and help bring your relationship back to a comfortable spot.

-  Your campus club has been languishing on account of lack of participation and funds. The new club president, though, is a marketing major and has identified some strategies to interest students in joining and supporting the club. Implementation is forthcoming.

- Your final art class project challenges you to conceptualize form in new ways. On the last day of class when students present their projects, you describe the techniques you used to fulfill the assignment. You explain why and how you selected that approach.

- Your math teacher sees that the class is not quite grasping a concept. She uses clever questioning to dispel anxiety and guide you to new understanding of the concept.

- You have a job interview for a position that you feel you are only partially qualified for, although you really want the job and you are excited about the prospects. You analyze how you will explain your skills and experiences in a way to show that you are a good match for the prospective employer.

- You are doing well in college, and most of your college and living expenses are covered. But there are some gaps between what you want and what you feel you can afford. You analyze your income, savings, and budget to better calculate what you will need to stay in college and maintain your desired level of spending.

Problem-Solving Action Checklist

Problem-solving can be an efficient and rewarding process, especially if you are organized and mindful of critical steps and strategies. Remember, too, to assume the attributes of a good critical thinker. If you are curious, reflective, knowledge-seeking, open to change, probing, organized, and ethical, your challenge or problem will be less of a hurdle, and you'll be in a good position to find intelligent solutions.

- Strategies
  - Define the Problem
    - Action Checklist
      - Identify the problem
      - Provide as many supporting details as possible
      - Provide examples
      - Organize the information logically
  - Identify available solutions
    - Action Checklist
      - Use logic to identify your most important goals
      - Identify implications and consequences
      - Identify facts
      - Compare and contrast possible solutions
  - Select your solution
    - Action Checklist
      - Use gathered facts and relevant evidence
      - Support and defend solutions considered valid
      - Defend your solution

Evaluating Information With Critical Thinking

Evaluating information can be one of the most complex tasks you will be faced with in college. But if you utilize the following four strategies, you will be well on your way to success:

1. Read for understanding by using text coding
2. Examine arguments
3. Clarify thinking

4. Cultivate “habits of mind”

Read for Understanding Using Text Coding

When you read and take notes, use the text coding strategy. Text coding is a way of tracking your thinking while reading. It entails marking the text and recording what you are thinking either in the margins or perhaps on Post-it notes. As you make connections and ask questions in response to what you read, you monitor your comprehension and enhance your long-term understanding of the material.

With text coding, mark important arguments and key facts. Indicate where you agree and disagree or have further questions. You don’t necessarily need to read every word, but make sure you understand the concepts or the intentions behind what is written. Feel free to develop your own shorthand style when reading or taking notes. The following are a few options to consider using while coding text.

Shorthand	Meaning
!	Important
L	Learned something new
!	Big idea surfaced
*	Interesting or important fact
?	Dig deeper
√	Agree
≠	Disagree

See more text coding from PBWorks and Collaborative for Teaching and Learning.

Examine Arguments

When you examine arguments or claims that an author, speaker, or other source is making, your goal is to identify and examine the hard facts. You can use the spectrum of authority strategy for this purpose. The spectrum of authority strategy assists you in identifying the “hot” end of an argument—feelings, beliefs, cultural influences, and societal influences—and the “cold” end of an argument—scientific influences. The following video explains this strategy.

Clarify Thinking

When you use critical thinking to evaluate information, you need to clarify your thinking to yourself and likely to others. Doing this well is mainly a process of asking and answering probing questions, such as the logic questions discussed earlier. Design your questions to fit your needs, but be sure to cover adequate ground. What is the purpose? What question are we trying to answer? What point of view is being expressed? What assumptions are we or others making? What are the facts and data we know, and how do we know them? What are the concepts we're working with? What are the conclusions, and do they make sense? What are the implications?

Cultivate "Habits of Mind"

"Habits of mind" are the personal commitments, values, and standards you have about the principle of good thinking. Consider your intellectual commitments, values, and standards. Do you approach problems with an open mind, a respect for truth, and an inquiring attitude? Some good habits to have when thinking critically are being receptive to having your opinions changed, having respect for others, being independent and not accepting something is true until you've had the time to examine the available evidence, being fair-minded, having respect for a reason, having an inquiring mind, not making assumptions, and always, especially, questioning your own conclusions—in other words, developing an intellectual work ethic. Try to work these qualities into your daily life.

Time Management

Learning Objectives

- define your current uses of time in daily life
- explore time management strategies to add time for college success activities
- identify procrastination behaviors and strategies to avoid them

Introduction

The two areas most students struggle with when acclimating to college life are studying and time management. These issues arise from trying to manage newfound freedoms in college and from misunderstanding expectations of college classes. Time management is a means to build a solid foundation for college success.

How You Use Your Time

As most students discover, time in college is not the same as it was in high school. There are many

more “unscripted” hours of the day. Fewer hours are devoted to sitting in a classroom, but more hours are expected to be devoted to classwork, on your own. While this can be liberating, you may find that social opportunities conflict with academic expectations. For example, a free day before an exam, if not wisely spent, can spell trouble for doing well on the exam. It is easy to fall behind when there are so many choices and opportunities.

In the following Alleyoop Advice video, Alleyoop (Angel Aquino) discusses what many students discover about college: there is a lot of free time—and many challenges to effectively balance free time with study time.

In the next few sections, we’ll take three steps towards learning to effectively manage our time. First, we have to see where we are, currently, with our use of time.

Identify Your Time Management Style

The following self-assessment survey can help you determine your time-management personality type. Read each question in the Questions column. Then read the possible responses. Select one response for each question. Each response should reflect what you probably would do in a given situation, not what you think is the “right” answer. Put a checkmark in the My Time Management Type column next to your likely response.

	QUESTIONS	RESPONSES: Which response most closely matches what you would do? In the right column, check one response (a, b, c or d) for each question.	MY TIME MANAGEMENT TYPE
1	Your instructor just gave your class the prompts for your first essay, which is due in two weeks. How do you proceed from here?	a. Choose a prompt and begin working on a thesis immediately. Better to get it out of the way!	O Early bird
		b. Read over the prompts and let them sink in for a week or so. You'll still have one more week to finish the assignment, right?	O Balancing act
		c. Read the prompts and maybe start playing around with ideas, but wait to really start writing until the day before. You swear it's all in your head somewhere!	O Pressure cooker
		d. Definitely last. You'll wait until everyone else has done their work, so you can make sure you are not duplicating efforts. Whatever, this is why you hate group work.	O Improviser
2	You are working on a group assignment that requires you to split up responsibilities with three other classmates. When would you typically finish your part?	a. First. Then you're done and don't have to worry about it. Plus it could give you time in case you want to tweak anything later.	O Early bird
		b. After one or two of the others have submitted their materials to the group, but definitely not last. You wanted to see how they approached it first.	O Balancing act
		c. Maybe last, but definitely before the assignment due date and hopefully before any of the other group members ask about it.	O Pressure cooker
		d. Definitely last. You'll wait until everyone else has done their work, so you can make sure you are not duplicating efforts. Whatever, this is why you hate group work.	O Improviser
3	Your instructor just shared the instructions for your next assignment and you read them but don't quite understand what he's asking for in a certain part. What would you probably do?	a. Send the instructor an email that afternoon. When he doesn't respond that night, email him again. This is your worst nightmare—you just want to know what he wants!!	O Early bird
		b. Send him an email asking for clarification, giving yourself enough time to wait for his response and then complete the assignment. Better to be safe than sorry.	O Balancing act
		c. Try to figure it out for yourself. You're pretty sure what he's trying to say, and you'll give it your best shot.	O Pressure cooker

	QUESTIONS	RESPONSES: Which response most closely matches what you would do? In the right column, check one response (a, b, c or d) for each question.	MY TIME MANAGEMENT TYPE
		d. Don't say anything until after the assignment is due. Other people in the class felt the same way too, probably!	O Improviser
4	The course you are taking requires you to post in a weekly discussion forum by Sunday night each week so the class can talk about everyone's posts on Monday. When do you submit your posts?	a. Tuesday night, after the first day of class that week. Then it's out of the way.	O Early bird
		b. Thursday or Friday night. You want to let the week's discussion sink in a little so you can collect your thoughts.	O Balancing act
		c. Sunday night. You always forget during the weekend!	O Pressure cooker
		d. Monday at 3 AM. That still counts as Sunday night, right?	O Improviser
5	You have an important assignment due Monday morning, and you have a social/ work/family obligation that will keep you busy for most of the weekend. It is now the Wednesday before the assignment is due. How would you approach this dilemma?	a. You already finished it yesterday, the day it was assigned. Done!	O Early bird
		b. You tell yourself that you'll finish it by Friday night, and you manage this by chipping away at it over those 3 days. …Little. By. Little.	O Balancing act
		c. You tell yourself that you'll finish it by Friday night, so you can have your weekend free, but you still have a little left to do on Sunday—no big deal.	O Pressure cooker
		d. You tell yourself that you'll take the weekend off, then stay up late on Sunday or wake up early on Monday to finish it. It's not a final or anything, and you have a life.	O Improviser
6	You have to read 150 pages before your next class meeting. You have 4 days to do so. What would you most likely do?	a. 150 pages divided by 4 days means… a little less than 40 pages a day. You like to chunk it this way because then you'll also have time to go over your notes and highlights, and come up with questions for the instructor.	O Early bird
		b. 150 pages divided by…well … 2 days (because it's been a long week), means 75 pages a day. Totally doable.	O Balancing act
		c. 150 pages, the day before it is due. You did this to yourself, it's fine.	O Pressure cooker
		d. How much time does it take to skim the text for keywords and/or find a summary online?	O Improviser

Assessing Your Responses

Which of the four basic time-management personality types did you select the most? Which did you select the least? Do you feel like these selections match the student you have been in the past? Has your previous way of doing things worked for you, or do you think it's time for a change? Remember, we can all always improve!

Learn more below about your tendencies. Review traits, strengths, challenges, and tips for success for each of the four time-management personality types.

The Early Bird

- Traits:
  - You like to make checklists and feel great satisfaction when you can cross something off of your to-do list. When it comes to assignments, you want to get started as soon as possible (and maybe start brainstorming before that), because it lets you stay in control.
- Strengths:
  - You know what you want and are driven to figure out how to achieve it. Motivation is never really a problem for you.
- Challenges:
  - Sometimes you can get more caught up in getting things done as quickly as possible and don't give yourself enough time to really mull over issues in all of their complexity.
- Tips for Success:
  - You're extremely organized and on top of your schoolwork, so make sure you take time to really enjoy learning in your classes. Remember, school isn't all deadlines and checkboxes—you also have the opportunity to think about big-picture intellectual problems that don't necessarily have clear answers.

The Balancing Act

- Traits:
  - You really know what you're capable of and are ready to do what it takes to get the most out of your classes. Maybe you're naturally gifted in this way or maybe it's a skill that you have developed over time; in any case, you should have the basic organizational skills to succeed in any class, as long as you keep your balance.
- Strengths:
  - Your strength really lies in your ability to be well rounded. You may not always complete assignments perfectly every time, but you are remarkably consistent and usually manage to do very well in classes.
- Challenges:
  - Because you're so consistent, sometimes you can get in a bit of a rut and begin to coast in class, rather than really challenging yourself.
- Tips for Success:
  - Instead of simply doing what works, use each class as an opportunity for growth by engaging thoughtfully with the material and constantly pushing the boundaries of your own expectations

for yourself.

The Pressure Cooker

- Traits:
  - You always get things done and almost always at the last minute. Hey, it takes time to really come up with good ideas!
- Strengths:
  - You work well under pressure, and when you do finally sit down to accomplish a task, you can sit and work for hours. In these times, you can be extremely focused and shut out the rest of the world in order to complete what's needed.
- Challenges:
  - You sometimes use your ability to work under pressure as an excuse to procrastinate. Sure, you can really focus when the deadline is tomorrow, but is it really the best work you could produce if you had a couple of days of cushion?
- Tips for Success:
  - Give yourself small, achievable deadlines, and stick to them. Make sure they're goals that you really could (and would) achieve in a day. Then don't allow yourself to make excuses. You'll find that it's actually a lot more enjoyable to not be stressed out when completing schoolwork. Who would have known?

The Improviser

- Traits:
  - You frequently wait until the last minute to do assignments, but it's because you've been able to get away with this habit in many classes. Sometimes you miss an assignment or two, or have to pretend to have done reading that you haven't, but everyone does that sometimes, right?
- Strengths:
  - You think quickly on your feet, and while this is a true strength, it also can be a crutch that prevents you from being really successful in a class.
- Challenges:
  - As the saying goes, old habits die hard. If you find that you lack a foundation of discipline and personal accountability, it can be difficult to change, especially when the course material becomes challenging or you find yourself struggling to keep up with the pace of the class.
- Tips for Success:
  - The good news is you can turn this around! Make a plan to organize your time and materials in a reasonable way, and really stick with it. Also, don't be afraid to ask your instructor for help, but be sure to do it before, rather than after, you fall behind.

Create A Schedule

Once you've evaluated how you have done things in the past, you'll want to think about how you might create a schedule for managing your time well going forward. The best schedules have some flexibility built into them, as unexpected situations will always pop up along the way.

Your schedule will be unique to you, depending on the level of detail you find helpful. There are some things—due dates and exam dates, for example—that should be included in your schedule no matter what. But you also might find it helpful to break down assignments into steps (or milestones) that you can schedule, as well.

Again, this is all about what works best for you. Do you want to keep a record of only the major deadlines you need to keep in mind? Or does it help you to plan out every day so you stay on track? Your answers to these questions will vary depending on the course, the complexity of your schedule, and your own personal preferences.

Your schedule will also vary depending on the course you're taking. So pull out your syllabus and try to determine the rhythm of the class by looking at the following factors:

- Will you have tests or exams in this course? When are those scheduled?
- Are there assignments and papers? When are those due?
- Are there any group or collaborative assignments? You'll want to pay particular attention to the timing of any assignment that requires you to work with others.

You can find many useful resources online that will help you keep track of your schedule. Some are basic, cloud-based calendars (like Google calendar, iCal, Outlook), and some (like iHomework) are specialized for students.

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

Questions and Answers About Schedules

- Student 1:
    - Do I really need to create a study schedule? I can honestly keep track of all of this in my head.
- Answer: Yes, you really should create a study schedule. Your instructors may give you reminders about what you need to do when, but if you have multiple classes and other events and activities to fit in, it's easy to lose track. A study schedule helps you carve out sufficient time—and stick to it.

Here is a tool to create a printable class study schedule to help you plan your time during the week from the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office.

Here are ways to plan time (semester, week, days) from Ohio University's Academic Advancement Center. Ohio University uses a quarterly system (11 weeks); you may need adapt their schedule to reflect your academic needs.

- Student 2:
    - Realistically, how much time should I spend studying for class?
- Answer: This is a good question and a tough one to answer. Generally speaking, for each hour of class, you should spend a minimum of two to three hours studying. Thus, a typical three-hour class would require a minimum of six to nine hours of studying per week. If you are registered for 15 credits a semester, then you would need to spend 30 to 45 hours each week studying for your classes, which can be as much time needed for a full-time job. If you think of college as a "job," you will understand that it takes work to succeed.

One important college success skill is learning how to interact with the course materials. Think about learning a sport or playing a game. How do you learn how to play it? With lots of practice and engagement. The more you play, the better you get. The same applies to learning. You need to engage with the course material and concentrate on learning.

Access The 168-Hour Exercise—How Do I Use My Time Now? from Ohio University's Academic Advancement Center. It can help you understand how you use your time now and decide if you need to make changes.

- Student 3:
    - Aside from class time requirements, should I account for anything else as I draw up my schedule?
- Answer: This depends on how detailed you want your schedule to be. Is it a calendar of important dates, or do you need a clear picture of how to organize your entire day? The latter is more successful, so long as you stick with it. This is also where it will be helpful to determine when you are most productive and efficient. When are you the most focused and ready to learn new things? In the morning, afternoon, or evening?

Here is a time management calculator for first-year students at the University of Texas El Paso.

- Student 4:
    - My life and school requirements change on a week-to-week basis. How can I possibly account for this when making a schedule?
- Answer: Try creating a variable schedule in case an event comes up or you need to take a day or two off.

- Student 5:
    - I'm beginning to think that scheduling and time management are good ideas, but on the other hand they seem unrealistic. What's wrong with cramming? It's what I'll probably end up doing anyway . . .
- Answer: Cramming, or studying immediately before an exam without much other preparation, has many disadvantages. Trying to learn any subject or memorize facts in a brief but intense period of time is basically fruitless. You simply forget what you have learned much faster when you cram. Instead, study in smaller increments on a regular basis: your brain will absorb complex course material in a more profound and lasting way because it's how the brain functions.

Get Better at Prioritizing

Due dates are important. Set your short and long-term goals accordingly. Ask yourself the following:

- What needs to get done today?
- What needs to get done this week?
- What needs to get done by the end the first month of the semester?
- What needs to get done by the end the second month of the semester?
- What needs to get done by the end of the semester?

Your time is valuable. Treat it accordingly by getting the most you can out of it.

Above all, avoid procrastination. Procrastination is the kiss of death, because it's difficult to catch up once you've fallen behind. Do you have a problem with procrastination? Be on your guard so that it doesn't become an issue for you.

Procrastination Checklist

Do any of the following descriptions apply to you?

- My paper is due in two days and I haven't really started writing it yet.
- I've had to pull an all-nighter to get an assignment done on time.
- I've turned in an assignment late or asked for an extension when I really didn't have a good excuse not to get it done on time.
- I've worked right up to the minute an assignment was due.
- I've underestimated how long a reading assignment would take and didn't finish it in time for class.
- I've relied on the Internet for information (like a summary of a concept or a book) because I didn't finish the reading on time.

If these sound like issues you've struggled with in the past, you might want to consider whether you have the tendency to procrastinate and how you want to deal with it in your future classes. You're already spending a lot of time, energy, and money on the classes you're taking—don't let all of that go to waste!

Strategies to Combat Procrastination

Below are some effective strategies for overcoming procrastination:

- Keep your studying "bite-sized."
  - When confronted with 150 pages of reading or 50 problems to solve, it's natural to feel overwhelmed. Try breaking it down: What if you decide that you will read for 45 minutes or that you will solve 10 problems? That sounds much more manageable.
- Turn off your phone, close your chat windows, and block distracting Web sites.
  - The best advice we've ever heard is to treat your studying as if you're in a movie theater—just turn it off.
- Set up a reward system.
  - If you read for 40 minutes, you can check your phone for 5 minutes. But keep in mind that reward-based systems only work if you stick to an honor system.
- Study in a place reserved for studying ONLY.
  - Your bedroom may have too many distractions (or temptations, such as taking a nap), so it may be best to avoid it when you're working on school assignments.
- Use checklists.
  - Make your incremental accomplishments visible. Some people take great satisfaction and motivation from checking items off a to-do list. Be very specific when creating this list, and clearly describe each task one step at a time.

Video Guidance

In the following video Joseph Clough shares key strategies for conquering procrastination once and for all.

A YouTube element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://asccc-oeri.pressbooks.pub/advancedcommunitycollegeeslcomposition/?p=138

Appendix A

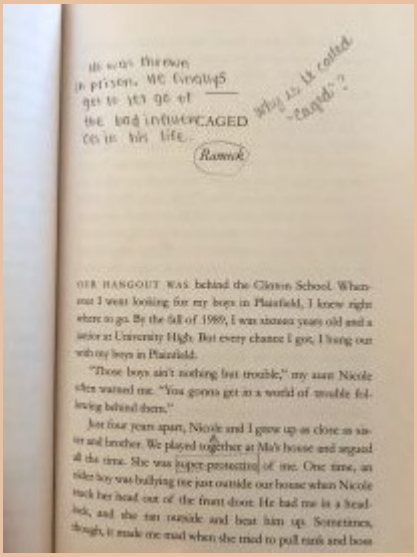
Annotation Strategies

STRATEGY 1

What, when, _____ , why, and how?

Ask WH-questions as you preview the title, headings, and visuals. As you continue reading the page, write questions in the margins.

- Good readers are always wondering while they read.
- Questioning helps YOU focus on what's important in the text.
- If you are reading fiction, you might ask questions about what will happen next or why a character acted in a certain way.
- Use sticky notes (post-its) if the margins are too small for all your questions.



An Annotated Text

STRATEGY 2

Start by underlining or highlighting the new word. Note the words that you don't know.

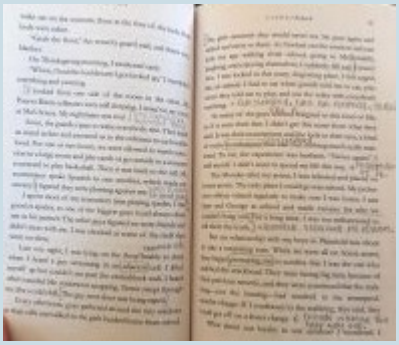
- Use context to guess the meaning. Write your guess in the margin or on a sticky note.
- Write simple definitions or synonyms in English in the margin.
- Keep a list of new words as part of your vocabulary-building practice. Create your own flash cards to remember new vocabulary.

Annotations Example

STRATEGY 3

Make predictions and draw inferences. Take a guess about the content based on a title. Draw inferences based on the ideas that come to your mind while reading.

- Inferring is how readers go beyond what is on the written page. This is a key part of critical thinking!
- Making an inference will help you build deeper meaning. Write your predictions and inferences in the margin or on a sticky note.



An Annotated Book

STRATEGY 4

Activate schema: Draw connections from what you are reading to your own experience.

Schema is all of your relevant prior knowledge which helps you relate to the story (in fiction) or the topic (in nonfiction).

- We can draw connections to ourselves, another text, or the experiences of others.
- Write your connections in the margin or on a sticky note and share with a classmate.

STRATEGY 5

If you get stuck, don't despair!
Identify confusing sentences so that after you finish reading, you can go back and try to make sense of it.

- Write a question mark (?) in the margin.
- Continue reading the page. Then return to the passage that was unclear. Write a question in the margin or on a sticky note.
- You may find that further reading brings clarity. If it does not, re-read the difficult section and determine what you need to do to better understand the reading.
- Ask a classmate for their ideas. Raise your hand and ask your teacher for help. Collaboration is the solution!

STRATEGY 6

Summarize and synthesize: demonstrate your critical thinking skills.

Put the author's ideas into your own words. Link the ideas to other readings.

- Close the book and jot down the main ideas that you remember. (You can pull all of the sticky notes out of your book and use them to write the main ideas.)
- Check your main ideas with a classmate. Edit as necessary. Be sure to include the author's name as part of the summary.
- Tell your classmate how the main points of this author connect to another reading (= synthesis).
- After sharing information, write down another sentence or two. Explain how these ideas are linked.
- See example in Appendix D.

Appendix B

Childhood: Memories From Deep Inside

Read this essay written by a student in E.S.L. 6A.

Determine the organization structure. Identify 3-4 issues that should be resolved.

Childhood is our deepest memory. Everyone has a different color to describe it. In chapter of "Blood And Rice" of *The Best We Could Do*, Thi Bui describes her father Bo's childhood. Born in Vietnam during the Second World War, Bo lived in the countryside where left him many unforgettable memories. This reminds me of my childhood, and I find many similarities between my childhood and Bo's: While we both lived in the countryside and had some of the same habits, we also had one biggest contrast: In Bo's childhood, he experienced famine and war while I grew up with sunshine.

One of the similarities between Bo and me is that we both lived in the countryside. Bo states, " people planted water hyacinth, water spinach, and morning glories, and stocked the pond with shrimp and fish"(96). This describes country life. In addition to farming grain, the villagers also grew many kinds of vegetables and flowers, raised poultry and lived a self-insufficient life. Bo enjoyed his life in the countryside where he learned swimming, and also he had plentiful food to eat. In my childhood, I remembered in the Spring, after finishing farming, the adults in my town organized Spring Sports. It had the tug-of –war, sprint, and the game of the hidden treasure. All the children enjoyed these activities very much, especially the treasure game. They would search in grass and bushes carefully. Laughter of men and children spread throughout the valley. The sky in the countryside was always blue, and people who lived in the countryside were very relaxed.

Another similarity of our childhood is that we had some of the same habits, such as swimming and fishing. Bo was a gifted boy, he learned how to swim by himself and fish in the pond. It was the best time of his growing up. My hometown also had a pond with fish and shrimps, which was the reason why I liked summer. In the morning, we would catch fish, later we would give the fish to our mom to make a delicious lunch. Although I was a girl, I went fishing with my brother all the time. In the afternoon, many kids would swim in the pond. The water in the pond was warm, and the tired children went to the bank to bask in the sunshine. That's why Bo and me like the water of the countryside.

Although we have many similarities from childhood, we have one biggest contrast: Bo lived through the Vietnam War. During the war, Bo learned how to hide. Bo describes, " Looking up through the breathing hole was the only way to tell that it was night, and the day again…before someone came back"(122). According to the novel, I know this happened when the French army occupied Vietnam, they killed a lot of Vietnamese. People were so terrified that they would hide in small spaces. I couldn't imagine that a little boy was hiding in a dark place only by himself, where terror and hunger surrounded him. Conversely, I had a very good time in my childhood. I was born in China after reform and the opening up, which means the

economic development was very fast. My parents worked hard, they supported the whole family. I was sent to school and expected to be a gifted person in the future. From my parents, I learned what is love and responsibility. In contrast to Bo, I lived in peace.

The countryside life made Bo and my childhood colorful, some of the same habits made our childhood full of happiness. However, because of the war, Bo's childhood is turbulence; because of the social and family, my childhood is comfort. Each of us has our own childhood; maybe there are similarities and differences, just like Bo and me. Whatever happened in childhood will become the most unforgettable memory in our life, and those memories will affect our life and behavior.

Appendix C

Batman: A Hero for Any Time

In "Batman: A Hero for Any Time," Jacob Gallman-Dreiling compares the traditional portrayal of the superhero Batman with the modern version. As you read, look for the comparison and contrast phrases that the author uses to help the reader understand the argument he is making. What kind of organizational structure does the essay follow?

Outline

Thesis: Although the framework of the Batman story always remains the same, the character has been re-imagined over time to suit the changing expectations of a hero through his characterization as well as that of those who surround him, both friends and foes.I. The backstory for Batman has always remained the same.

A. Bruce Wayne is the son of wealthy socialites.
   1. Bruce Wayne's parents are murdered in front of him.
   2. Bruce Wayne grows up to inherit his parents' fortune.

B. Bruce Wayne becomes Batman to avenge the violence of his parents' death.
   1. Batman fights crime with the help of Commissioner Gordon and others.
   2. Batman employs an arsenal of non-lethal weapons to aid him.

II. The characterization of Batman has changed to fit the changing expectations of a hero.

A. In the Silver Age of comic books, Batman was portrayed as a sunny, pulpy character.
   1. Batman's stories had to adhere to the guidelines of the Comics Code Authority.
      a. Characters could not use concealed weapons.
      b. Stories required "morals."
      c. Stories could not use kidnapping or excessive violence.
      d. Stories incorporated elements of science fiction.
      e. Stories had limitations on the portrayal of female characters.
   2. Batman's suits often had ridiculous properties he conveniently prepared for the upcoming mission.

B. In modern portrayals, Batman is a tortured and flawed character.
   1. Batman is haunted by the death of his parents.
   2. Batman has become a skilled detective and fighter.
   3. Batman's suit is more armor than spandex.
   4. Batman is haunted by his mistakes.
   5. Batman and Commissioner Gordon conspire to hide the truth about Harvey Dent from the people of Gotham.

III. The characterization of Batman's associates has changed to fit the changing expectations of a hero.
    A. In the Silver Age of comic books, Batman's associates were correspondingly light- hearted.
        1. Characters like Ace the Bat-Hound, Bat-Mice, and Batwoman were created to draw in children.
        2. Issues were built around a villain-of-the-week.
    B. In modern portrayals, Batman's associates deal with real consequences and changes.
        1. Dick Grayson grows up and goes to college.
        2. Batgirl is paralyzed by the Joker.
        3. Joker is given several conflicting backstories explaining his psychosis.
        4. Catwoman has changed from a harmless cat-burglar to a reformed prostitute.

Student Essay

Batman: A Hero for Any Time

Few ideas in this world are as timeless as that of a superhero. The ancient Greeks had Odysseus and Hercules. The British have Sherlock Holmes and Allan Quatermain. The Americans developed the modern concept of the superhero with characters like Superman and Spider-Man and created elaborate stories for the origin of their powers, much like the Greeks used when creating their heroes. While the world of superheroes was originally a white man's club, the creation of Wonder Woman ushered in a new era of diversity. Now men, women, people of color, even those of differing sexual orientations are represented among the ranks of those who fight against evil. Though teams of superheroes like the Justice League of America and the X- Men have enduring popularity, few superheroes have captured the imagination like Batman.

Created in 1939 by Bob Kane and Bill Finger, a boy orphaned by violence grows to become the Caped Crusader, avenger of the fictional of Gotham. This comic book hero has spurred film, radio, and television adaptations, has spawned action figures and video games, and has maintained an uninterrupted comic book publication, something few other superhero titles can boast. Although the framework of the Batman story always remains the same, the character has been re-imagined over time to suit the changing expectations of a hero through his characterization as well as through the portrayal of those who surround him, both friends and foes.

The basic framework of the Batman story has stayed the same since his debut in May, 1939. At the age of eight, Bruce Wayne, the son of wealthy socialites, witnesses his parents' murder at the hands of a desperate mugger and swears to avenge their deaths by waging war on all criminals. He grows up to inherit their fortune and the family company, using the money to fund charitable efforts and to reside in stately Wayne Manor. By night, he becomes Batman, ridding the Gotham City streets of menacing foes like the Joker, the Riddler, and Two-Face. He is aided in his fight by his sidekick Robin, Batgirl, and Commissioner Gordon, as well as his butler Alfred Pennyworth. His most enduring love interest is Selina Kyle, who is also known as the notorious cat-burglar, Catwoman. Batman eschews lethal weaponry such as guns, instead preferring to outwit his foes using his intellect to bring them to justice.

While the key details of Batman's backstory have remained unchanged for almost seventy-five years, his characterization has changed to suit the ever-evolving expectations of a superhero. When the character debuted in the Silver Age of comics—the decades between 1950 and 1970—he was a sunny, pulpy char-

acter: he was billed as the "World's Greatest Detective" and performed as such, while reflecting what is considered to be a more innocent time. His villains were grand, but he outsmarted them using his intelligence and science. The introduction of the Comics Code Authority in 1954 restricted not only the way that stories were presented but also the types of stories that could be presented. For instance, concealed weapons were forbidden, stories were required to have "morals," and kidnapping and excessive violence were forbidden. As such, Batman's stories began incorporating elements of science fiction. As the comics demonstrate, Batman famously repels aliens and an island of animatronic dinosaurs during this period. Also, female characters in the Batman stories of this time are poorly treated. The villain Catwoman had to be shelved due to regulations regarding women and violence, while the original Batwoman was brought on as a potential love interest to quiet the growing assertion of conservative culture warriors that Batman and Robin were, in fact, lovers. When this version of Batwoman was deemed unnecessary, she was written out. This period is also famous for Batman having "batsuits" with heretofore unseen special properties, such as fireproofing and thermal heating.

Modern portrayals of Batman show him as a deeply flawed, psychologically scarred hero. During the 1980s the Comics Code's influence was waning, and writers like Frank Miller took advantage of this to tell brutal, psychological stories. Haunted by the murder of his parents, a modern Batman is dangerous and calculating. He has returned to his roots as a skilled detective and fighter, which has made him suspicious and paranoid. He is often depicted as having calculated how to defeat his allies, should the need arise, with contingency plans for everyone from Robin to Superman. Modern writers have a young Bruce Wayne train as a ninja before returning to Gotham to become Batman, so greater emphasis is placed on his stealth and fighting skills. The batsuit has reflected this change as well, shifting from a cloth/spandex suit to one that is very clearly body armor, built to withstand bullets and knives.

He is also haunted by his mistakes. After the death of Jason Todd, the second sidekick to go by the codename Robin, Batman spirals into anger and depression over not being able to prevent Jason's death at the hands of the Joker. For the next decade, Jason's murder haunts Batman alongside that of his parents as his greatest failure. He puts Jason's costume on display in the Batcave as motivation. In the 2008 Christopher Nolan film *The Dark Knight*, Batman and Commissioner Gordon conspire to hide the truth of the popular District Attorney Harvey Dent's descent into madness so that Gotham City will have a symbol of hope. While that decision is for the good of the city, it leads to Bruce Wayne's reclusion and an eight year hiatus as Batman. Such dark, psychological stories would never have been allowed during the heyday of the Comics Code Authority.

Just as the portrayal of Batman has shifted to meet the current expectations of a superhero, so too have the depictions of the characters around him, both allies and enemies. During the Silver Age, Batman's associates are, like Batman himself, light-hearted. Characters like Ace the Bat-Hound and the Bat-Mice were introduced to bring in more young readers, though these characters were rarely seen after 1964. Issues were built around a villain-of-the- week who is purely evil and has no outside motivation. These stories also tend to be episodic with no story arcs or even character arcs. The Joker is originally a calculating murderer, but his character becomes a gleeful trickster to comply with the Code.

As readers matured, the creative forces driving the various Batman outlets were able to tell more complex, meaningful stories. Thus, in modern portrayals, Batman's associates deal with real, lasting consequences and changes. Beginning with Frank Miller's *The Dark Knight* comic series, Batman's friends begin their trials. Dick Grayson, the original Robin, grows up and goes to college, being replaced by the ill-fated Jason Todd. He becomes a hero in his own right, going by the codename Nightwing and becoming the

leader of the Teen Titans. In the seminal 1988 graphic novel *The Killing Joke*, Batgirl is partially paralyzed by the Joker, who shoots her through her spine as part of an effort to drive her father, Commissioner Gordon, insane. This condition lasts until the DC-Universe-wide reboot in 2011, and she is now able to walk and has resumed the mantle of Batgirl. The Joker himself has been given many different backstories, all of them horrific. Filmmakers give a nod to the Joker's varied backstories in the film *The Dark Knight* by having the Joker give conflicting accounts of how he received his trademark scars. Catwoman is originally just a bored housewife who turns to crime, but beginning in the 1980s her story retroactively changes to her being a prostitute who turns to burglary to buy freedom for herself and her sister. Once a staunch villain of Batman, this new version of the character is portrayed more as an antihero; though she is not necessarily an upstanding citizen, the new Catwoman will join forces with Batman to fight evil when it suits her. These stories appeal to an audience craving depth and substance to their characters, far different from the Pre-Vietnam War era Batman stories.

While the key details to the Batman story never change, the way the character has been presented has changed over time, as has the way his associated characters have been presented. It is perhaps this adaptability that has allowed Batman to flourish in popularity for almost seventy-five years, with no signs of that popularity waning. As the demographic for Batman's stories matures, the power wielded by the Comics Code Authority has diminished, making darker, more meaningful stories possible. Previously one dimensional characters were given subtleties and nuances, much in the way modern film versions depict the heroes of old, from Odysseus to Sherlock Holmes. As society's norms change, this change is reflected in the way films, stories, and comic books depict superheroes. With all the changes occurring in culture worldwide, who knows what the next generation's Batman will be like?

Online Compare-and-Contrast Essay Alternatives

Deborah Tannen compares and contrasts conversation styles in "Sex, Lies and Conversation: Why Is It So Hard for Men and Women to Talk to Each Other?"

Alex Wright examines communication patterns, old and new, in "Friending, Ancient or Otherwise."

Appendix D

Synthesis Essay Sample

Read this essay written by a student in an E.S.L. advanced composition course. Which authors are cited?
How many sources are integrated? How are these sources connected?
What should be included as part of MLA style?
What should this student do to improve the content/organization of the essay?

Changing the Future: Replacing Bad for Good

As well as a garden with different plants, humankind is composed by many races, people with diverse degrees of knowledge, experiences of life, personalities, and religions, amid others. Laura Pulido in her book *A People's Guide to Los Angeles* shows, in many articles, how an event could negatively transform the life of different communities living in Los Angeles in the last century, for instance, the Mexican American habitants of Chavez Ravine, the Chinese Americans of Chinatown, and the Japanese Americans in the West Coast of California. In all those examples, immigrants and their following generations have been displaced, suffering, once again, the duel of leaving and losing their homes, their lands, and burying even their dreams … Readers can easily imagine the scenario of each episodes, and feel the sorrows and the desperation of all of those people, produced by such psychological and economic instability. James Thomas Jackson, a well-known American journalist and magazine writer, presents in his article "Waiting in Line at the Drugstore" a different experience of life going from ignorance to knowledge making possible the effacement of his inferiority complex. It would be interesting to add this article as another section in Laura Pulido's book because it is a new approach of how to face and deal with a sad reality transforming it as a successful life. Working for a photographic studio, James Jackson, a 13-year-old African American boy, decides to stop studying. One of his daily duties in his job was to buy food and drinks from the drugstore for the office's workers; it was for him the worst experience, because being "black", he was rejected and humiliated by white people. One day, waiting in line to be served, as he used to be every day, he discovers bookcase, he picks one book and began reading. From that moment, his personality and his complete life were positively transformed. The person who reads those pages will realize how James Thomas Jackson could delete two important barriers in his life: the inferiority complex caused by the color of his skin and a lack of knowledge.

In fact, the first barrier for James Thomas Jackson was the inferiority complex due to the color of his skin, a huge problem during many decades the 1930s, in the United States. At that time, usually this characteristic determined the past, the present and perhaps the future of the African American people. Jackson wrote: "Being thirteen is doubtless bad enough for white male youths, but for blacks -me in particular- it was a pure dee hell" (16). As an adolescent, Jackson was suffering a normal psychological unbalance, cruelly

exacerbated by the color of his skin. In fact, the most important point to highlight in the adolescent period is the need of being accepted by his entourage; he was humiliated and rejected in the drugstore. In addition, adolescents are very sensitive, another negative factor that increase the humiliation and rejection coming from the racist white society. He is rebellious, it is why he repeat many times that he is black and he wants, but he knows that he can not fight against that society. He was really living the drama for being not only an adolescent, but an African American adolescent. In Jackson's inner self, consciously or unconsciously, it carries out a battle against the racist white society. The consequences of this battle are presented as emotional instability, resentment, the interruption of any kind of positive progress and the origin of the substrate where the inferiority complexes will be build. His self is imprisoned by his age and the color of his skin. In this case, only a strong stimulus, like the acquisition of knowledge obtained by reading good books, -as we will see in the next paragraphs- will be able to change this continuous vicious circle, and will help him to overcome his inferiority complex.

The second barrier for James Thomas Jackson was the lack of knowledge; this element places a human being in a lower level, facing life with much more difficulties. Jackson was thirteen years old when he decided to stop studying, "I was thirteen, I dropped out of school" (16); adolescents usually wants to decide about their life, they begin to be open to the society and listening less their parents. He did his own decision. We can infer that, his degree of education was low in this period of life. He is perhaps satisfied having a bike and working as a messenger for a photo studio or it is just a way to scape to his sorrows. Analyzing the story, we can observe that his life is divided in two parts: before and after the act of reading, being reading in this case the source of knowledge. In fact, the first part was filed by rage and other negative emotions. The second part was followed by successful events. This crucial jumping was triggered by a simple glance at a bookcase. It is just in this moment when he began a new life, a reading life. "I was eighteen then and a drop-out, but I was deep into the wonderful world of literature and life. I found myself, and my niche, in the world" (18). In this quotation, we can realize that, according to Jean Piaget, one of the most important psychologist of the last century, adolescence is the period where we decide what to do in our life, and the education that we are receiving plays an important role in our decision. We can infer why Jackson chooses journalism for as his professional life. He has been immerse in the literature's world. The fact of entering in this, represents an acquisition of knowledge, gives him new abilities, and takes him to great positions in his life. Knowledge, by itself, is a wealth that can not be replace for anything, nothing that can fill the emptiness produces by the lack of knowledge or learning. This process of learning opens the mind, and produces, most of the time, significant positive changes in the human being.

On the other hand, perseverance was a very important element in this story; it helped Jackson to overcome his barriers. He was being exposed to literature but he keeps reading going every day to the drugstore and to the library; he found the way to do it. Thanks to his attitude, he could build his world of knowledge and to be the one that he is now. A person can be in love of some activity but at the same time, can find many reasons to pull out; that was not the case for Jackson. To sum up we can say that, there is a big difference between the human being and animals. This difference is based on the acquisition of knowledge, and it is in this knowledge where it will flourish the self-confidence, and at the same time, will destroy, little by little, his inferiority complex, replacing also the bad experiences for new good ones. It is just in this moment when a perseverant person begins his process of personal realization. Because this story is a good example of changing the future in a positive way, it is worth to introduce the article "Waiting in Line at the Drugstore" by James Thomas Jackson in Laura Pulido's book *A People's Guide to Los Angeles.*

Appendix E

Summary Skills

Learning Objectives

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

Introduction

Being able to accurately summarize a reading to someone else is the ultimate demonstration that you understand the reading's contents.

Consider this fun example of a summary from the "30-Second Bunny Theater" series: Star Wars in 30 Seconds and Re-enacted by Bunnies.

This recap of the well-known movie *Star Wars* is a blend of major plot points and fan-favorite scenes. In other words, it conveys all the major points of the film. It also adds a couple of supporting details to capture the flavor of the entire movie. Plus bunny ears.

Annotation

As we've learned in earlier sections, active reading involves multiple steps. Even experts in a field expect to read a new piece of writing several times before they feel they understand it fully. Following the same steps that advanced readers do will help you become an advanced reader yourself.

The Secret is In the Pen

One of the ways experienced readers read is with a pen in hand. They know their purpose is to keep their attention on the material by:

- predicting what the material will be about
- questioning the material to further understanding
- determining what's important
- identifying key vocabulary
- summarizing the material in their own words, and
- monitoring their comprehension (understanding) during and after engaging with the material

Strategies for Annotation

You remember from the SQ3R approach to reading, that there are five general steps to reading: Surveying, Questioning, Reading, Reciting, and Reviewing.

The process of annotation will be especially useful for the Questioning and Reading steps of the SQ3R process. This video provides a demonstration of annotation in action.

As you annotate, focus on some or all of the following:

- Definitions. Look up and write down definitions of unfamiliar words.
- Concepts. Underline what you think are the most important, interesting, or difficult concepts.
- Tone. Note the writer's tone–sarcastic, sincere, witty, shrill.
- Biases. Look out for the writer's biases and unstated assumptions (and your own).
- Responses. Ask questions and note your own reactions and insights.

- Connections. Make connections with other texts you have read or your own experiences.

Paraphrasing a Text's Thesis Statement

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

You'll remember that the "How to Identify a Thesis Statement" video offered advice for locating a text's thesis statement. Remember when it asks you to write 1 or 2 sentences that summarize the text? When you write that summary, without looking at the text itself, you've actually paraphrased the thesis statement.

Review this process by re-watching the video here.

Paraphrasing is a skill that asks you to capture the idea of a text, without using any of the same words. This is harder to do than it might first appear. Like advanced reading skills, it takes practice to do well.

As you paraphrase, keep the following tips in mind:

- Paraphrases are roughly the same length as the original text. If the thesis sentence is a medium-length sentence, your paraphrase will also be a medium-length sentence (though it doesn't have to have exactly the same number of words).
- Paraphrases use entirely distinct wording from the original text. Common small words like "the" and "and" are perfectly acceptable, of course, but try to use completely different nouns and verbs. If needed, you can quote short snippets, 1-2 words, if you feel the precise words are necessary.
- Paraphrases keep the same meaning and tone as the original text. Make sure that anyone reading your paraphrase would understand the same thing, as if they had read the original text you paraphrased.

Major vs. Minor Ideas

The following presentation offers advice about distinguishing major ideas in a text from minor ones. When you're asked to write a summary of something you read, you'll want to focus only on the major ideas, since minor ideas aren't generally included in summaries.

A SlideShare element has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view it online here: https://asccc-oeri.pressbooks.pub/advancedcommunitycollegeeslcomposition/?p=146

Major and minor details from **Nichole Keith**

On slide 6, can you identify which are the major ideas of the paragraph, and which are the minor ones?

Choosing Appropriate Quotes

Pretty much every piece of writing you do for college, whether it's an informal post or a formal essay, will be in response to something you've read—and that means you have to quote. Sometimes you'll rely on outside sources to introduce an idea, define a technical term, or provide supporting evidence for your own argument. Sometimes you'll use a quote to illustrate different positions on an issue, or as an example of an argument you'll go on to disagree with in your paper. But no matter why you're using a quote, remember: what YOU have to say is more important than what the quote has to say.

How to Pick Appropriate Quotes

1. Return to the annotations you made during the reading process. These should point to quotes & passages that you found compelling as you read.
2. For each quote, ask yourself:

    - Does the quotation say something in an original or unusually vivid and powerful way that is hard to paraphrase?

- Does the quotation come from someone with first-hand experience with the issues?
- Does the quotation come from an expert whose authority is particularly important?

3. If the answer to any of these questions is *yes*, make a note of it next to the quote and hold onto it. If the answer to all of these questions is *no*, you don't need the quote—set it aside.

Summarizing

Once you've identified a text's thesis statement, major ideas, and quotations that are valuable, you'll be prepared to draft a summary of that text.

Remember, the goal of a summary is to convey the overall meaning of the text to someone who has not read it. You are the expert about this text, and you're sharing your expertise with others through your summary.

Appendix F

MLA Style: Works Cited

Formatting the Works Cited Page

By Jennifer Janechek

Whenever you incorporate outside sources into your own writing, you must provide both in-text citations (within the body of the paper) and full citations (in the Works Cited page). The in-text citations point your reader toward the full citations in the Works Cited page.

That's why the first bit of information in your in-text citation (generally, the author's name; if no name is provided, the title of the article/book/webpage) should directly match up with the beginning of your Works Cited entry for that source. For further information about in-text citations: https://writingcommons.org/formatting-in-text-citations-mla

For example, let's say I have a quote from Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities* in my research paper. Within the body of the paper, following the quote, I include the following in-text citation: (Anderson 56). This information points to the book's entry in my Works Cited page:

Anderson, Benedict. *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the Origin and Spread of Nationalism*. London: Verso, 2006. ~~Print.~~

When your reader sees the in-text citation in your essay, she may decide that the source might be valuable for her own research. When she looks at the Works Cited page, she can easily locate the source (because the Works Cited page is alphabetized and because she has the in-text citation as her referent) and then can use the full citation to retrieve a copy of the source for her own research. But aside from providing the reader with resources for her own research, the Works Cited page serves another function: it establishes the writer's credibility. If a writer fails to include in-text citations and/or a Works Cited page, that writer has plagiarized because he or she has neglected to provide the publication information of the source. In addition, when a reader locates undocumented information in an essay, she will likely think that the information was made up by the writer or that the information was stolen from a source, or plagiarized. And when a reader peruses a writer's Works Cited page, she can see the types of sources used by the writer, assessing those sources in terms of their credibility. For instance, if a reader reads my Works Cited page and sees I cite sources from university presses such as Oxford UP and Cambridge UP, she will know that I've incorporated credible sources into my research paper. Thus, including both in-text citations and a Works Cited page in a research paper provides the writer with ethos, or credibility.

Key Takeaways

Avoid plagiarism by following these two guidelines:

- Include in-text citations within the body of the essay.
- Include a Works Cited page at the end of the essay.

Now let's take a look at how to properly format a Works Cited page according to MLA guidelines:

Placement

According to MLA style guidelines, the Works Cited page should appear after the body of your paper and any accompanying endnotes. It should begin on a new page, and the pagination should continue from the body of the paper. In the above example, the Works Cited page begins on page 38, which means that the essay concluded on page 37.

General format

The Works Cited page should be double-spaced throughout. The first line of each entry should be flush with the left margin; if the entry extends more than one line, ensuing lines should be indented 1/2 inch from the left margin. The first page of the Works Cited list should have the title "Works Cited," not "Bibliography." The Works Cited title should appear in the same manner as the paper's title: capitalized and centered—not bolded, within quotation marks, italicized, underlined, or in a larger font.

Entries

The entries should be alphabetized based on the author's last name. According to MLA guidelines, author names come first in an entry, then titles, then the publication information (city of publication, publisher, and date of publication), and then the type of media—the details for different types of sources vary, but this is the general structure followed. Note that if the city is not "well-known" and there is more than one city with that name, unlike New York and London, then the state or territory should be included after the city, e.g., "Roswell, GA: 2006." If no name is provided for a given source, the title of the work/webpage will take the place of the author's last name and should still be placed in its proper alphabetical location. Also note that "university" and "press" are always abbreviated "U" and "P" in Works Cited entries.

EXERCISE 1

There are several errors in the Works Cited list below. Which ones can you identify?

1. **Brionna Denger.** "Sexual Assault Unawareness at University of Redlands." *Odyssey*, 6 Sep. 2016, http://www.theodyssey-online.com/sexual-assault-unawareness.
2. **"Title IX – The Nine."** *ACLU*, www.aclu.org/other/title-ix-nine. Accessed 23 Apr. 2012.
3. **Jay Asher.** *Thirteen Reasons Why*. Penguin, 27 Dec. 2016, p. 280.

Here are some guidelines for commonly used sources:

Single-Authored Book

Last Name, First Name. *Title of Book*. Place of Publication: Publisher, Date of Publication. Type of media.

Example:

Bratlinger, Patrick. *Rule of Darkness: British Literature and Imperialism, 1830–1914*. Ithaca: Cornell UP, 1988. ~~Print.~~

Book with Multiple Authors

Last Name, First Name (of first author listed), and First Name Last Name (of second author, etc.). *Title of Book*. Place of Publication: Publisher, Date of Publication. Type of media.

Example:

Sabherhagen, Fred, and James V. Hart. Bram Stoker's Dracula: *A Francis Ford Coppola Film*. New York: Signet, 1992. ~~Print.~~

Article or Chapter in an Edited Collection (or Textbook)

Last Name, First Name. "Article Title." *Title of Book*. Ed. First Name Last Name (of Editor). Place of Publication: Publisher, Date of Publication. Page Range of Article. Type of Media.

Example:

Vieregge, Quentin. "Writing as Process." *Negotiating Writing Spaces*. Ed. Jennifer Yirinec and Lauren Cutlip. Plymouth, MI: Hayden-McNeil, 2011. 57–59. ~~Print.~~

Article in a Print Journal

Last Name, First Name. "Article Title." *Title of Journal*. Volume #.Issue # (Date of publication): Page Range of Article. ~~Print.~~

Example:

Rogers, Pat. "Crusoe's Home." *Essays in Criticism* 24.4 (Oct. 1974): 375–90. ~~Print.~~

Journal Article Accessed Using an Electronic Database

Last Name, First Name. "Article Title." *Journal Name* Volume #.Issue # (Date of publication): Page Range of Article. *Database*. Web. Date of Access.

Example:

Lamont, Rose C. "Coma versus Comma: John Donne's Holy Sonnets in Edson's *WIT*." *The Massachusetts Review* 40.4 (Winter 1999–2000): 569–75. *JSTOR*. Web. 30 April 2012.

Article Accessed from an Online Journal

Last Name, First Name. "Article Title." *Journal Name* Volume #.Issue # (Date of publication): n.pag. Web. Date of Access.

Example:

Haynsworth, Leslie. "All the Detective's Men: Binary Coding of Masculine Identity in the Sherlock Holmes Stories." *Victorians Institute Journal* 38 (2010): n.pag. Web. 16 May 2012.

Article from a Webpage

Last Name, First Name (if given). "Title of Webpage." *Website Title*. Publisher of website (often found at the bottom of the page), date of last update. Web. Date of Access. See (URL is only necessary if you think your reader won't easily be able to locate the webpage).

Example:

"Opening Night: *Wit* Starring Cynthia Nixon." *Broadway.com*. Broadway.com, Inc., 2012. Web. 12 Feb. 2012.

Entire Website

Website Title. Publisher of website, date of last update. Date of Access. See (URL is only necessary if you think your reader won't easily be able to locate the webpage).

Example:

Broadway.com. Broadway.com, Inc., 2012. Web. 12 Feb. 2012.

For information about how to format the Works Cited entries for other different sources, consult the Purdue Online Writing Lab: