
Fresh English:

A Guide to First-Year College Composition, Grammar, and Rhetoric

First Edition (2016)



*Remixed from OERs, edited, and written by
S. Davis, Professor of English
Coastline Community College*

A free and open textbook



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1 Overview



Pixabay image shows field and sky vista.

1.1 Publication

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- Attributions
- Accessibility
- Acknowledgements

1.2 Welcome

1.3 Freshman Comp Outcomes

- Course Content
- SLOs

1.4 Student Collaborations

Peer Reviewing

Helpful Feedback

1.5 Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

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1.1 Publication

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ACCESSIBILITY

This open textbook complies with sections 504 and 508 of the Americans with Disabilities Act and the Rehabilitation Act. Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 have been applied to the design of this e-textbook, which is compatible with JAWS and other screen readers. Alternative text descriptions (alt tags) and subtitles are provided for all tables and photos. Size 14 text, Arial sans serif font, and discreet use of color optimize readability. The Table of Contents and Bookmarks provide enhanced go-to-section navigation; standardized section and content headings are used. *Fresh English* has been verified accessible via Word and Adobe Acrobat accessibility checkers.

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1.2 Welcome

Dear freshman composition student,

Welcome to *Fresh English*! This open textbook exists as a free alternative to commercial textbooks, whose prices have climbed 82% during the past decade. Undergraduates must pay around \$1,200 per year on textbooks and supplies; consequently, 65% of students decide against buying a

textbook at all.¹ (Students wishing to print this textbook rather than view it digitally do assume printing costs.)

In addition to original writings and commentaries written by the editor/author, this textbook is built on remixed public domain and Open Educational Resource materials. (See Acknowledgements.) Meeting ADA accessibility guidelines, this textbook helps students attain the writing standards set by their professors and employers. As with the writing process itself, this textbook is recursive, returning to and amplifying some of the same writing competencies throughout various sections.

Fresh English explains composition theory concretely and practically; still, instructors are expected to engage students' multiple intelligences and learning styles by supplementing the textbook with multimedia, customized writing exercises, and other meaningful activities. Beyond presenting conventional freshman composition competencies such as writing modes, grammar, and critical reading and thinking strategies, I also provide contextualized and interdisciplinary lessons demonstrating that knowledge, be it from history, art, science, or any other discipline, is unified rather than discrete.

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October 23, 2016

1.3 Freshman Composition Learning Outcomes

This textbook fulfills each of the criteria below. Students enrolled in community college courses in California are expected to attain prescribed

¹ "Report: High Textbook Prices Have Students Struggling" by Allie Bidwell. *U.S. News and World Report*. Jan. 28, 2014. Retrieved from <http://www.usnews.com/news/articles/2014/01/28/report-high-textbook-prices-have-college-students-struggling>

learning outcomes based on three levels: institutional, program, and course. This textbook aligns with the usual learning outcomes listed on a freshman composition Course Outline of Record.

COURSE CATALOG DESCRIPTION

The basic principles of written composition will be applied through examinations and assigned essays. The process of choosing and shaping a thesis and writing an extended, well-developed essay will be stressed. Practice in research and production of a research paper will be included. This course must be taken for a letter grade.

STUDENT ACTIVITIES

Students will read textbooks about expository writing, and they will use a grammar handbook or punctuation guide to review punctuation and grammar rules and to correct such errors in their essays. They will also incorporate the instructor's feedback in revisions of essays or in later essay writing. In addition, they will read essays and analyze them for form (organization), content (development), style, and logic. They will learn logical fallacies. They will ascertain appropriate sources to use in a research paper and will document secondary sources according to MLA and APA Style Guidelines. Students will participate in class discussions, and some may give individual or group oral presentations. Primarily, students will write expository essays and essay examinations. A minimum of 6,000 words of such expository essay writing is required.

STUDENT LEARNING OUTCOMES

Institutional Student Learning Outcomes (ISLOs)

- Demonstrate ability to apply critical thinking and analysis.
- Demonstrate information competency.
- Use effective communication and interpersonal skills.

Program-level Student Learning Outcomes (PSLOs)

- Search for and find reliable, unbiased sources and use these sources in research papers with correct MLA and APA documentation.

- Write well-organized, well-developed expository essays in a variety of rhetorical modes in Standard English with a clear thesis statement, topic sentences, and supporting details.

Course-level Student Learning Outcomes (SLOs)

- Using critical reading and analysis skills, students will search for and find relevant, reliable, unbiased sources and use these sources in research papers with correct MLA and APA documentation.
- Using Standard English, students will write well-organized expository essays in a variety of rhetorical modes with a clear thesis statements, topic sentences, and supporting details.

Lesson / Unit-Level Outcomes

- Use the writing process (prewriting, drafting, revising, and editing).
- Recognize the purpose and audience for a piece of expository writing.
- Choose and narrow a topic.
- Write an effective thesis statement with supporting topic sentences.
- Compose expository essays that have organization, order, unity, coherence, and support.
- Use research materials appropriately, including correct MLA and APA documentation.
- Recognize, identify, and define major logical fallacies.
- Critically analyze and evaluate essays as well as other written materials.
- Use logic and argumentative strategies to write one or more argumentative essays.

COURSE CONTENT

Freshman comp requires a minimum of 6,000 evaluated words in expository writing assignments (essays and essays examinations, not journal writing), which conforms to CSU freshman comp writing standards.

1. Purpose of writing
2. Audience awareness
3. Prewriting techniques (prewriting, brainstorming, clustering, etc.)
4. Outlining methods

5. Types of essays (rhetorical modes)
6. Strategies for narrowing a topic
7. Good thesis statements
8. Good topic sentences
9. Introductory paragraphs, body paragraphs, and concluding paragraphs
10. Development of concepts and arguments
11. Transitions
12. Style and diction
13. Paraphrasing strategies
14. Plagiarism and ways to avoid it
15. Evaluation of outside sources
16. Use of outside sources
17. MLA and APA documentation (citations and bibliography)
18. Critical thinking
19. Logic and logical fallacies
20. Argumentative strategies

1.4 Student Collaborations

“No passion in the world is equal to the passion to alter someone else’s draft.”

--H.G. Wells

“You write to communicate to the hearts and minds of others what’s burning inside you. And we edit to let the fire show through the smoke.”

--Arthur Plotnik

At college and later in your professional career, you will have to write with other people. Scholars collaborate with other scholars to review and add insight to each other’s work. Business writers work closely with colleagues, administrators, and consultants to ensure that their work meets the relevant standards. In addition to group projects such as reports, class debates, and

discussions, you may be asked to **peer edit** an essay written by a classmate.²



Image shows a handshake.

Collaboration creates a thinking environment that produces thoroughly developed theses by opening discussion to include an awareness of opposing views and diverse perspectives. No two people have the exact same backgrounds, skills, knowledge bases, or thought processes. In addition, we should admit that not everyone loves group work, which can lead to the **free rider problem**. Collaboration can take more time than individual writing, since the team will often need to meet to discuss changes or additions. Sometimes the document can become disjointed, especially if the authors have not tried to match their style and tone.

EFFECTIVE COLLABORATION

The two most important aspects of effective collaboration are discussion and planning. If you are enrolled in an online course, log in early and often! Set an attendance schedule, such as Mon – Weds – Fri when you will participate in **online discussions**. If group members participate in active discussions, the group will be more likely to share a clear understanding of the assignment. Moreover, your online English instructor will have time to provide regular and substantive feedback. **Academic honesty** requires that if you work with a classmate, tutor, or anyone else on an essay or other project, then you must credit that person with his or her contributions.

PEER REVIEWING

It's often easier to spot problems in other people's writing because our own ego or pride doesn't get in the way. Writers, particularly new writers, often find that letting other writers review their work is tremendously helpful. In

² Content courtesy of *Rhetoric and Composition Wiki Book*. CC BY-SA. Built upon and remixed by S.D.

addition to your classmates' editing skills, you can also get general suggestions from your professor and from the Student Success Center tutors.

In the academic world, journal articles and books are nearly always peer reviewed before they are accepted for publication. Sometimes these reviews are blind, meaning that neither the writer nor the reviewers know each other's identities. This process is meant to make the process fair and ensure that every scholar gets a chance to get her work published.

Academic reviewers must evaluate a work, recommend that it be published or rejected, and (hopefully) offer the writer substantial advice about how his work can be improved.

Ultimately, what makes an evaluation worthwhile is the soundness of its criteria. Both the reviewer and the person being reviewed need to be as clear as possible about the criteria that will be used to evaluate the work. Are your reviewers looking at your grammar only, or are they also determining the rationality of your arguments? Does a comma splice make a bigger difference than a rough transition between paragraphs?

All of these matters should be spelled out clearly beforehand, either by the writer or the reviewer. If you are the reviewer in this situation, ask to see the assignment and rubric, if possible. You can also ask the writer for specific guidelines, areas of greatest need, or even anything he or she might know about the grader. The more focused the reviewer and writer are, the more effective the reviews are.

WRITING HELPFUL FEEDBACK

Organization

1. What are your initial thoughts? What strengths and weaknesses does the paper have? What parts confused you, or might be confusing to other readers? What's the most important thing that the writer is trying to say?
2. How is the paper you're reviewing organized? Again, does it start with the broad and move to specifics? Do all sentences support the paragraph's topic sentence, and do all paragraphs support the thesis? Is there an introduction that draws in the reader, or does it

restate the assignment and become redundant? Is the paper organized in a way that will make sense to readers? Does the writer employ transitions effectively? Does the paper flow from beginning to end?

Focus

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

Style

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

Development

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

Conventions

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

While reviewing the paper, make notes in the margins of any problems you find. Do not overwhelm the writer with comments. As much as possible, try to avoid repeating similar comments (e.g., don't correct every single comma error you find). Also, although it can be tempting to make some of the changes you suggest yourself, you never want to rewrite the work you are reviewing.

By handling criticism constructively, you'll be more aware of your common errors and less likely to repeat them, or at least will know how to find and correct them the next time you write. When people offer criticism, they're usually just trying to help you. Take the suggestions when you think they make sense, and discard the ones that don't. And by the way, these rules and suggestions will become clearer as you proceed through this textbook!

1.5 Academic Honesty and Plagiarism

The Council of Writing Program Administrators defines plagiarism as a writer deliberately using someone else's language, ideas, or other **proprietary material** without acknowledging the source.³ A person can plagiarize by copying an entire paper, copying and pasting portions of another paper (**patchwork plagiarism**), or exceeding the maximum Similarity Score, which is usually 15% to 20%.

Citing your sources is easy; do it and save yourself from a zero score and trip to the dean's office, or worse. For more on most colleges' stance on scholastic integrity, see a representative "Academic Honesty Policy": http://documents.coastline.edu/About%20CCC/Policies%20and%20Regulations/CCC_PaR_AcademicHonesty.docx

RULES TO HELP YOU AVOID PLAGIARISM

The following rules are taken from Leonard Rosen's *The Academic Writer's Handbook*: "When quoting another writer, use quotation marks and give

³ Content courtesy of *English Composition 1*. Built upon and remixed by S.D.

credit. When restating the ideas of others in your words, give credit. Avoid using words, phrases, or sentence structures from the original source” (2006, pages 122-124). Note how I provided the name of the author and textbook, the quotation, the year, and the page numbers? This is a citation in APA style, which we learn more about later in this book in the chapter titled Research and Documentation.

PATCH-WRITING

Patch-writing or **patchwork plagiarism** means taking another person’s words and sentences and reworking them or changing words or phrases here and there without attribution to make the writing appear to be your own. Patch-writing is the equivalent of copying a classmate’s math exam but rearranging the order of operations to make your answers seem original. Writers must cite not only quotations and paraphrases but also other proprietary information that comes from sources aside from the student’s own common knowledge.

COMMON KNOWLEDGE VS. PROPRIETARY IDEAS

Common knowledge is that bank of information that most people know, and it does not require a citation. One way to identify such information is to note that it is presented in multiple sources without documentation. Another identification method is to realize that you, along with most people, are aware of the information. For example, you can write that “Santa Ana is the seat of Orange County” without needing a reference. On the other hand, if you were to note that there is a high rate of new restaurant openings in downtown Santa Ana, then you would need to cite that detail, which is called **proprietary**, meaning owned by someone else (the researcher or newspaper reporter, in this case).

PROPERLY SUMMARIZING AND PARAPHRASING

When you **summarize**, you rewrite a quotation in your own words, and the result is substantially shorter than the original text. You should also use your own words when you **paraphrase**. However, paraphrasing might be as long as or longer than the original text. When you paraphrase, you should include, in your words, all the ideas from the original text, and you should not insert any of your own ideas or interpretations (though your

paraphrase itself is a sort of interpretation). Both summaries and paraphrases should maintain the author's original intent and slant. Taking details out of context to suit your purposes is not ethical since it does not honor the original ideas. Here's a humorous example of something **taken out of context**: "The phone book . . . inspires me!" Really? Must be quite a phone book! But note the **ellipses** (. . .) here; the original quotation was "The phone book bores me, but my English professor inspires me!"

2 Sentences to Paragraphs



Pixabay image shows sheet music and a guitarist.

2.1 Sentences

Subjects, Verbs, and
Clauses
Four Basic Sentence
Patterns
Subordinating Conjunctions
Parallelism

2.2 Conciseness

Eliminating Repetitiveness

Rewording

Conciseness Tips

2.3 Diction

Bloom's Lexicon

Transitions

2.4 Paragraphs

Design

Supporting Detail

2.1 Sentences

Care and attention to words and word order (**syntax**) in the sentence creates potent writing. Think of yourself as a master painter composing a single image in a larger picture. This is the relationship among you, the word, the sentence, the paragraph, and the essay. In this chapter, we examine how to sharpen your sentence-level writing.

SUBJECTS, VERBS, AND CLAUSES

In its simplest form, an English sentence has two parts. The **subject** shows who or what is doing the action. It is always some form of **noun** or **pronoun**. The **verb** shows the action or the state of being. It can be an action verb such as “run” or a linking verb such as “seem.” When both a subject and verb are present, you have a clause. A **phrase**, on the other hand, is missing either the subject or the verb. Quaint, isn’t it?

Phrase

- After the flood... Leaving behind the stroller... With you in my life...
[Each example is missing a subject or verb.]

Independent clause is a subject and verb that make a complete thought—a complete sentence. Independent clauses can stand on their own.

- Our mascot is the dolphin.
[This is a complete sentence!]

Dependent clause is a subject and verb that don’t make a complete thought. Dependent clauses need to be attached to an independent clause (they’re too weak or dependent to stand alone). A dependent clause by itself is a **fragment**, a broken piece of a complete thought.

- Because our mascot is the dolphin...
[This incomplete thought = fragment.]
- While our mascot is the dolphin...
[This incomplete thought = fragment.]

Subjects and verbs can double up in the same single clause. These are called **compound** subjects or verbs because there are two or more of them in the same clause.

Compound subject (two subjects tied to the same verb):

- Aeron and Shanon collaborated on the research article.

Compound verb (two verbs tied to the same subject):

- Aeron conducted the experiment and documented the results.

Compound subject with compound verb:

- Aeron, Shanon, and their indentured servants drafted and revised the article several times.

FOUR SENTENCE PATTERNS

The four patterns are simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex. Vary your sentences using different patterns. S means subject and V verb. Notice how the punctuation changes with each arrangement.

Simple Sentence One independent clause (SV).

- Mr. Potato Head eats fries.
- I eat Mr. Potato Head.

Compound Sentence Two or more independent clauses. They can be arranged in these ways: (SV, and SV.) or (SV; however, SV.). You may connect two independent sentences with a comma plus **FANBOYS** (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so). You may also connect two independent sentences a semicolon plus conjunctive adverb (however, moreover, nevertheless, nonetheless, therefore, etc.) and comma.

- Mr. Potato Head eats them for breakfast every day, but I don't see the attraction.
[The connection or **coordination** is made with a comma + "but."]
- Eating them makes him happy; however, he can't persuade me.
[The connection is made with a semicolon + "however" + comma.]

Complex Sentence This pattern uses one independent clause plus one or more dependent clauses. They can be arranged in these ways: (SV

because SV.) or (Because SV, SV.) or (S, because SV, V.) **Subordinating conjunctions** (because, although, when, if, after, until, etc.) show how the dependent clause is related to the independent clause.

- He recommends them highly because they taste like chicken.
- Although chicken appeals to me, I am skeptical about snake.

Compound-Complex Sentence This pattern contains two or more independent clauses plus one or more dependent clauses. They can be arranged in several ways, including (SV, and SV because SV.) or (Because SV, SV, but SV.)

- Mr. Potato Head said that he would share the secret recipe; however, if he does, then Mrs. Potato Head will immerse him in the deep fryer, so we are all safer and happier if he and I just watch the ballgame instead.

In summary, there are four sentence patterns: simple (one independent clause), compound (two independent clauses connected), complex (one independent clause connected to one dependent clause), and compound-complex (a simple or compound sentence combined with a complex sentence).

SUBORDINATING CONJUNCTIONS

Remember that the FANBOYS (for and nor but or yet so) **coordinating conjunctions** plus comma allow you to connect two simple sentences into a compound sentence. On the other hand, you may connect a complete idea (independent clause) with an incomplete idea (dependent clause) using **subordinating conjunctions**.

Function	Subordinating conjunction
cause/effect	because, since, so that
comparison/contrast	although, even though, though, whereas, while
place/manner	where, wherever, how, however
possibility/conditions	if, whether, unless
relation	that, which, who, whom

Function	Subordinating conjunction
time	after, as, before, since, when, whenever, while, until

Table Ch. 2.1: Functions of subordinating conjunctions

PARALLELISM

Parallelism sounds intimidating, but you will learn quickly to identify it. Parallelism repeats the same structure to show equal importance or provide balance.

Not parallel: John likes reading, his studies, and talking.

Corrected: John likes reading, studying, and talking.

Not parallel: We were asked to calculate scores, record them, and putting them on the bulletin board.

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

Not parallel: The science class had to dissect frogs or was experimenting with gases.

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

2.2 Conciseness

You can manage cluttered sentences by eliminating repetitive ideas, removing repeated words, and rewording to eliminate unneeded words.

ELIMINATE REPETITIVENESS

Unless you are providing definitions on purpose, stating one idea in two ways within a single sentence is redundant and repetitive and unnecessary (see what I mean?). Read each example and think about how you could revise the sentence to remove repetitive phrasing that adds wordiness.

Original: Use a very heavy skillet made of cast iron to bake a savory, delicious, and mouth-watering meatloaf.

Revised: Use a cast-iron skillet to bake a delicious meatloaf.

Original: The student who won the essay contest is a very talented and ambitious student.

Revised: The student who won the essay contest is talented and ambitious.

REWORD

If a sentence has words that are not necessary to carry the meaning, those words are unneeded and can be removed to reduce wordiness.

Original: Andy has the ability to make the most fabulous twice-baked potatoes.

Revised: Andy makes fabulous twice-baked potatoes.

Original: For his part in the cooking class group project, Malik was responsible for making the mustard reduction sauce.

Revised: Malik made the mustard reduction sauce for his cooking class group project.

MORE CONCISENESS TIPS

Tip 1: As often as possible, use active verbs instead of “to be.”

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

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

Tip 2: Use active rather than **passive voice** whenever possible (we will study these in depth in the chapter titled Grammar Theory). **Active voice** is a component of syntax whereby the agent of action is generally at the front of the sentence, before the object of the sentence.

Active: The student passed the basketball to his English professor.

Passive: The basketball was passed by the student to his English professor.

Active: The cat broke the vase.

Passive: The vase was broken by the cat. OR The vase was broken.

[Note here that the passive voice allows the agent of action to be disguised, which can be useful for avoiding responsibility!]

Tip 3: Replace wordy phrases.

Wordy phrase	Replace with
the reason for, for the reason that, owing/due to the fact that, in light of the fact that, considering the fact that, on the grounds that, this is why	because, since, why
on the occasion of, in a situation in which, under circumstances in which	when
as regards, in reference to, with regard to, concerning the matter of, where ___ is concerned	about, regarding
it is crucial that, it is necessary that, there is a need/necessity for, it is important that, it cannot be avoided that	must, should
is able to, has the opportunity to, has the capacity for, has the ability to	can
it is possible that, there is a chance that, it could happen that, the possibility exists for	may, might, could

Table Ch. 2.2: Replace wordy phrases

2.3 Diction

Diction means word choice. Prefer clear, on-point words to vague, verbose expressions. Just as you would prepare an entrée for a Sunday dinner by using only the best ingredients, so you write a sentence by using the best words in the best order. The chart below shows forceful diction that conveys higher-order critical thinking.

Bloom's Taxonomy

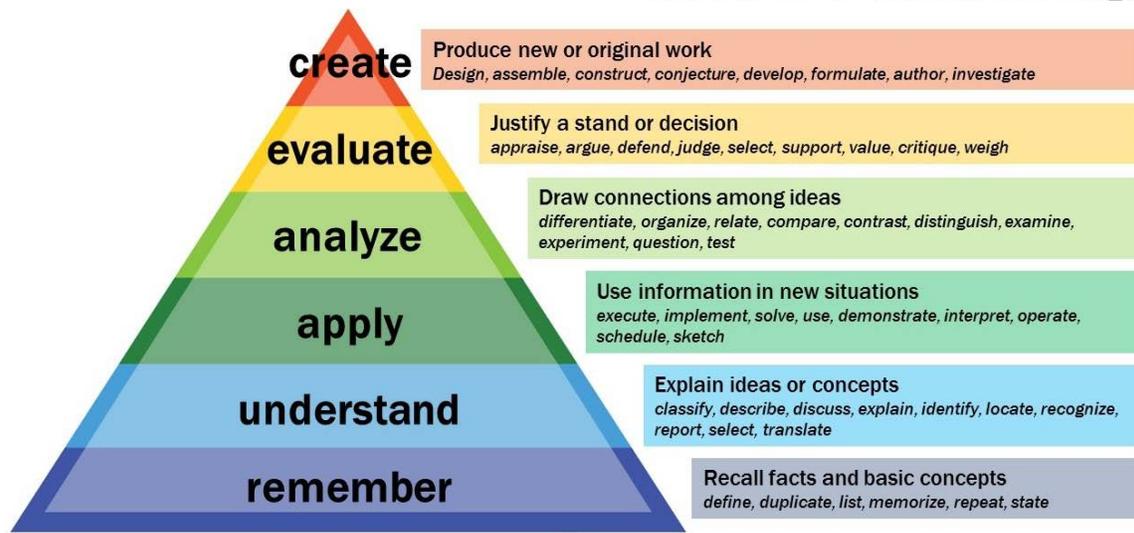


Image shows Bloom's Taxonomy.

BLOOM'S LEXICON

Remember

This becomes evident in how well you remember the subject matter, such as the major ideas, dates, places, events, etc. Questions may begin with identify, describe, examine, when, where, who.

Understand

How well you understand the information presented. Can you describe the information in your own words? Questions may begin with interpret, contrast, predict, discuss.

Apply

Can you use the principles learned to solve other problems in different situations? Questions may begin with illustrate, examine, modify, experiment, relate.

Analyze

Can you recognize hidden meanings, see patterns, and identify the underlying parts? Questions may begin with separate, order, connect, classify, divide, explain.

Evaluate

Can you synthesize knowledge from different areas to support your conclusions? Questions may begin with appraise, argue, critique.

Create

This involves producing new or original work. Questions may begin with design, conjecture, formulate.

TRANSITIONS

The best stylists become masters at placing **transition words** in pivotal positions--places where the sentence or paragraph meaning shifts slightly. When you do use transitions, keep their broader functions (e.g., causality, emphasis, etc.) in mind.⁴

Function	Transition word
Causality	accordingly, consequently, for this reason, hence, therefore, thus
Emphasis	above all, certainly, clearly, indeed, in fact, in short
Location	beyond, here, nearby, opposite, overlying (underlying), there, to the right
Intention	for this purpose, in order to do this, to this end, with this in mind
Closure	in conclusion, in sum, on the whole, to summarize
Detail	especially, in particular, in regard to, namely, specifically, to enumerate
Amplification	again, also, apparently, besides, equally important, finally, obviously, of course, first / second / etc., further, in addition, moreover
Similarity	likewise, similarly
Concession	at any rate, at least, it is true that
Example	for example, for instance, to demonstrate, to illustrate
Comparison & contrast	however, in contrast, in relation to, nevertheless, on the other hand, still

⁴ *Style for Students Online*. Authored by Joe Schall. Provided by Pennsylvania State University. Located at <https://www.e-education.psu.edu/styleforstudents/>. Penn State's College of Earth and Mineral Sciences' OER Initiative. CC BY-NC-SA.

Function	Transition word
Interpretation	fortunately, interestingly, significantly, surprisingly
Time	afterward, at the same time, before, earlier, eventually, in the meantime, sometimes, later, next, preceding this, simultaneously, soon

Table Ch. 2.3: Transition words

2.4 Paragraphs

The sentence is the foundation of the paragraph, and the paragraph is the foundation of the essay. Once you understand how to write clear, ordered sentences, you can begin to put them together into a paragraph. In this freshman comp class, a paragraph should be six to ten sentences long. Your paragraphs, and all your writing, should be reader-oriented; that is, essays should be directed toward your audiences: your professor, and when you post to the Discussions, your classmates. When writing an essay, you will use essentially three types of paragraphs.

- The **introductory paragraph** gives an overview of the topic and concludes with a **thesis sentence** stating what your essay shows or proves.
- **Body paragraphs** each open with a **transition phrase** (“Another example of ___ is ___”) and a **topic sentence** stating the main idea, followed by **major and minor supporting evidence** and a **concluding sentence** or **clincher**.
- A **conclusion paragraph** closes the essay. The conclusion may consist of a summary of your points, a brief discussion of the future of the topic, your personal opinion about the issue, or a call to readers to act.

BODY PARAGRAPHS

We will investigate introduction and conclusion paragraphs when we examine the essay. Let’s look at the body paragraph in detail now, as your instructor might ask you to begin your freshman composition course with a refresher on basic paragraph structure.

Outline for a body paragraph

1. Transition phrase or opening that catches the reader's attention
2. Topic sentence stating main idea of the paragraph
3. Major supporting detail one
 - a. Minor supporting detail such as a quotation or other evidence
 - b. Minor supporting detail, etc.
4. Major supporting detail two
 - a. Minor supporting detail two, etc.
5. Major supporting detail three
 - a. Minor supporting detail three, etc.
6. Conclusion sentence wrapping up the paragraph

You can and should use a variety of support for your **topic sentences** (the sentences in the body paragraphs stating the main idea) and your **thesis sentence** (the overall claim of the essay). Since they can be objectively verified, **facts, research, expert testimony, data, and statistics** are more persuasive than **anecdotes**. Let's say you wish to argue that everyone can learn a foreign language by watching TV. You tell a personal anecdote about learning to speak Korean by watching Korean dramas every afternoon; your readers might be intrigued, but they might not think this is true or that your experience can be replicated. If you provide research from scientists at UCI about language acquisition via daytime dramas, though, your argument takes on more credibility.



Image shows options for supporting a main idea.

Statistics support your thesis brilliantly. For example, you relay the results of a study that 90% of people who exercise for twenty minutes after every meal lose two pounds per week. **Examples** or **analogies** can also clarify and support your facts and statistics by making the ramifications clearer or concreter to your audience.

SUPPORTING DETAILS

Organize your supporting details so that they best support your thesis. One strategy is to list the most powerful information first. Another is to present information in a natural sequence such as **chronological** order. A third option is to use a compare/contrast format. Choose whichever method most clearly and persuasively supports your thesis. Make sure to use at least two or three major and minor supporting details for each paragraph.



Image shows a paragraph built on reliable supporting details.

SAMPLE PARAGRAPHS

Basic but organized paragraph with extensive supporting details

- If I had a magical ability, it would be the ability to fly. *[topic sentence]* You might ask, “Why would you want to fly?” First of all, when I was a boy, I would lie on my back and watch the clouds overhead. *[major support 1]* The clouds were fluffy and white against the deep blue sky. And sometimes a bird or airplane would fly across the sky. *[minor support 1]* Another reason why I want to fly is it would help me visit friends and family more quickly. *[major support 2]* Imagine flying over the top of traffic! *[minor support 2]* The third and final reason I want to fly is because gasoline is so expensive. *[major support 3]* Who wants to have to buy a Prius, anyway? *[minor support 3]* For these three reasons and many more, I would choose flying as my magical ability. *[conclusion]*

More advanced expository paragraph with MLA heading and title

Curtis Cobain

February 20, 2016

English 100 - Prof. Davis

“Game” assignment

How to Win at Softball

- *(tab to indent) (now to start with a “hook” or “lead” or “opening” that catches the reader’s attention):* Imagine you’re outside on a spring day. You want to exercise in the sun and smell the freshly cut grass. What can you do, aside from go to the beach? Why not try playing softball! *[the lead, hook, opening, etc.]* *(next is topic sentence—what is this paragraph about? Main idea?)* In this paragraph, I will teach you how to win at the best outdoor sport, softball. *[topic sentence]* First, in order to win, you have to recruit good players. Start by posting an ad on Craigslist, and then ask your most athletic friends to join, too. You’ll want your team to enjoy playing together, so make sure you take them out for beer and pizza! Second, you’ll want to develop your batting order. *[notice how these major and minor supporting details are internally organized using words such as “first,” “second,” etc.]* The fastest player should bat “lead-off,” so he or she gets on base early. Third, practice your defense! This means your teammates must be able to “field” or catch the softball when it is hit to them. They also must practice throwing the softball to the bases in order to “put out” the runner. So the next time you feel the need to be outside in the sun, running across a freshly-mowed lawn, think about starting a winning softball team. *[conclusion]*

In freshman comp your paragraphs should be designed and arranged similarly to the ones above. Of course, you will be writing about academic rather than personal subjects, so your major and minor supporting details will consist of research, citations, and other evidence rather than anecdotes or other personal experiences.

3 Paragraph and Essay Modes



Pixabay image shows student furiously jotting notes.

3.1 Common Modes

Organizational
Patterns

3.2 Argumentative Essays

Argumentative Essay
Structure
Framing Your
Argument

The Opposition

3.3 Advanced Writing Modes

Research Essays
Analytical Essays
Literary Analysis
Interpretive Essays

3.1 Common Paragraph and Essay Modes

Each writing mode requires a different approach and mindset, which is why professors often ask for different kinds of writing: they want you to think about a subject in a variety of ways. But generally, assignments will require you to apply several modes simultaneously. Few professors beyond the first-year level of coursework require an assignment that focuses on only description or cause/effect; other modes are required to generate a sophisticated work that informs and persuades. (For advanced writing in the humanities and sciences, see the chapter titled Interdisciplinary Writing.)

ACADEMIC VS. PERSONAL WRITING

Freshman comp prioritizes **academic essays** over **personal essays**. Unless stated otherwise in the directions, this means that students write **objectively** or impartially, using data, research, and independently verified evidence instead of **subjectively**, using personal experience and the words “I” or “me.” You are not prohibited from including brief **personal anecdotes**, comments, or observations in your academic essays; in fact, a well-placed personal remark can be potently persuasive. However, these occasions should be carefully chosen based on your **audience**.

Research and argumentative essays in freshman composition will be almost entirely academic, appearing in the **third person point of view**. A **personal statement** for admission to a university will be (no surprise) almost entirely personal, appearing in the **first person point of view**. In general, I advise students to dedicate no more than one body paragraph of an academic essay to personal experience or one section of the conclusion paragraph to personal experience. (Note my judicious use of “I” here to deliver and personalize this guidance.) When you do opt to shift to a personal pronoun, consider whether your “I” can be replaced with “we,” which is more inclusive.

As you read the table, recognize how interdependent the modes are. Each of these modes may be rendered as an academic or personal essay, depending on your teacher’s directions.

COMMON MODES

Mode	Explanation	Example
Analogy	Analogies are used to draw comparisons between seemingly unlike people, items, places, or situations. Writers use analogies to help clarify a point.	Walking down an aisle at a farmers' market is like walking down the rows in a garden.
Analysis by Division	The writer takes a unit and breaks the unit into smaller parts.	You might apply this mode to an article about a band or orchestra performance while separating the different instruments into sonic roles.
Cause and effect	Cause-and-effect paragraphs point out how one thing is caused by another and clarify relationships.	You will find that your meals benefit greatly from shopping at the farmers' market. You will eat fewer unnatural foods, so you will feel better and have more energy. The freshness of the foods will make your dishes taste and look better. The excitement of finding something new at the market will translate to eagerness to try it out within a meal.
Classification	Similar to definition, compare and contrast, and analysis by division, here the writer examines a group or category.	For example, you might investigate the realm of educators. What are the different groups or classes of educators (pre-k, k-5, 6-8, 9-12, community college,

Mode	Explanation	Example
Classification, cont'd	Cont'd	university, and so on)? What are their distinct duties and qualifications?
Comparison and contrast	You can choose to compare (show similarities) and contrast (show differences) by selecting a trait, explaining how each thing relates, and then moving on to another trait (point-by-point organization). You can also describe all the features of one thing in one paragraph and then all the features of the other thing in the next paragraph (block organization).	Tomatoes purchased at the farmers' market are almost totally different from tomatoes purchased in a grocery store. To begin with, although tomatoes from both sources will mostly be red, the tomatoes at the farmers' market are a brighter red than those at a grocery store. That doesn't mean they are shinier—in fact, grocery store tomatoes are often shinier since they have been waxed. You are likely to see great size variation in tomatoes at the farmers' market, with tomatoes ranging from only a couple of inches across to eight inches across. By contrast, the tomatoes in a grocery store will be fairly uniform in size. All the visual differences are interesting, but the most important difference is the taste. The farmers' market tomatoes will be bursting with flavor from ripening on

Mode	Explanation	Example
Comparison and contrast, cont'd	Cont'd	the vine in their own time. The grocery store tomatoes are often close to flavorless.
Definition	Definition paragraphs clarify words or concepts.	A pluot is a hybrid fruit created from joining an apricot and a plum. Pluots range in size from that of a small apricot to that of a large plum. The outer skin varies in color from sort of cloudy golden to cloudy purplish. Overall, a pluot looks and tastes more like a plum than an apricot, although the skins are less tart than those of typical plums.
Description	Effective description uses vivid imagery based on the senses (sight, sound, taste, touch, and hearing). You might also use figurative language such as metaphor , simile , and personification to bring a scene to life.	The potatoes are rough to the touch, whereas the apples are smooth. Women's voices echo across the marketplace. They are eager to share information and samples without applying any sales pressure. They are people with whom you would likely enjoy sitting around a campfire and trading stories.

Mode	Explanation	Example
Examples or illustrations	Examples are commonly used to clarify a point for readers.	You will find some foods at the farmers' market that you might not typically eat. For example, some farmers bring pickled pigs' feet or mustard greens that taste like wasabi. Some vendors sell gooseberry pies and cactus jelly.
Narration	Narration is storytelling. Think about verb tense—if you are sharing a memory, then use past tense.	Sauntering through the farmers' market on a cool fall day, I happened upon a small lizard. Actually, my foot nearly happened upon him, but I stopped just in time to pull back and spare him. As I stooped to look at him, he scampered up over the top of a watermelon and out of sight. Glancing behind the melon, I saw that the lizard had a friend. I watched them bopping their heads at each other and couldn't help but wonder if they were communicating.
Problem–solution	A problem–solution paragraph begins with a topic sentence that presents a problem and then follows with details that present a solution for the problem.	Since the market is such an asset to our community, a committee formed to look for a new location. The first idea was to close a street off for a few hours each Saturday morning.

Mode	Explanation	Example
Problem–solution, cont’d	Cont’d	Unfortunately, the city manager nixed that idea since he believed that too many people would complain. Finally, I came up with the perfect idea, and our government blessed the idea. Since the high school is closed on Saturday, we will be having the market in the school parking lot.
Response	The writer responds to a reading passage, experience, or event.	A response can take many different forms, from experiential (creative) to a journal entry to general impressions.
Review	The writer critiques strengths and weaknesses of a work.	You might review a book, film, album, or the work of a classmate.
Summary	A summary provides the reader a brief overview of the topic.	In your introductory paragraph you might write a summary of an argument, an article, a novel, or a movie. Note that a summary is different from a paraphrase , which is a thorough re-wording.

Table Ch. 3.1a: Common modes

As indicated previously, nearly all these modes overlap with each other, and multiple modes will be used within any given writing task. In that sense, a skillful writer should be adept at deploying and fusing each of these techniques on a small scale (sometimes only on the sentence level),

leading to an overall effect of a unified, coherent paragraph and essay. More advanced writing modes, which we shall tackle later, include analyzing a passage, interpreting a work, and arguing for a certain point of view using research.

So how should you arrange your ideas, your major and minor supporting details, within a paragraph and throughout an essay? Depending on your writing topic, you might find it beneficial to use one of these common organizational patterns.

ORGANIZATIONAL PATTERNS

Pattern	Explanation	Example
Process Analysis	A process analysis paragraph is used to describe how something is made or to explain the steps for how something is done. Use clear, simple language and transition words that order the instructions (e.g., first, next, then, finally).	Make sure to warm up the ground in advance by covering it in plastic sheeting for a couple of weeks. When you are ready to plant them in soil, plant them deeply enough so they can put down some strong roots. Mulch next, and once the stems of the tomato plants have reached a few inches in height, cut off the lower leaves to avoid fungi. Finally, carefully prune the suckers that develop in the joints of the developing stems.
Chronological	Chronological arrangement presents information in time order.	First, at the Wilson Pork Farm booth, I tasted a little pulled pork. Next, I went on with a plastic quart container in my left hand and my lettuce and flower in my right hand. Finally, I . . .
General-to-specific	A common paragraph format is to present a general idea and then give examples.	The displays at the farmers' market do not lack for variety. The featured fruits on a given day might be as varied as pomegranates, persimmons, guava, jackfruit, and citron.

Pattern	Explanation	Example
Specific-to-general	The reverse of the above format is to give some examples and then summarize them with a general idea.	Your sense of smell is awakened by eighteen varieties of fresh roma tomatoes. Your mouth waters at the prospect of sampling the fresh breads. Your eye catches a glimpse of the colors of handmade, embroidered bags. These are the smells, tastes, and sights of the market.
Spatial	Spatial organization presents details from near to far, top to bottom, or inside to outside. Details are ordered based on their physical (spatial) location.	From top to bottom, the spice booth at our farmers' market is amazing. Up high they display artwork painstakingly made with spices. At eye level, you see at least ten different fresh spices in small baggies.

Table Ch. 3.1b Organizational Patterns

3.2 Argumentative Essays

“If you can’t annoy somebody, there’s little point in writing.”

--Kingsley Amis (1922 - 1995)

When you hear the word “argument,” what do you think of? When English instructors use that word, they’re typically thinking about promoting and defending a **claim** or **thesis** (your position on an issue) using vetted evidence.

College-level argumentative essays are not much concerned with personal opinion (e.g., “I like chocolate more than strawberry”). Instead, an argument might tackle issues such as online education, immigration, stem cell research, or gun safety. What distinguishes an argument from an **expository essay** or summary is that the argument must take a stance; if you’re merely presenting both sides of an issue or pointing out pros and cons, then you’re not writing an argument. “Let’s examine the benefits and

drawbacks to gun control” is not an argument—it’s an exposition. “Stricter gun control laws will result in a decrease in gun-related violence” is an argument. Do you see the difference? Naturally, some people will disagree with your claim / thesis / position / stance / argument, which is precisely why this writing mode is useful: it makes us think.

Part of learning to write effective arguments is finding reliable sources (or other documents) that lend credibility to your position. As mentioned before, support your claim by incorporating these **topoi** into your body paragraphs:

- facts
- statistics
- quotations from recognized authorities, and
- other types of evidence

The goals of an argument are these:

- make a claim
- support your claim with sharp reasoning and the most credible evidence you can muster
- hope that the reader will understand your position, if not entirely agree
- hope that your claim is taken seriously

If you defend your argument’s position with logic and solid evidence (as well as the proper essay length and correct grammar!), then you have written a successful argumentative essay, even if your instructor or anyone else personally disagrees with the views you are promoting.

ARGUMENTATIVE ESSAY STRUCTURE

Introduction paragraph

The first paragraph of your argument is used to introduce your topic and the issues surrounding it. This needs to be in easily understandable language. Once you have provided an overview of your topic, it’s time to state your claim or thesis. Make sure that you use clear and precise language. Your reader needs to understand exactly where you stand on the issue.

Body paragraphs

There are usually multiple sides to every issue. This means not everyone will agree with your viewpoint. So try to forge **common ground** with the audience. Think about who may be undecided or opposed to your viewpoint. This will affect your word choice, and your audience may be more likely to listen to your argument with an open mind if you do. Support your body paragraphs and back up your thesis with logic and data. During your **pre-writing stage**, outline the main points you might use to support your claim, and decide which are the strongest and most logical. Eliminate arguments that are built on emotions rather than facts. Your **corroborating evidence** should be well-researched—think statistics, examples, and expert opinions. Yes, you may reference personal experience in one body paragraph or in your conclusion. Otherwise, present an **objective** rather than **subjective** case.

Conclusion paragraph

You have introduced your topic, stated your claim, supported that claim, **conceded** points when necessary, and refuted your opposition's viewpoint. By the time readers get to the end of your paper, they should have learned something. You should have learned something, too. Give readers an idea to take away with them. As mentioned before, your conclusion may include a call to action, a personal opinion on the subject, an inquiry into the future of the subject, a summary, or a final piece of evidence supporting your stance.

FRAMING YOUR ARGUMENT

Two options for **framing your argument** are the position method and the proposal method. The **position method** convinces your audience that you are *in the right*, and the other side is *wrong*.

How to frame an argument using the position method

1. Introduce and define your topic. Never assume that your reader is familiar with the issues surrounding your topic. This is your chance to set up the premise or point of view you wish to prosecute or perpetuate. Present your thesis statement.
2. Background information. Do your research! The more knowledgeable you are, the more concise an argument you will be able to give. This

will allow your audience to read your paper and glean the same knowledge you possess on the topic. Information is the backbone to a solid argument.

3. **Development.** Provide evidence in the form of data, statistics, research, quotations, and citations, and provide reasoning in the form of observations, commentary, and analysis.
4. Be prepared to deal with the “other side.” There will be those who oppose your argument. Be prepared to **concede** some points and **refute** or **rebut** others. If you have done your homework and know your material, you will be able to address any opposing arguments with ease and authority. Always do so confidently but respectfully, keeping in mind that your audience may judge your argument based on your **delivery** and **tone** as much as on your data.

The **proposal method** is used when there is a problematic situation, and you would like to offer a solution to the situation. The structure of the Proposal method is very similar to the above position method, but there are slight differences.

How to frame an argument using the proposal method

1. Introduce and define the problematic situation. Focus on the actual problem and its cause. This may seem obvious, but many people focus solely on the effects. By focusing on the actual problem, your readers will see your proposal as a solution to the problem rather than a mere complaint.
2. Propose a solution, or a number of solutions, to the problem. Be specific about these solutions. If you have one solution, you may choose to break it into parts and spend a paragraph or so describing each part. If you have several solutions, you may instead choose to spend a paragraph on each scenario. These additional solutions add depth and breadth to your argument.
3. Describe the workability of the various solutions. There are a variety of ways that this could be done. With a single-solution paper you could break the feasibility down into short- and long-term goals and plans. With a multiple-solution essay, you may instead highlight the

strengths and weaknesses of the individual solutions, and then establish which would be the most successful, based on your original statement of the problem and its causes.

THE OPPOSITION

Skeptical readers should have their own beliefs and points of view. When conducting your research, make sure to review the opposing side of the argument. Prepare to counter those ideas. For people to give up their positions, they must see how your position is more reasonable than theirs, and how they benefit by adopting your position. When you address the opposing points of view in your essay and demonstrate how your own claim is stronger (remember concession and refutation), you neutralize their arguments. By failing to address a contrary view, you leave a reason for your reader to disagree with you, and therefore you weaken your persuasive force.

Methods of addressing the opposing side of the argument vary. You may choose to state your main points, then address and refute the opposition, and then conclude. Conversely, you might summarize the opposition's views early in your argument, and then revisit them after you've presented your side of the argument. This will show how your information is more reasonable than theirs.

USE OBJECTIVE (IMPERSONAL) LANGUAGE

Phrasing and tone

Use phrasing that invites rather than alienates your audience and is organized, logical, well-researched, supported, reasonable, and compassionate. Using language that is demeaning or subjective will undermine the strength of your argument. This destroys your credibility or **ethos** and reduces your audience's willingness to listen.

Objectivity

Minimize or eliminate "I" and "my" statements. Consider the following claim:

- I believe that the United States Government is failing to meet the needs of today's average college student.

Now let's add specificity to this claim and remove the "I":

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

You may use "I" or "my" sparingly, of course; one body paragraph or the conclusion is suitable for subjective input. Otherwise, if you need a subject pronoun, use "we" instead of "I," so you sound inclusive.

3.3 Advanced Writing Modes

RESEARCH ESSAYS

College-level English or humanities research papers almost always have an element of argumentation; that is, they usually take a stance. A **research essay** backs up the argument using extensive sources and citations. Writing the research paper involves detective work. You should research and discover as much information as you can about the given topic, so you can form a coherent and valid opinion. A writer in the social sciences might also conduct interviews, surveys, polls, and observation clinics. Research papers have a variety of elements that make them stand out from other papers. They carry three distinct characteristics.

- First, there is a large amount of background research that goes into the prewriting stage. The research contains various findings such as facts, statistics, interviews, quotes, and so on. (See the chapter Research and Documentation.) Researching and gathering data must include analyzing and commenting on that information once it is compiled.
- The second characteristic is the amount of preparation when gathering, compiling, analyzing, and sorting through everything in order to create a draft of your data.
- Finally, the third characteristic involves knowing the format, citation, and reference rules that must be followed when writing a research paper in a particular discipline.

The specifics of these rules should be conveyed by your instructor. Ask for clarification!

ANALYTICAL ESSAYS

Analytical writing examines and dissects the components of a text, work of art, and so on. Writers of analytical essays or articles consider information, break it apart, and reconstruct it in order to describe the information, so another reader can make sense of it. Writers must make sense of a work before they can describe its constituent parts.

Like interpretive writing, analytical writing focuses on the “how” and “why.” Analytical writing happens in four steps.

- The first step is to clearly identify the problem, the question, or the issue.
- The second step is to define the issue.
- The third step is to **deconstruct** the issue.
- The fourth step defines the relationship between the issue and the analysis of that issue.

LITERARY ANALYSES

There is a lot of overlap between analysis and interpretation, especially when writing about literature. Writing about literature (poems, short stories, plays, novels, even non-fiction or creative non-fiction) often involves making an argument that can be backed up with specific examples from the text. When interpreting a poem, for example, the writer should select representative lines, words, or phrases before quoting and dissecting them.

A **literary analysis** should not be a summary of the text. It doesn't always hurt to give a few background examples, but the writer should focus on talking about the portions of the text that emphasize his or her points rather than summarizing the entire piece. Instead, provide an overview of the text in the introductory paragraph; after that, proceed with the analysis without relying on summary. The essayist's job is not to recap but to illuminate and argue for an understanding of the work. Remember that literature should always be written about in the present tense.

INTERPRETIVE ESSAYS

An interpretation involves the discovery of meaning in a text, film, painting, or in anything, really. Therefore, interpretive writing assists the reader in understanding specific events (literary, cultural, or otherwise) rather than just engaging in summary. For example, a student writing an interpretive paper about *Crime and Punishment* may try to explain Dostoevsky's attitudes or views on the criminal justice system in Russia. The writer of the interpretive essay then uses the evidence found in that novel to back up his or her claims.

A poor example of interpretive writing is a book report. A good example of interpretive writing is a scholarly article about another text. Interpretive writing asks "why" and "how" instead of just "what." When interpreting a film, you might ask, "Why did these events happen?" or "What was the significance of these events to the main character?" as opposed to "What happened" (unless the actual events are in question, which certainly opens them up for interpretation!). The former questions encourage writers to explore their own thoughts or to delve into the mind of the writer of the text, or even attempt to put themselves in the shoes of the protagonist. The latter question is less challenging, as the book or piece of literature will usually lay this type of information out for the reader.

4 Prewriting



Pixabay image shows a student and notebooks.

4.1 Understanding

Instructions

4.2 What Makes Writing

“Good”?

4.3 Overview of Writing

Stages

Planning and

Prewriting

Researching

Outlining

Drafting

Proofreading

Editing

Reviewing and

Revising

4.4 Planning

Brainstorming

Freewriting

Clustering

4.1 Understanding Instructions

There is no one guidebook, approach, or set of rules that college teachers will consult when putting together their coursework. Since each assignment will always be unique, it is important to devote time to understanding what is being asked of you before beginning. Don't wait until the night before the work is due to begin asking questions and delving in.⁵

READING TO WRITE

Writers with excellent exposition skills are careful readers. **Expository writing** explains or informs. Before writing anything based on a written passage, read critically. First, read the article or other text carefully. It might help to write down the main point of each paragraph in the margin. Next, reread the article, **annotate** (it is okay to write on the text!), and look carefully for the main points the author is trying to get across. Look for things the author states explicitly, as well as what is implied. Look for **bias** or missing information. Ask yourself, "What is the big picture here?" The title will often provide a clue about the author's main point.

Furthermore, make sure you read the professor's **prompt** carefully. Observe and interpret every detail. Ask yourself why your professor has given this assignment. How does it relate to what you are studying in class? Pay attention to key words such as *compare*, *contrast*, *analyze*, etc. Who is your audience? Should the paper be written in a formal or informal tone? Is documentation required? If a specific number of sources is required, how many must be books vs. online sources? What type of citation is called for, APA or MLA? Is there a page minimum/maximum? Will there be peer review? Don't play a guessing game when it comes to tackling assignment criteria--ask your professor for clarification. And, of course, do not wait until the last minute to seek help.

TIMELINE

Set due dates for yourself for each aspect of your composition: prewriting (research and outline), writing (drafting), and rewriting (editing,

⁵ Content courtesy of *Rhetoric and Composition Wikibook*.

proofreading, revising). Procrastination rarely results in a good paper. Don't sell yourself short with late submissions.

WRITING TUTORS

Most colleges have a Student Success Center or Writing Center staffed with tutors. If you feel somewhat confident about what you need to include in your writing assignment, bring your completed outline and/or the first draft of your paper together with your essay prompt. Tutors can also help you proofread your final draft before its submission to your professor. Remember, though, that tutors are there to help you understand composition and grammar concepts; they are not employed to edit your essay for you. In addition, tutors need time, so please don't ask them to help you at the last minute; give them several days' notice.

4.2 What Makes Writing "Good"?

Consider this quotation from Nobel Prize laureate Bob Dylan about the process of reading, listening, absorbing ideas and rhythms, writing, and then rewriting:

You just do it subliminally and unconsciously, because that's all enough, and that's all you know. That was all that was dear to me. They were the only kinds of songs that made sense: "When you go down to Deep Ellum keep your money in your socks / Women on Deep Ellum put you on the rocks." Sing that song for a while and you just might come up with "When you're lost in the rain in Juarez and it's Easter time too / And your gravity's down and negativity don't pull you through / Don't put on any airs / When you're down on Rue Morgue Avenue / They got some hungry women there / And they really make a mess outta you." ("How Dylan Became Dylan," retrieved from <http://www.nytimes.com/2016/10/14/opinion/bob-dylan-the-poet-sponge.html? r=0>)

On the one hand, writing is an art--we don't say Shakespeare's language is "correct" but rather that it is beautiful.⁶ On the other hand, writing is a science--we want the instructions that came with our Blu-Ray player to be accurate, precise, and easy to understand. Thus, writing must be judged according to its context--what are its **purpose** and **audience**?

Compared to speaking, writing is a much more recent phenomenon, and for many centuries it was assumed that the best way to learn to write well was to entreat The Muses or imitate writings that were already considered great. Eventually, as more people wanted to write, scholars created rules to help pupils write. Knowing how to write grammatically correct prose is essential, but it is not enough, by itself, to make writing effective or persuasive. (Legend has it that Winston Churchill grew so irritated at pedants telling him not to end his sentences with prepositions that he said to one of them, "Madame, that is a rule up with which I shall not put.") Aristotle wrote a famous treatise on the subject of effective communication called *The Rhetoric*. This book is meant for speakers; however, teachers and students also have long used it to polish their writing. A later chapter in this textbook is dedicated to rhetoric.

As you learn the various writing modes, you will find--like the experienced journalist on a quick deadline for a story--that often your writing will come more quickly and easily. However, whenever you have a major challenge in your future as a writer, you will know how to return to the circular or **recursive** steps of the process to develop difficult ideas, explain difficult concepts to your audience, and delight your professor and your classmates with your writing *savoir faire*. Each discipline or major has its own writing style, organizational method, and purpose or goal. For example, English essays are typically in MLA style, whereas psychology papers are in APA style. Your professors can guide you as you learn to apply your academic writing skills to their disciplines.

So can writing be taught? Of course. Math teachers don't teach calculus to their elementary students; instead, they begin with addition and subtraction. Everything else builds on those simple processes. No one is born a

⁶ Content courtesy of open *Rhetoric and Composition Wikibook*.

mathematician. Similarly, while luck certainly plays a role in any successful writer's career, successful writers (or speakers) are not just born into the role--and no one is fated to struggle in English. You can learn to write with substance and style. It takes work, but it is within your power. You have already taken the first step by enrolling in this class.

4.3 Overview of the Writing Stages

The very first step you must take is to be sure you understand the essay prompt—the question your professor asked you to answer. If you need clarification, then ask him or her!

The writing process involves **recursivity**--moving forward through some steps and then circling back to redo previous steps. In other words, while we still think of writing as a process taking place in a series of steps, we now understand that good writers tend to switch frequently among the different steps as they work. An insight gained while editing one chapter might convince the writer that an additional chapter is needed; as a result, he or she might start another drafting phase.

We've mentioned that writers often work recursively—frequently switching among drafting, editing, and proofreading—but it is useful to break the writing process into three stages: **prewriting**, **writing**, and **rewriting**. We can divide these three stages into smaller processes: planning, researching, drafting, proofreading, editing, reviewing, and revising.

PLANNING

Organized writers plan their documents in advance. This stage, prewriting, includes everything from making a tentative outline and brainstorming to chatting with friends or colleagues about the topic. Map out exactly how you want your document to look when it's finished, yet be prepared to revise and re-order your content along the way.

RESEARCHING

Writers frequently require reliable information to support their documents. A writer's personal opinions and experience are insufficient evidence for most

types of documents. One form of research is the interview, in which you call up or meet with someone who has information on the topic you are pursuing. Another type, **field research**, involves travel to places where the topic can be studied first-hand. You might also circulate a survey. These examples are all part of what is called **primary research**—that which you conduct yourself. While many writing teachers assign primary research to their students in the process of writing a research paper, much of the research that writing at the college level asks you to do is **secondary research**--exploring other people's writing in the form of books, scholarly journals, newspapers, magazines, websites, and government documents.

DRAFTING

Drafting means writing or adding to a piece of writing--composing it. It may seem like a straightforward process, but it can often be made difficult by writer's block or other anxieties exacerbated by "life happening" and interfering with your time management.

PROOFREADING

Proofreading requires reading and re-reading your draft on multiple levels, from macro to micro or big to small. First, check the overall organization of the essay. Do the paragraphs flow together or need to be rearranged so that similar themes are placed beside each other? Is the format, such as MLA or APA style, correct with running head, heading, page numbers, font, spacing, margins, and so on? Second, check the organization within the paragraphs. Do they open with transition phrases, move to a topic sentence, include major and minor supporting details such as quotations and citations, and wrap up with a conclusion? Third, check your sentence-level writing. Are there grammar, punctuation, capitalization, spelling, or other mechanical errors? Finally, read your essay aloud. Does it flow from point to point, or is it choppy? Is the syntax natural or stilted?

EDITING

We distinguish between deciding what needs to be improved and actually making the changes. We'll call the decision-making process **editing** and making the changes **revising**. Unlike publishers who hire professional editors to work with their writers, student writers do most of their own

editing with occasional help possibly from the teacher, peer reviewers, and tutors.

REVIEWING AND REVISING

You're a reviewer of your own text. We often don't make the best readers of our own work, though, because we are so close to it. Independent reviewers bring valuable perspectives we can't get any other way.

Revising is hard work, but it's probably some of the most valuable work you can do to become a better writer. Dive into the task with the willingness to wrestle with your writing and bring out the best in it, and you will learn why revising is often considered the meat of the writing process. Remember to take advantage of the writing tutors at the Student Success Center.

4.4 Planning

"The role of a writer is to say not what we all can say but what we are unable to say."

--Anais Nin

"The best time for planning a book is while you're doing the dishes."

--Agatha Christie

Before you actually begin writing, **test the prompt** by asking it the following questions: Who? What? When? Where? Why? How? Which?

1. Why is this question being asked?
2. What is my subject, and what is it intended to uncover?
3. Which evidence has the most potential to persuade readers?
4. Who are those readers—my audience?
5. Where should I discover or locate supporting background information?
6. How else can I persuade my readers?

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

FINDING WRITING IDEAS (TOPOI)

There are plenty of other ways to stimulate your brain. You might be struck by a brilliant insight as you're running on the treadmill or dreaming. Always be prepared to record new ideas. Use your cell phone to record a voice memo. You might even try writing the idea on a napkin and taking a picture of it. The important thing is to get it down quickly, because you're all too likely to forget all about it by the time you're ready to write.

Another good way to generate ideas is to read and listen actively. Your texts and professors will discuss relevant issues in the field, and they might make comparisons to related ideas and other thinkers. A professor might write or say, "There is still work to be done in this area" or "There is great controversy over this issue." Be alert to these sources for good ideas. The biggest mistake a novice writer can make is to rely solely on inspiration. As a scholar, you are never alone--don't be afraid to listen and respond to the work of others. Even chatting with your classmates might help you think of a good topic. Let's look now at three other techniques for getting your neurotransmitters firing: brainstorming, freewriting, and clustering.

BRAINSTORMING

Brainstorming allows you to generate quickly a large number of ideas. You can brainstorm with others or you can brainstorm by yourself, which sometimes turns into freewriting. To capture more of your thoughts, you may want to brainstorm a few times until you have enough ideas to start writing. At this stage, every idea is good since you are trying to come up with as many angles as possible. A majority of academic writing begins with brainstorming. After you brainstorm, you can organize your ideas into blocks of similar content—these blocks are the foundations for your paragraphs.

FREEWITING

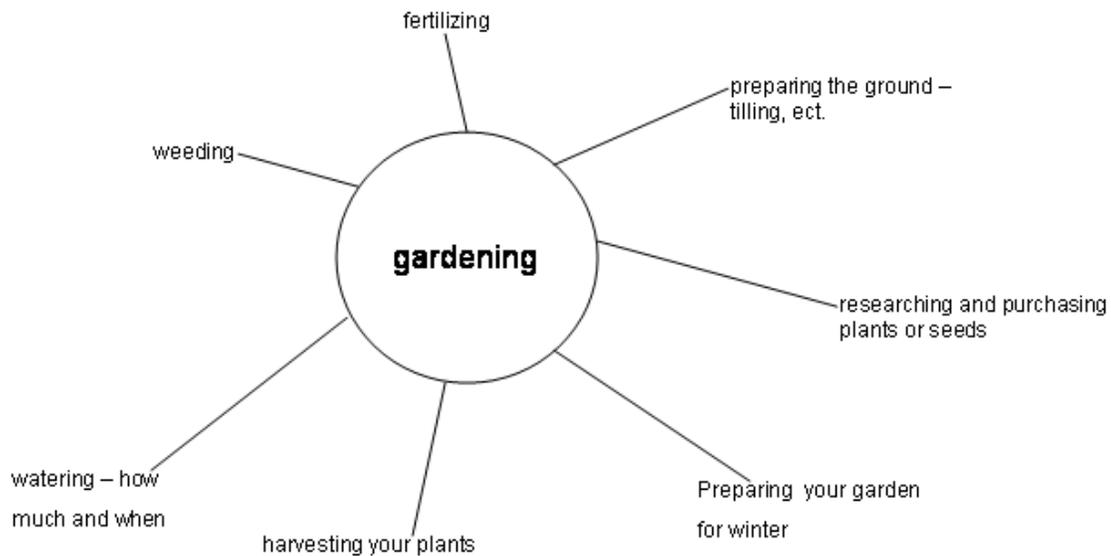
Freewriting helps generate ideas and set them in motion. How does one **freewrite**? Sit down in silence with a pencil and paper. Write down anything and everything you think of, not stopping the flow of writing for any reason. Ignore all conventions of spelling, syntax, grammar, and so on. Do not look back at what you wrote until you are satisfied that you have

written enough. An easy way to freewrite is to set a time limit and then begin writing.

CLUSTERING

Clustering is a visual organizer wherein you take your central subject and draw a circle around it. You then draw lines out from the circle that connect topics that relate to the main subject in the circle.

Clustering visual



Public domain image shows gardening in center of cluster with related topics stemming outward.

OUTLINING

An **outline** is an efficient, convenient way to organize your ideas in preparation for your first essay draft. Always outline everything you write, from paragraphs to essays. Always!

Sample outline

- I. Introduction
 1. Thesis
 - a. Brief description of issues that arise when reading *Hamlet*
- II. Body paragraphs

1. Issues of feminism uncovered through reading *Hamlet*
 2. What other scholars have discovered about feminism in *Hamlet*
 3. Which of these discoveries was most evident to me and how
 4. Ideas of feminism that I uncovered on my own
 5. How uncovering ideas of feminism in *Hamlet* has led me to understand what Shakespeare thought of the role of women in society
- III. Conclusion paragraph discussing importance of *Hamlet* to the community college audience

5.1 Organizing the Parts of the Essay

From sentence-to-sentence, paragraph-to-paragraph, the ideas should flow into each other smoothly and uninterrupted. If someone tells you that your paper sounds choppy or jumps around, you probably have a problem with organization and transitions. **Transition phrases** occur at the start of each body paragraph (e.g., “In addition to their causing traffic accidents, reckless drivers also increase our insurance premiums”). **Internal transitions** organize ideas within a body paragraph (e.g., “first,” “next,” “finally,” etc.). Few writers can write a well-organized paper in one draft. Instead, their first drafts are disorganized and even chaotic. It takes patience to sort through this mess, consolidate related ideas into coherent paragraphs, and help the readers follow a train of thought without derailing.

TITLE

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

Tips for titles

- Get inspiration from best-selling books or well-known essays, particularly those closely related to your topic (e.g., “Men are from Mars, Women are from Snickers: Candy Bars and the Obesity Epidemic”).
- Look through your paper and see if you can identify some **key words** or special phrases that might serve as part of a title.
- Consider **poetic devices** such as repeating **consonant** sounds (e.g., “The Cost of Caring”).
- Get inspiration from famous quotations or song lyrics (e.g., “Stringing My Granny’s Banjo: A Feminist Perspective on Country Music”).

INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH

An introduction is a first impression: once presented, you never get a second opportunity. A good introduction gets to the point, gives the reader a reason to keep on reading, and sets the stage for a really exciting

performance. A bad introduction is misleading, rambling, incoherent, boring, or so vague that you know less about the topic than you did before you read it. If you have tedious openers or **hyperbolic generalizations** such as “since the beginning of human history,” then delete them. Minimize your use of quotations and citations in your introduction. Be careful not to write a wordy or overly dense introduction; your introduction should merely frame the rest of the paper.

THESIS SENTENCE

It is not advisable to begin drafting without a thesis. The **thesis statement**, also called the claim or **central argument** of your essay, is a roadmap; at the drafting phase it will help keep you on track. Make sure that you begin with a statement (not a question) that clearly, precisely articulates what your essay demonstrates or proves. A thesis is not only an idea but also a theory that provides direction and guidance to your essay. It provides a clear goal (what is being proved or demonstrated) for the paper. It should answer two simple questions: What issue are you writing about, and what is your position on it? A thesis should be a single sentence that provides the answers to these questions clearly and concisely. Place the thesis sentence at the end of the introduction paragraph. One basic structure for a thesis statement is “they say, I say”: What is the prevailing view, and how does your position differ from it?

Some thesis statements

- Although many readers believe *Romeo and Juliet* to be a tale about the ill fate of two star-crossed lovers, it can also be read as an allegory concerning a playwright and his audience.
- The war on drugs has not only failed to reduce the frequency of drug-related crimes in America but has also actually enhanced the popular image of dealers by romanticizing them as rebels fighting for a cause.
- If students really want to improve their essays, they must read often, practice writing, and receive quality feedback from their peers.
- Plato’s dialectical method has much to offer those of us engaged in online discussions, which are far more conversational than essays.

BODY PARAGRAPHS

Body paragraphs should be six to ten sentences long; should always begin with a transition and topic sentence (the main idea of the paragraph); should provide original analysis and commentary; should contain one or two impactful, relevant quotations and citations, if you're conducting research; and should end with a concluding sentence that wraps up the paragraph.

As you build support for your thesis in the body paragraphs, always ask yourself if you are spending your readers' time wisely. Are you writing unnecessarily complex and confusing sentences or using fifty words when five would do? If a sentence is already plain and direct, there's no need to fluff it up. Flowery words and phrases obscure your ideas: when writing, **conciseness** is key. For example, why write, "Cats have a tendency toward sleeping most of the day" when you could simply write, "Cats usually sleep most of the day"? How about changing "The twelfth day of the month of April" to "April 12th"? If you are having trouble meeting the minimum page count for your essay, a far better solution is to add more commentary, analysis, examples, details, quotations, or perspectives.

Precise writing is powerful writing

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

Although the first sentence is longer and sounds more sophisticated, it isn't better. The second sentence (courtesy of JFK) is elegant, precise, and memorable.

CONCLUSION PARAGRAPH

After all the work you have exerted on your paper, you want to end with a **conclusion paragraph**. Conclusions may be a simple restatement of your thesis to reestablish what the entire paper is about. They may also sum up your main points, reflect on the information presented, present your

personal opinion, ask a thought-provoking question, ponder the future of the topic, or present a call to action telling your readers what you want them to do with the information you have presented. Often, this choice will be determined by the genre, audience, or purpose of your paper. Nevertheless, your conclusion should accurately reflect the paper's subject and provide the reader with closure.

WORKS CITED OR REFERENCES

If you are writing in MLA style, then the last page of your essay will be a Works Cited indicating the author, title of article, year of publication, and so on of your sources. Similarly, if you are writing in APA style, then the last page of your essay will be called References. For more on this, see the chapter titled Research and Documentation.

5.2 Drafting

"Fiction is based on reality, unless you're a fairy-tale artist. You have to get your knowledge of life from somewhere. You have to know the material you're writing about before you alter it."

--Hunter S. Thompson

FIRST DRAFT

Prewriting sets up your first draft. Find the best possible quotations and data and type them out. Group similar themes together, and you may end up with a nice foundation for paragraphs. Don't worry about being complete in your drafting. Disorganization and choppiness are usual here; you can smooth that out in later drafts. Drafts may contain grammatical and spelling errors and may lack detail. Rephrasing and expanding ideas will be a part of later drafts.

SECOND DRAFT

The second draft is about organizing your information logically and effectively. If you created a thorough first draft, this should be easy. Organize the main points that you plan to make, find supporting evidence for each point, and spend a few sentences explaining what conclusions you are able to draw from the information. Check for unnecessary **stems** such

as “I think/feel/believe,” and eliminate them. You will want to come up with an overall organizational strategy or **pattern of organization** and stick to it. Always place similar ideas beside each other. Beyond that, you may want to organize things chronologically or by order of importance. (See our earlier table on patterns of organization.)

THIRD DRAFT AND MORE

The third and any subsequent drafts are really about finesse. Don't be afraid to strut your stuff—logical, developed, fluid arguments are a pleasure to read. These are the drafts that will hook your reader. If you are bored reading the paper, chances are your professor will be, too. Add action verbs (instead of the “to be” verb) and use examples. Be sure to follow a timeline. Make sure that you start early and have time to develop your final draft.

Sometimes you will find it is easier to write the introduction after you have written the body of your paper. Consider waiting to write the introduction until you have a definite sense of what direction you want your paper to take. Try to write an attention-grabbing **opening** or **lead** in your introduction as well as a conclusion that leaves the reader thinking about your paper.

POSITION

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

Weak or generic thesis statements

- Abortion is a very controversial issue in America. [too obvious]
- Capital punishment is both good and bad. [indecisive]
- This paper will present the pros and cons of modern copyright law. [this might work for an expository essay; however, an argumentative essay must take a stance—one side or the other]

SCOPE

Many writers often narrow or expand the topic as they write. Overly broad topics can be difficult to manage and can lead to summary rather than analysis. Narrowing your topic will provide you with a more workable idea to focus on. Asking questions about what you want to know regarding your topic and what you want your readers to know will help focus your writing. You may always add background information, term definitions, literature review, reasons for your assumptions, and counter-arguments to strengthen your own argument. Besides explaining what your paper is about and your argument, an introduction may also state what you will and won't cover. Let's say you wanted to write a paper that argued that Ford makes better cars than Chevrolet. However, your introduction didn't mention Chevrolet at all, but instead had the line that "Ford makes better cars than any other car manufacturer." Your reader would quickly begin to wonder why you're not talking about Toyota or Nissan! Try to anticipate what your reader will expect to see covered, and, if necessary, state it explicitly.

Thesis sentences appropriately narrow in scope

- Although our topic is capital punishment, we will focus on one aspect of that larger issue: the execution of convicts who are mentally ill.
- Although we interviewed over two hundred doctors in our study, we will discuss only three of them in detail here.
- This essay analyzes the preface to only the first edition of *Leaves of Grass* so does not apply to the prefaces in Whitman's later editions.

FLOW

As you draft early on, do not stop to edit or look up small pieces of information; there will be time for precision later. Luke Sullivan, author of *Hey Whipple, Squeeze This*, suggests that you must "write hot and edit cold." In other words, write off the top of your head and allow your thoughts to be spontaneous. You never want to leave a good idea out. However, when it comes to polishing the final product, become critical by taking out unnecessary words or ideas that stray from the main message. Do not keep text that distracts or causes misunderstandings. If you have a

question, place it in **brackets** ([]) or make a note of it and refer back to it later. Don't get distracted when your initial drafts aren't A-quality work. That's the reason they are drafts. The important thing is to get your ideas down on paper. You can spend time evaluating them later.

5.3 Essay Pointers

A long essay assignment can be intimidating, but you make your job and the reader's job much easier by following some basic rules of thumb.

Essay pointers

- Read and understand the essay prompt. Ask if you need any clarification.
- Essays should have a consistent format
 - Running head in the upper right margin (in MLA style, this is your last name plus the page number) of every page of your essay.
 - The essay heading goes in the upper left corner of only the first page of the essay (MLA style). The heading should have your name, the date, the name of the class, and the name of the assignment.
 - The essay title should be centered below the heading. The title should be original and catchy.
 - Margins should be 1" (one inch) on all sides—no more, no less.
 - Double space.
 - Use Times New Roman font, size 12.
- Write at least the minimum length that the professor requests, but do not write much more. For example, if an essay is to be five pages, then your essay could be five and a half pages long (meaning it ends partway down page six of your document).
- All essays should follow the same arrangement: introductory paragraph with thesis sentence; body paragraphs; conclusion paragraph.
- Use the Power Proofreader for everything you write.

CRAFTING AN INTRODUCTION PARAGRAPH

You should get your reader’s attention immediately by announcing the paper’s subject or by launching into a relevant scenario or narrative that informs or illustrates your overall argument. An introduction should provide background to the essay topic, define and limit the paper’s scope and purpose, indicate some sense of organization, and, whenever possible, suggest an overall argument.⁷

In general, academic writing does not require subjective or personal anecdotes; therefore, you rarely need to use “I.” Indeed, using “we” is preferable if a personal comment is appropriate. As an example, note below how the first excerpt uses “I” while the second excerpt does not use “I,” even though the writer is clearly reflective about the subject matter. The first excerpt is from a paper on the generic nature of America’s highway exit ramp services; the second is from a paper on shape constancy.

With “I”

- The observation struck me slowly as a growing sense of déjà vu. I was driving the endless miles of Interstate 70 crossing Kansas when I began to notice that the exits all looked the same . . .

Without “I”

- Our eyes often receive pictures of the world that are contrary to physical reality. A pencil in a glass of water miraculously bends; railroad tracks converge in the distance . . .

CRAFTING A THESIS STATEMENT / CLAIM

The thesis sentence, also called the thesis statement or claim, is conveniently located at the end of the introduction. Thesis statements usually forecast the paper’s content, present the paper’s fundamental hypothesis, or suggest that the paper is an argument for a particular way of thinking about a topic.

⁷ *Style for Students Online*. Authored by Joe Schall. Provided by Pennsylvania State University. Located at <https://www.e-education.psu.edu/styleforstudents/>. Penn State's College of Earth and Mineral Sciences' OER Initiative. CC BY-NC-SA.

Sample theses

- This paper reviews the problem of Pennsylvania's dwindling landfill space, evaluates the success of recycling as a solution to this problem, and challenges the assumption that Pennsylvania will run out of landfill space by the year 2020.
- As this paper will show, the fundamental problem behind the Arab-Israeli conflict is the lack of a workable solution to the third stage of partition, which greatly hinders the current negotiations for peace.

CRAFTING BODY PARAGRAPHS

As we learned before, use prewriting strategies to generate and order similar themes. Organize the body of your paper using an overarching principle that supports your thesis, even if that simply means presenting four different methods for solving one problem. Again, body paragraphs should open with a **transition phrase**, lead to a **topic sentence** stating the main idea, built out the argument with **major and minor supporting details** (e.g., a quotation and citation followed by your analysis and commentary), then wrap up with a **concluding sentence** or **clincher**.

CRAFTING A CONCLUSION PARAGRAPH

When you are stuck for a conclusion, look back at your introduction; see if you can freshly reemphasize your objectives by outlining how they were met, or even recast an opening scenario from the introduction in a new light to illustrate how the paper has brought about change. Your conclusion need not be a summary of the paper or a simple tacked-on ending; instead, present a significant and logical realization of the paper's goals.

What follows is an excerpt from a conclusion to a paper titled "Exercise in the Prevention and Treatment of Osteoporosis in Women." Note how the conclusion reflects directly on the paper's hypothesis and spells out the bottom line, gracefully bringing closure to the paper's argument.

- The majority of evidence presented in this paper supports the hypothesis that exercise positively affects bone mineral density in both premenopausal and postmenopausal women. Significantly, exercise has been shown to increase bone mineral density in

premenopausal women even after the teenage years, and it helps preserve the bone mass achieved in the following decades. There is also evidence that exercise adds a modest, yet significant amount of bone mass to the postmenopausal skeleton. As these findings demonstrate, women of all ages can benefit by regular weight-bearing exercise, an increased intake of calcium-rich foods, and—for postmenopausal women—the maintenance of adequate estrogen levels. For all women, it is never too late to prevent osteoporosis or lessen its severity by making appropriate lifestyle choices.

5.4 Writer's Block

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

Common cures for writer's block

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

EXPERIMENTATION

With all that said, you can make up your own approach to create your own way of writing yourself out of a block. All the technological tools you have access to make it possible for you to write virtually anytime, anywhere, and however you want. Take advantage. Type on your computer, research on

it, record your own voice if the pen is slowing down your thinking, go for a jog, or whip up a new dish in the kitchen . . . experiment with your approach to writing.

6 Rewriting



Pixabay image shows film editing on a laptop.

6.1 Proofreading

Five Evaluation

Criteria

Tips

Copyediting Symbols

6.2 Power Proofreader

6.3 Editing

Tips

6.4 Revising

Before and After

Common Grammar

Revisions

6.1 Proofreading

Professional readers usually rely on a series of special annotations called proofreaders' marks. Your teacher may or may not use these or require you to use them. Turnitin, Word, Crocodoc, Vericite, the Canvas LMS, and other software programs permit your instructor to make comments directly on your essay, for example. In addition, modern techniques such as the track changes and comments features in Microsoft Word and other word processors have greatly reduced the need for these marks, but they are still used by many publishers and teachers.

What teachers generally mean by **proofreading** is your final examination of a piece of writing before it is submitted to be graded. Typically, this means carefully reading over your work to catch and fix small errors such as misspellings or missing commas. Taking time to properly proofread your work can make a substantial difference in the grades you receive on your writing assignments. It shows you care about your work and the teacher's time.

PROOFREADING BASICS

Proofreading requires slow and careful reading (as opposed to speed reading) while focusing on each letter, punctuation mark, and individual word for correctness. Good proofreaders train themselves to focus clearly on what other readers may skim over or only glance at. For instance, try reading this sentence quickly, and then slowly:

- Starring closely at each sentence, Henry found and correct over thirty-two errors.

Did you notice that "correct" is missing "-ed" and that "staring" is misspelled as "starring," as in "a starring role in an action film"? Speed readers learn to skip over small particles of words, and sometimes entire words--especially if the words are short and seemingly unimportant to the meaning of the sentence, e.g., "of" or "on." To break these habits, force yourself to read slowly.

When you find an error, fix it, and then read back over the entire sentence. Sometimes you might fix one problem only to introduce another one. For

instance, if you changed “correct” to the present tense “corrects,” then you would also need to change “found” to “finds.”

FIVE EVALUATION CRITERIA

There are five criteria we can use to evaluate any piece of writing. These criteria are focus, development, organization, style, and conventions.

Focus

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

Development

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

Organization

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

Style

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

Conventions

This criterion covers grammar, mechanics, punctuation, spelling, capitalization, formatting, and other mechanical issues that are dictated by convention or rules. Basic grammar errors can make even a brilliant writer seem careless, which will seldom impress his or her readers.

PROOFREADING TIPS

- Read your work aloud. Read slowly, emphasizing each syllable. This process forces you to slow down and will help you find many small errors that you would have missed reading silently.
- Print out your documents and read from the paper rather than the screen. The higher contrast of the paper will help you see problems that you may not have noticed on the screen.
- Read the document out of order, perhaps starting with the conclusion and working back up. As you read, follow the sentences with your finger or pen, and keep reminding yourself to go slowly.
- Never proofread while you are tired or distracted. Give yourself a day after you stop writing before proofreading. If you finish your draft the night before and proofread the next morning, you will find many more errors than if you had not taken a break. If time is an issue, try to give yourself as much of a break as possible. Even an hour or two will make a difference.
- Look over your previous writings from the past. Identify frequent critical errors. Divide the parts of your paper into categories of **high-order concerns** (HOC) and **low-order concerns** (LOCs).
- HOCs include these:
 - *Thesis or focus*: Make sure the paper has a central thesis. Ask someone to read the first paragraph or two and tell you what he or she thinks the paper will discuss.

- *Audience and purpose*: Who is the audience for this paper? What is the purpose or intention behind the paper? Why should anyone read your paper?
 - *Organization*: Are the language and structure of the paper smooth? Make a brief outline and decide if the organization makes sense and if any parts should be moved.
 - *Development*: Find places where more details, examples, or specifics could be used. Have someone read the paper and let you know if something is unclear and needs more explanation or support.
- Allow someone else to review your essay. You might visit a Student Success Center or Writing Center, or contact a writing tutor virtually via email or Skype.

COPYEDITING SYMBOLS

		Delete		Flush Left		Set in Bold Face Italic
		Insert		Flush Right		Set in Light Face
		Join		Center Horizontally		Wrong Font
		Move closer		Center Vertically		Hyphen
		Space		Move to the next line		En Dash
		Add Space		Move to the preceding line		Em Dash
		Delete Space		Indent 1 em		Superscript
		Transpose Word		Indent 2 ems		Subscript
		Transpose Letters		Paragraph		Comma
		To separate two or more marks		All Caps		Apostrophe
		Let it Stand (ignore correction)		Small Caps		Period
		Move Left		Caps & Small Caps		Semicolon
		Move Right		Capital Letter		Colon
		Move Up		Lower Case		Quotation Marks
		Move Down		Set in Roman		Parentheses
		Align Vertically		Set in Italic		Brackets

Public domain image shows copy editing symbols.

6.2 Power Proofreader

Proofread each draft of your essay with this guide developed after many years of correcting the same patterns of errors.

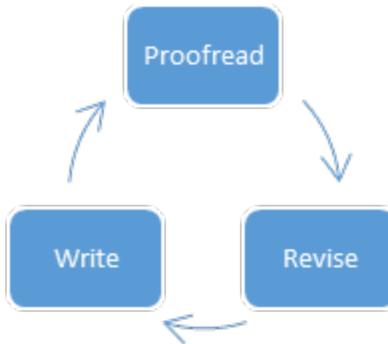


Image shows write to proofread to revise process.

Write, proofread, and revise your essays using this sheet as a guide.

POWER PROOFREADER

Category	Items to check	Explanations
Grammar	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • subject-pronoun agreement(h) • run-ons avoided with semicolon(i) • capitalize proper nouns only • verb tense consistent 	<p>(h)"Each person brings his or her [not their] laptop." Also, do "it" and other pronouns refer clearly to their antecedents?</p> <p>(i)"She exited the subway; she entered the café." [Semicolon combines two sentences into one.]</p>
Punctuation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • apostrophes for possession and contraction(j) • comma after item in series of three or more(k) • comma splice avoided(l) • semicolons separate two complete sentences, whereas colons set up a definition, list, or quotation (see below) 	<p>(j)"James's pen," "children's books," she + is = "she's"</p> <p>(k)"He bought bread, cheese, [must include this comma] and wine."</p> <p>(l)"She exited the subway, and she entered the café." [Must have "and" after comma here to avoid comma splice.]</p>

Category	Items to check	Explanations
Usage	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Italicize names and titles of longer works(s) • put quotation marks around shorter works(t) • triple-check for accuracy: affect/effect; its/it's; lose/loose; than/then; who/whom • spell out numbers below 100(u) • do not use "etc." in a formal essay 	<p>(s)Italics: newspaper = <i>The L.A. Times</i>, magazine = <i>Time</i>, journal = <i>Science</i>, play = <i>Romeo and Juliet</i>, novel = <i>Crime and Punishment</i>, album = <i>Exile on Main Street</i></p> <p>(t)Quotation marks: article = "Top sheriff's official resigns," poem = "Lake Isle of Innisfree," short story = "The Lady or the Tiger," song = "Gimme Shelter"</p> <p>(u)10→ ten, 55→ fifty-five, and so on.</p>
Quotations	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • lead into each quotation(m) • cite each quotation(n) • integrate quotations into the middle of your body paragraphs only <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ do not use quotations in your intro paragraph ○ do not use quotations in the topic sentence of your body paragraphs • do not italicize quotations • quotations should be well-chosen and no longer than two sentences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ do not use block quotations in this class 	<p>(m)Examples: <i>Psychology Today</i> <u>states</u>, "Hugging..." ["states" and other verbs take a comma before the quotation] <i>Psychology Today</i> <u>states that</u> "Hugging..." ["that" takes no comma] <i>Psychology Today</i> states this: "Hugging..." ["this" takes a colon]</p> <p>(n)In MLA style we cite the author and page number in parenthesis after the quotation: <i>Psychology Today</i> states, "Hugging dogs causes them anxiety" (Spulber 13). [Note that the period goes <u>outside</u> the quotation and citation.] In APA style we cite the author, year, and page number: <i>Psychology</i></p>

Category	Items to check	Explanations
Quotations, cont'd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • comma goes inside quotation(o) • use ellipses (. . .) only where you remove language from the middle of a quotation 	<p><i>Today</i> states, “Hugging dogs causes them anxiety” (Spulber, 2012, p. 13). (o)Sandy exclaimed that Suzy was her “best friend,” after which Sandy drove off with Sharon. [correct = “friend,” not “friend”.]</p>
Style	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • tone fits the mode(p) • writing is audience-oriented and reader-friendly • hyperboles or generalizations are avoided(q) • language is precise rather than wordy(r) • diction / word choice is clear and simple 	<p>(p)Adjust your tone to fit your purpose and audience, e.g., an argumentative essay’s voice should be objective and reasonable, whereas a satirical article’s voice should be dry and humorous. (q)No sweeping statements such as “since the history of civilization” or “it has always/never been the case that everyone/no one...” (r)Instead of “Cars have an impact on pollution,” you write, “Cars impact pollution.”</p>
Organization	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • intro paragraph gives overview of the topic <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ avoid quotations in the intro ○ intro ends with thesis sentence (claim) stating what this essay proves • body paragraphs provide evidence supporting your thesis 	(see below)

Category	Items to check	Explanations
Organization, cont'd	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ each body paragraph must open with a transition then a topic sentence stating the main idea of the paragraph(d) ○ provide major and minor supporting details such as one or two quotations followed by your commentary and analysis ○ conclude each body paragraph by wrapping up the paragraph and reminding readers of the big picture (how this paragraph links to the thesis)(e) ● conclusion paragraph has many options beyond summarizing the essay(f) ● paragraphs should all be six to ten sentences long ● follow instructions about minimum length of essay(g) ● read your essay aloud to others to check the flow and overall coherence of your argument 	<p>(d)Here's a sample transition to new topic sentence: "The second overt instance of Woolf's emphasis on intellectual liberation and physical independence is the scene when Mrs. Ramsey challenges Charles Tansley outside the lighthouse."</p> <p>(e)Sample sentence concluding a body paragraph: "Thus, Woolf conveys English wives' struggles for independence in the early nineteenth century."</p> <p>(f)In your conclusion, you may offer your personal opinion on the subject; discuss the future of the subject or its consequences; share how your readers can get involved with the subject; mention new inquiries stemming from your subject; or simply end with a body paragraph then one to two sentences that pull together the essay.</p> <p>(g)For example, "four-and-a-half pages long" means the essay ends midway down page five, not midway down page four.</p>

Category	Items to check	Explanations
Format	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • running head(a) • heading(b) • title is centered below heading(c) • margins are standard one inch on all sides • font is size twelve Times New Roman • essay is double-spaced with no extra gaps 	<p>(a)In MLA style, your last name and the page number appear in the upper right corner of each page. In APA style, the title appears in the upper left corner and the page number appears in the upper right corner of each page. [Use the Insert > Page Number function to do this.]</p> <p>(b)Heading appears in upper left corner of the first page only and includes your name, date, class and instructor, and assignment name.</p> <p>(c)Title should be memorable; do not underline it.</p>

Table Ch. 6.2: Power Proofreader

6.3 Editing

“Substitute ‘damn’ every time you’re inclined to write ‘very’; your editor will delete it, and the writing will be just as it should be.”

--Mark Twain

“Bad spellers of the world, untie!”

--anon.

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

--Michael Crichton

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

--Neil Simon

“There are two kinds of editors: those who correct your copy and those who say it’s wonderful.”

--Theodore H. White

Editing means going through a piece of writing and making comments and suggestions about how it could be better. **Revising** occurs when a writer attempts to make the changes suggested during the editing process. You may also **peer review**. When revising, focus on technical issues such as **usage**, word choice (**diction**), **transitions**, and **mechanics**.⁸

EDITING TIPS

Editing is like going over your writing with a fine-toothed comb, scanning the surface and the depths for errors, misstatements, and ambiguity. Don’t rely entirely on **spell check**. It will correct the spelling but not the proper usage of a word. For example, the word “their” conveys possession: “We sat in *their* chairs.” On the other hand, “there” is used to express an area or place: “We sat over *there*.” Spell check can’t differentiate between these two usages. When reviewing your work, it is also important to ensure that the tense you choose remains consistent. **Tense** refers to the relation of details in the past, present, and future. For example, one writer may tell a story about going to the mall in the present tense by saying, “I *am* walking around the mall, and I see my third grade teacher.” Another writer may choose to relate this story in the past tense by saying, “I *was* walking around the mall when I *saw* my third grade teacher.”

More editing pointers

⁸ Content foundation courtesy of open *Rhetoric and Composition Wikibook*.

- *Take a break.* Looking at your paper later will help you see it from the point of view of the audience. A good rule of thumb is to wait at least a day before revising. Often, writers look at their prose a day or two later and recognize significant flaws they overlooked previously.
 - *Be your own critic.* You are your own best critic. When writing, most people do not (and should not) turn in their first drafts. So take advantage of your first, second, and third drafts to write your opinions in the margins. Highlight the things you really like and circle the things you would like to change.
 - *Read and re-read your paper.* In the first read-through consider the clarity of both the focus and the purpose of the paper. Does every supporting statement agree with the thesis? In the second read-through analyze organization, logical development, and correctness. Reading your text aloud reveals awkward phrasing, missing information, weak points, and illogical reasoning.
 - *Put yourself in the shoes of your readers.* Look at your work through their eyes. Keep in mind that while you may know something about a topic and write about it with supported research, your audience may be new to the topic. Being specific in your writing helps clarify your message. Do not assume that your audience already knows what you know.
 - *Cut unnecessary words.* Inexperienced writers should be able to cut twenty percent (or more) of their prose. Look hard at each word, each phrase, and each sentence. Does each and every one help you achieve your purpose? Does each sentence in a paragraph relate to the main idea? If you are like most people, you will find unnecessary repetition rampant in your writing. Pruning the verbiage will result in leaner, tighter, and more forceful writing.
 - Remember E.B. White's paradoxical mantra: "Omit needless words. Omit needless words. Omit needless words."
 - *Revision is constant.* Understand that revising your paper should not be the last thing you do; revision should be ongoing throughout the creation of a document.
-

6.4 Revising

SAMPLE REVISIONS

Before revision

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

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

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

Pete and I have decided to split chores almost evenly. I will be doing 44.43% of the total things that will need to get done. He will be doing 43.24% of them. We decided that our son, who will be named Christian, was old enough to help with some of the chores. Some of the other things, we decided, would be worth paying an outside

source to do. Income tax returns, for example, we concluded could be better and more efficiently taken care of by a CPA. We found that I will be doing 50.25% of the housework, while Pete will be doing 43.17%. We also found that I will be doing 10% of the occasional work while Pete will be doing 63.33%. I will do 60% of the child care, and Pete will do 40%. I seem to be doing more daily tasks, and Pete seems to be doing more occasional tasks.

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

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

After revision

➤ Household Chore Divisions When We Get Married

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

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

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

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

From the results of this assignment, I will be doing more of the traditionally “female work,” and Pete will be doing more “male work.” I think that our assigned careers play a part in this but not as much as I

would like. I think that although we have broken many of the stereotypes to which my parents' subscribe, we are still following some of them. When I look over the results, it seems odd, gender-task speaking, that Pete will be doing more of the ironing than I, but he taught me to iron, and his job calls for more ironed clothes than mine. We also figured that he will have a little more leeway on time as a manager than I will as a lawyer. Because of this, he will be getting the kids ready for school in the morning. We broke a couple of stereotypes, but we still have a ways to go before reaching equality.

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

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

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

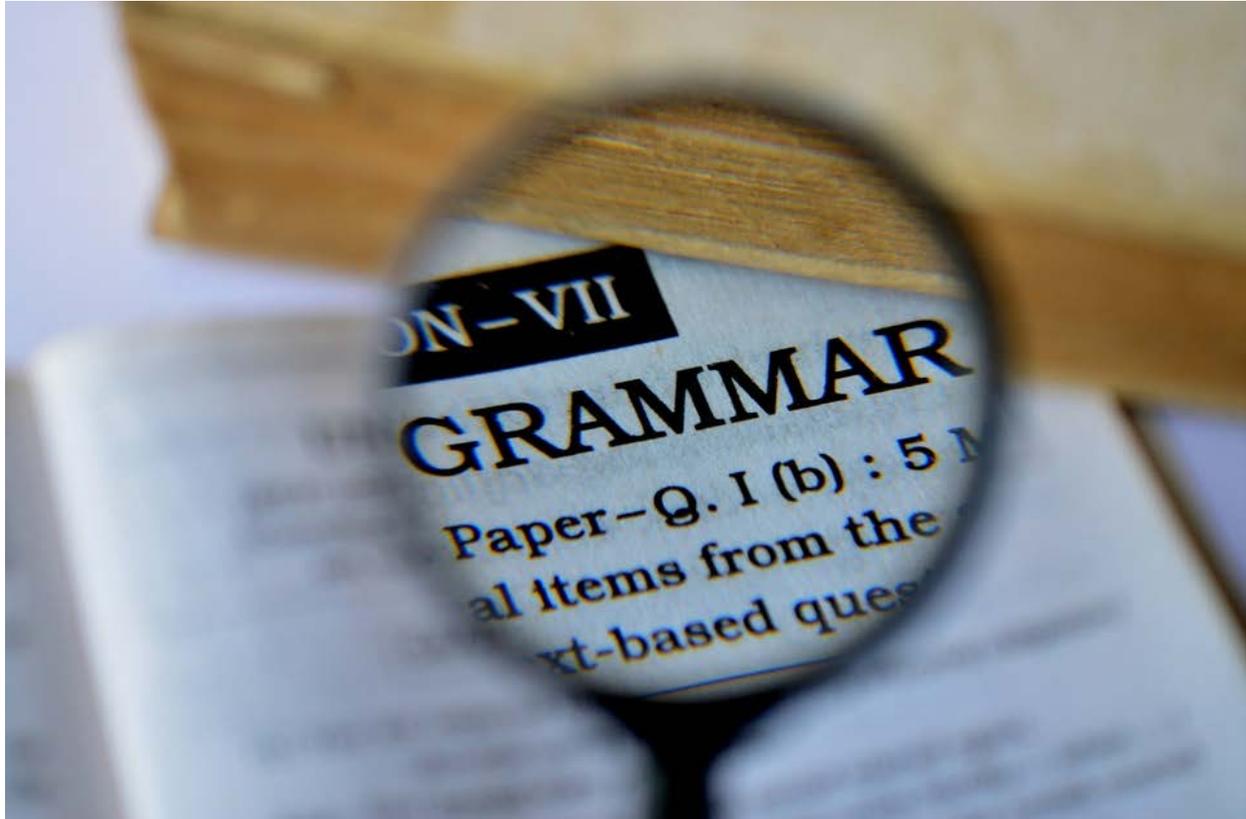
3. “6” was changed to “six.” Be aware of numbers in your writing. I advise you to spell out numbers from zero to ninety-nine.
4. Some material was added to the After for clarity. When you believe something can be added or taken away to provide your reader with a better idea of your meaning or thought process, do so. If your reader becomes confused, your paper’s effectiveness will be limited. Do your best to guide your reader, so he or she will not need to re-read your **prose** to ascertain meaning.

COMMON GRAMMAR REVISIONS

Errors to consider when revising

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

7 Grammar Theory



Pixabay image shows a magnifying glass looking at the word "grammar."

- 7.1 Subject, Predicates, Complements, and Modifiers
- 7.2 Sentence Types and Purposes Revisited
 - Four Types
 - Clauses
 - Four Purposes
- 7.3 Parts of Speech
 - Nouns

- Pronouns
- Verbs
- Adjectives
- Adverbs
- Conjunctions
- Prepositions
- Interjections
- 7.4 Active and Passive Voices

7.1 Subjects, Predicates, Complements, and Modifiers

English sentences typically have four parts: subject, predicate, complement, and modifier.

SUBJECT AND PREDICATE

The **subject** of a sentence is a noun or pronoun. In active-voice sentences it is the noun performing the action in the sentence:

- The boy crossed the street.
- My mother works in the city.

The **predicate** in the sentence is the verb or verb phrase, linked to the subject, which tells what action is being performed.

- The boy crossed the street.
- My mother works in the city.

COMPLEMENT

The word **complement** is a noun form based on the verb “complete.” (Note the spelling difference with the word “compliment,” which means to praise.) There are further subdivisions within the category of complements.

Object is a noun complement following an action verb. The **direct object** receives the direct action of the verb, whereas the **indirect object** indicates where the direct object goes.

- George carried the plants (direct object) to the car (indirect object).
- Samsung flung his chopped hair (direct object) at Delilah (indirect object).

Predicate nominative is a noun complement following a linking verb.

- George is a marathoner.

Predicate adjective is an adjective complement following a linking verb.

- George is tall.

MODIFIERS

Pretty much everything else in a sentence beyond the subject, predicate, and complement is a modifier of one kind or another. There are three basic kinds of modifying constructions:

- **single-word** modifiers (adjectives and adverbs)
- **phrases** (e.g., prepositional, participial, infinitive, and appositive)
- **clauses** (a clause being defined as any group of words with its own subject and predicate)

7.2 Sentences Types and Purposes Revisited

(Please review the earlier chapter, Sentences to Paragraphs, for an intro to this lesson.) Choosing among simple, compound, complex, and compound-complex sentences will keep the reader interested. Varying the length of the sentences also keeps the reader involved.

Varied sentences

- As the band marched along the street, the director signaled for the drums to play. A red car stopped at the intersection. While the parents walked beside the band, children threw water balloons at the brass section. The trumpet players started to play. The band marched past the intersection, and the red car proceeded down the street.

The first sentence is complex, and the second one is simple. The third is again complex, whereas the fourth is simple. The fifth sentence is compound. Style and flow result from this variation of sentence type and length.

FOUR SENTENCE TYPES

A **simple sentence** does not contain more than one full sentence pattern.

- Life would be empty without love.

A **compound sentence** is composed of two or more independent clauses (see clauses explanation below) with no subordinate clauses. The two clauses are usually joined by a comma plus conjunction, a semicolon, or a semicolon and conjunctive adverb.

- Together we stand, but united we fall.
- Together we stand; united we fall.
- Together we stand; however, united we fall.

A **complex sentence** is composed of one independent clause and one or more subordinate clauses.

- If you call me names [dependent / subordinate clause], I will cry [independent clause].

A **compound-complex sentence** contains at least two independent clauses and at least one subordinate clause.

- If you call me names [dependent / subordinate clause], I will cry [independent clause], but I will also short-sheet your bed [second independent clause].

CLAUSES

Sentence structure is determined based on the number of clauses in the sentence. A clause can be independent or subordinate. An **independent clause** is a full sentence pattern that can operate on its own and does not function within another sentence pattern. It contains a subject plus a verb and any objects or modifiers. A **subordinate clause** (also called a **dependent clause**) functions within a sentence—it has a subject and verb but cannot stand on its own.

- After Mary studied in the library for her final exam . . .

What happened after Mary studied? This line has a subject and verb, but it isn't a complete idea; therefore, it's a dependent clause. If you examine the structure of entire sentences, you will often see that a complement clause is taking the place of a direct object, adjective, or other noun. You'll often see the word "that" used.

- I know that James went to Coastline before transferring to Northwestern.
- I love the idea that chimps can talk.

A **relative clause** can be somewhat tricky to identify. Just remember that it is a clause (subject plus verb) attached to a noun or pronoun, and it usually begins with "who" or "that."

- She is the girl who was in my line at the grocery store last week.
- Please return the weights that I gave you last week.

FOUR SENTENCE PURPOSES

Declarative sentences state.

- My dog barks at everything.

Imperative sentences request or demand.

- Give me that.

Interrogative sentences ask.

- What are you doing?

Exclamatory sentences exclaim.

- I'm not drinking any freaking merlot! (This is an **allusion** to the movie *Sideways*.)

7.3 Parts of Speech

There are **eight parts of speech** to which every word belongs; the eight parts are easily remembered by the **acrostic CAPPIVAN**:

Conjunction

Adverb

Preposition

Pronoun

Interjection

Verb

Adjective

Noun

NOUNS

Nouns refer to persons, places, things, states, or qualities. **Count nouns** refer to a discrete number of things that are countable—you can say there are “x number” of these things. They can take the plural forms and can be preceded by articles, e.g., book, house, car. **Non-count** nouns aren't “x-numbered,” e.g., rice, oil, weather. **Common nouns** are not capitalized: a city, the policeman, that desk. **Proper nouns** are the name of a specific person, place, or thing: Nicolas, Orange County, Disneyland. **Collective nouns** are used to name groups: team, herd, jury. **Concrete nouns** represent objects one can see, hear, touch, smell, or

taste. **Abstract nouns** are anything one cannot see, hear, touch, smell, or taste, e.g., confidence, intelligence, ability.

Possession

If a singular noun does not end in -s, add 's:

- The delivery boy's truck was blocking the driveway.
- Mrs. Peale's concession speech was stoic and dignified.

If a singular noun ends in -s, add 's:

- The boss's temper was legendary among his employees.
- Chris's exam scores were higher than those of any other students.
- Jesse James's pistol collection is meagre.

If a plural noun ends in -s, add only an apostrophe after the -s:

- The cats' toys were scattered around the yard. [more than one cat]
- The cat's toys were scattered around the yard. [one cat]

If a plural noun ends in -es, add an apostrophe:

- The Joneses' sprawling estate covers three blocks.

PRONOUNS

A pronoun replaces a noun phrase, other pronouns, or other words functioning as a noun in a sentence. The word or group of words that a pronoun replaces or refers to is called the **antecedent** of the pronoun

- The dog [subject / antecedent] is old. He [pronoun referring to the antecedent] walks slowly.

There are several types of pronouns: personal pronouns, possessive pronouns, intensive and reflexive pronouns, relative pronouns, interrogative pronouns, demonstrative pronouns, and indefinite pronouns.

Personal Pronouns are those that refer to specific people or things.

- I, he, she, we, us, they.

Possessive Pronouns indicate ownership.

- My, mine, your, our, theirs.

Intensive pronouns emphasize a noun or another pronoun. **Reflexive pronouns** look the same as intensive pronouns but serve a different function. They name a receiver of an action.

- myself, herself, ourselves, yourself

Relative Pronouns introduce subordinate clauses and function as adjectives.

Interrogative Pronouns introduce questions.

Demonstrative Pronouns point out specific persons, places, things or ideas.

- that, those, this, these.

Indefinite Pronouns refer to non-specific people or things.

- all, both, any, few, everyone, each, nobody, some, several, neither.

Pronoun tips

Collective nouns should be used as singular unless they are obviously plural.

- The jury gave its verdict. [Not “their” verdict.]

Some antecedents sound plural but are actually singular, e.g., each, every, everyone.

- Everyone needs to clean off his or her [not “their”] desk.

Make sure the antecedent is clear.

- When she set the picture on the glass table, *it* broke.
[Did the picture or the table break? “It” is ambiguous.]

If you are unsure which pronoun to use, try omitting the antecedent.

- We/Us workers would like to have more breaks.
[It is logical to say, “We would” instead of “Us would.”]

VERBS

A verb expresses an action, describes an occurrence, or establishes a state of being.

- Jason *kicked* the football.
- A hush *descended* on the crowd.
- Jill *was* serious.

The **principal parts** of verbs are the different forms that verbs take depending on how they are used in a sentence. For example, take the verb “escape.”

- **base form or infinitive:** to escape
- **past tense:** escaped
- **present participle:** (am/is/are/etc.) escaping
- **past participle:** escaped

Verbs need to agree with their subjects in number (singular or plural) and in person (first, second, or third).

- A pencil, a backpack, and a notebook were issued to each student.
- The direction of the three plays is the topic of my talk.
[The subject is “direction,” not “plays.”]
- Beside the house stand sheds filled with tools.
[The subject is “sheds,” not “house.”]

Tenses in a verb help to show when the action expressed by a verb takes place. The three simple tenses are the present tense, past tense, and future tense. **Present tense** occurs now or is ongoing. **Past tense** expresses an action or situation that was started and finished in the past. Most past tense verbs end in -ed (e.g., completed, fished, ended).

Irregular verbs have special past tense forms that must be memorized (e.g., wrote, led, broke). **Future tense** expresses an action or situation that will occur in the future. This tense is formed by using will/shall with the simple form of the verb (“We will have a grammar quiz”) or the progressive form (“We are going to have a grammar quiz”).

There are three **verb aspects**: indefinite (or simple = “He reads the book”); complete (or perfect = “He has read the book”); and continuing (or progressive = “He is reading the book”).

There are also three **verb moods**: indicative (makes statements, asks questions); imperative (requests, commands); and subjunctive (presents a hypothetical or conditional event).

Linking verbs such as “to be” are the verbal equivalent of an equals sign in math:

- The house is green.
- She seems angry.

Some verbs in English never take a complement; they are known as **intransitive verbs**.

- Ken smiled.
- Monica slept.

Some verbs always take a complement; they are known as **transitive verbs**.

- Denny raised . . . ?

[This is a **fragment**, an incomplete sentence.]

The sentence will not make sense until we find out what noun completes the meaning begun by the subject and predicate.

A **phrasal verb** is a phrase construction made up of a verb plus an adverbial particle or a preposition.

- The parents called on the teacher.
- He looked up the number.

ADJECTIVES

Adjectives describe, modify, or limit the meaning of nouns or pronouns.

- Josh threw the yellow ball.
- We caught several sunfish last weekend.
- Carol tried hard to win that race.

[“That” describes the particular race.]

Adjectives can also function as pronouns.

- Shelia bought *her* first car yesterday.
- The Smiths saw *their* dreams crumble when they were denied a mortgage.

Besides modifying a meaning, adjectives can be used to compare items, e.g., tall, taller, tallest.

- Our graduating class this year is smaller than last year’s class.
[This is called a **comparative adjective**.]
- Our graduating class this year is the biggest ever.
[When we say something is the most or the least, we use a **superlative adjective**.]

The **articles** *a*, *an*, and *the* precede nouns or other words that come before a noun. A **definite article** (“the”) is used before singular and plural nouns that refer to a particular member of a group.

- The cat on the mat is calico.

[“The” refers to a specific cat.]

An **indefinite article** (“a, an”) is used before singular nouns that refer to any member of a group.

- An antelope is a mammal.

[“An” refers to antelope in general.]

When a word begins with a **vowel sound**, use “an” instead of “a.”

ADVERBS

Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, other adverbs, or entire clauses. Many adverbs end in -ly, except for “always,” “never,” “very,” and “well.” The most commonly used adverb is “not.” Adverbs can be derived from adjectives by adding the suffix -ly to the adjective.

Common adverbs using -ly

- beautifully, strangely, cleverly, respectfully

Remember that an -ly alone does not make the word an adverb. Some adjectives also end in -ly such as “friendly” and “lovely.”

Conjunctive adverbs show a relationship between two independent clauses (complete sentences). When they combine two sentences, they require a semicolon and a comma. Some examples are *accordingly, furthermore, thus, and however*.

- I always brush my teeth; therefore, I have no cavities.

The location of an adverb in a sentence can change the overall rhythm and emphasis dramatically. As often and carefully as possible, place an adverb or adjective directly beside the word it modifies. (The ordering of words, phrases, and clauses in a sentence is called **syntax**.)

CONJUNCTIONS

Conjunctions join words, phrases, or clauses within a sentence. They illustrate a relationship between the elements that are being joined. *For, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so* are **coordinating conjunctions**. These are conjunctions of two grammatically equal elements such as two nouns or two clauses. This can also be remembered through the acronym

FANBOYS.

- I'll have both a slice of pizza and a calzone!
- She pressed the gas pedal to the floor, for she couldn't miss her flight.
[We may use “for” + comma to join two independent clauses into one sentence.]

Correlative conjunctions come in pairs such as *either...or, neither...nor, not only...but also*. These conjunctions also connect two equal grammatical elements.

- I will have either pho or pizza for dinner.

After, although, as if, because, even though, once, in order that, and rather than are common **subordinating conjunctions**.

- Although I would rather party tonight, I will go to the library instead.

PREPOSITIONS

Prepositions show relationships between or among objects or other parts of the sentence.

- about, above, after, along, among, as, before, behind, below, beside, between, by, despite, during, for, in, into, like, of, onto, opposite, over, past, regarding, since, with, according to, except for, in front of, next to, as well as, instead of, due to, in spite of, because of, with regard to

Prepositional phrases begin with a preposition and most often end with a noun. The noun is called the “object of the preposition.”

Prepositional phrases

- under the stars
- along the busy highway
- from her to me [two prepositional phrases here]
- at home without a worry [two prepositional phrases here]

Note that these are **phrases**, having a preposition plus an object, which distinguishes them from **clauses**, which always have both a subject and verb.

INTERJECTIONS

An interjection literally means “thrown in between” from the Latin *inter* (“between”) and *iacere* (“throw”). It expresses emotion and is capable of standing alone or of interrupting a sentence.

- Ugh! Wow! Oh! Hey! Daaaang! Woohoo! Well . . . Um . . .
(and profanity)

7.4 Active and Passive Voices

Voice has two meanings in writing. One meaning is stylistic: the writer’s personality and attitude. The other meaning is grammatical, including the active and passive voices. In the **active voice**, the subject performs the action. The subject of an active-voice construction is known as an **agent**.

Active examples

- The student finished the exercise.
- John Henry drove spikes of steel into the tracks.
- I broke the vase.

In the **passive voice**, the subject receives the action. The subject of a passive-voice construction is known as a **patient**. The tense and subject-verb agreement are always shown through the **auxiliary verb** “to be.” The **main verb** is always the **past participle**. The subject of the active voice sentence can be included in a prepositional phrase with “by.”

Passive examples

- The exercise was finished by the student.
- Spikes of steel were driven into the tracks by John Henry.
- The vase was broken.
[Notice how this passive constructions allows me to evade responsibility.]

Converting an active-voice clause to a passive-voice clause may not change technical meaning, but it shifts **emphasis** as well as the **connotation** (the feeling or sentiment of the text).

Emphasizing the agent

- Shakespeare wrote *Hamlet*.

Emphasizing the patient

- *Hamlet* was written by Shakespeare.

Note that research studies are usually described in the passive voice. Research is intended to be objective, without the biases of the researchers conducting the experiments.

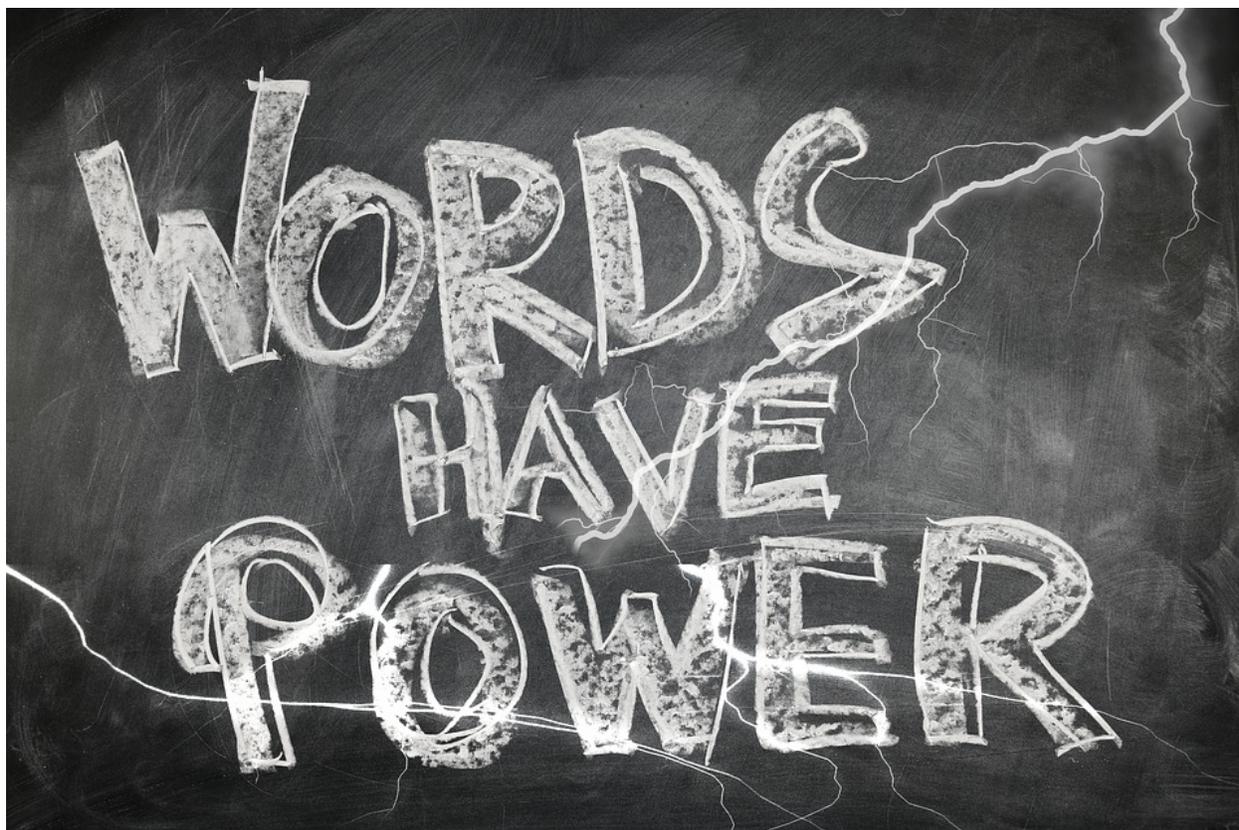
Active research voice

- I collected samples from the subjects.

Passive research voice

- Samples were collected from the subjects.
[This sounds more objective and scientific, and less personal.]

8 Common Grammar Errors



Pixabay image reads "Words have power."

8.1 Fragments

8.2 Run-on / Fused Sentences

Combination Options

8.3 Pronoun Case

Subject and Object

Comparisons

8.4 Agreement

Subject-verb

Antecedent-pronoun

8.5 Modifiers

Dangling

Misplaced

Squinting

8.6 Parallelism

8.7 Improper Tense Shifts

8.8 Capitalization

8.9 Commonly Confused Words

8.1 Fragments

A fragment is a sentence error; it is an incomplete piece, like a shard of a broken vase. However, we often use fragments when talking, emailing, and texting. They save time and space and sound natural. Advertisements frequently use them to draw attention to key concepts. In academic writing, however, all but the most occasional use of fragments is considered inappropriate; fragments are too folksy and colloquial.

Fragments

- Although you would like to...
- Picked up the cigarette...
- To clean your room...
- Whereas I had already arrived...
- Here!

Read your work aloud. Listen for any sentences that leave you hanging, as if you want to say, “Well, now what? Go on, finish!” Try reading the following paragraph out loud and seeing if you can pick out the fragments—the sentences that leave you hanging.

First draft with fragments

- Getting published is simultaneously one of the most exhilarating and taxing goals writers can set for themselves. Calling for equal parts patience and persistence.[fragment] It is often a team effort among several players. Such as, the writer, an agent, friends, and peers who will edit and respond to the work, and previously published writers who can provide advice.[fragment] Another tension writers must negotiate when pursuing publication is audience appeal and personal integrity to one’s work. What is often called “being true to oneself.”[fragment] Because getting published calls on writers to be flexible yet unique at the same time.[fragment]

Fixing fragments is usually a matter of (a) hooking the fragment to the sentence before or after it, often using a comma, colon, or dash; (b) adding the missing actor (noun) or action (verb); (c) fleshing out the thought.

Second draft with fragments corrected

- Getting published is simultaneously one of the most exhilarating and taxing goals writers can set for themselves, calling for equal parts patience and persistence. It is often a team effort among several players, such as the writer, an agent, peers who will edit and respond to the work, and previously published writers who can provide advice. Another tension writers must negotiate when pursuing publication is audience appeal and personal integrity--what is often called “being true to oneself.” Because getting published calls on writers to be flexible yet unique at the same time, it can be the most challenging yet rewarding experience writers undertake.

8.2 Run-on or Fused Sentences

While a **run-on sentence**, also known as a **fused sentence**, might seem to be a type of sentence that goes on and on without a clear point, the technical grammatical definition of a run-on sentence is one that fuses or “runs together” two or more independent clauses (basically, clauses that express a complete thought and could stand on their own as full sentences) without correct punctuation to connect them. Run-ons may have nothing between them, or they may have a coordinating conjunction (and, or, nor, but, for, so yet) between them but not the comma that needs to accompany the coordinating conjunction.

SIX OPTIONS FOR FIXING RUN-ONS AND COMMA SPLICES

Once you find a run-on sentence and notice where the two independent clauses collide, you can decide how to separate the clauses:

1. You may make two separate sentences by inserting a **period**. This is the strongest level of separation.
2. You may use a **semicolon** between the two clauses if they are of equal importance; you will want your reader to consider the two parts together.

3. You may use a **semicolon with a transition word** to indicate a specific relation between the two clauses; in addition, the transition word needs to be followed by a comma.
4. You may use a **coordinating conjunction and a comma**, for FANBOYS is a primary method of connecting two sentences into one.
5. You may add a **subordinating conjunction** to one clause to make it dependent.
6. You may use a **participial phrase** to shorten and connect two sentences.

The sentences below are examples of run-on (fused) sentences. Can you locate the place in each sentence where the run-on happens?

Run-ons

- Every day, millions of children go to daycare with millions of other kids there is no guarantee that none of them are harboring infectious conditions. [No, this is a run-on!]
- Many daycare centers have strict rules about sick children needing to stay away until they are no longer infectious but enforcing those rules can be very difficult. [No, r.o. again!]
- Daycare providers often undergo extreme pressure to accept a sick child “just this once” the parent has no other care options and cannot miss work. [No, argh!]

Corrected

- Every day, millions of children go to daycare with millions of other kids. There is no guarantee that none are harboring infectious conditions.
- Many daycare centers have strict rules about sick children needing to stay away until they are no longer infectious; however, enforcing those rules can be very difficult.
- Many daycare centers have strict rules about sick children needing to stay away until they are no longer infectious, but enforcing those rules can be very difficult.

- Daycare providers often undergo extreme pressure to accept a sick child “just this once” because the parent has no other care options and cannot miss work.

MISSING COMMA RUN-ON ERROR

Independent clauses in compound sentences are joined with coordinating conjunctions, or FANBOYS (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, and so) plus a comma. If you do not include a comma, then you have written a fused or run-on sentence.

Missing comma run-ons

- A dog barks but a cat meows.
- The mayor’s office is downtown and the police department is next to it.
- Punctuation can be tricky yet it is worth the effort to learn it.

Corrected

- A dog barks, but a cat meows.
- The mayor’s office is downtown, and the police department is next to it.
- Punctuation can be tricky, yet it is worth the effort to learn it.

8.3 Pronoun Case

Be sure to use the correct pronoun case in your writing. Decide whether the pronoun you want to use serves the function of a subject or object in the sentence. **Subject pronouns** include *I, you, he, she, it, we, you, they, who, whoever* (etc.). **Object pronouns** include *me, you, him, her, it, us, you, them, whom, whomever* (etc.).

Wrong pronoun case

- His mother and *him* were arguing. [No, wrong case!]
- My husband and *me* love to go shopping for new clothes. [No, case error again!]
- The sarcastic professor seemed to be criticizing my friend John and *I*. [No, argh!]

Correct pronoun case

- His mother and *he* were arguing.
- My husband and *I* love to go shopping for new clothes.
- The sarcastic professor seemed to be criticizing my friend John and *me*.
- It is she at the gate!
[You wouldn't say, "Her is at the gate!"]
- It is I on the phone!
[You wouldn't say, "Me is on the phone!"]
- The winner of the contest will be the person *who* guesses the number of jelly beans in the jar.
- You are the person *whom* I love most in all of Orange County.
- She gave the tickets to *him* and *me*.
[Not "She gave the tickets to *he* and *I*."]]

COMPARISONS

Should you write, "Anna is taller than I" or "Anna is taller than me"? Here's the logic: the sentence actually continues after the pronoun at the end.

This construction is called **elliptical**. The full sentence should read "Anna is taller than I am" (instead of "taller than me am"), but we cut off the "am" at the end to make the sentence simpler.

Sample comparisons

- The Blazers are better than they.
[You wouldn't say, "The Blazers are better than them are."]
- Our dog, Foxy, is smarter than he.
[Again, you wouldn't say, "Our dog is smarter than him is"; you're just shortening the expression "Our dog is smarter than he is" to "Our dog is smarter than he."]
- Irene is taller than she.
[You'd say, "Irene is taller than she (is)" rather than "Irene is taller than her is."]

8.4 Agreement: Subject-Verb and Antecedent-Pronoun

SUBJECT-VERB AGREEMENT

There are easy ways to spot the **subject** of a sentence: 1) Find the verb and ask, “Who or what is performing this act?” 2) Cross out all prepositional phrases. These simple tasks should lead you right to the subject of the sentence.

- Characteristics [subject] of the middle child often include [verb] a balanced temperament and high feelings of security and self-esteem.
- The opportunity cost [subject] of loaning out the funds is [verb] usually reflected in the interest rate.
- A certain percentage [subject] of the cars meets [verb] stricter standards.

Two or more singular nouns joined by “and” take a plural verb:

- A relevant **topic** and an **environment** [subjects] of trust **produce** [verb] a lively class discussion.

When two nouns differing in number are joined by “or,” the verb should take the form of the noun closest to it:

- Zoo visitors assume that either the monkey’s **antics** or the handler’s **chagrin** causes [the verb, “causes,” matches its closest subject, “chagrin”] chaos.

ANTECEDENT-PRONOUN AGREEMENT

Pronouns—words such as it, her, them, this, someone, who, him, they, themselves, and herself—replace specific nouns, so you don’t have to keep repeating them. The grammar term to describe the pronoun replacing the noun is antecedent. Like subjects and verbs, pronouns (antecedents) and nouns need to agree as to whether they are singular or plural. They also need to agree in gender—masculine, feminine, or inclusive.

- Every one of the studies indicated ~~their~~ its methodology.
- Neither Jackson nor Juarez believed ~~they~~ he had been represented unfairly.

- Each researcher included a control group with ~~their~~ his or her test group.
- By 1999 the lacrosse team had outgrown ~~their~~ its space.
- Neither a crocodile nor a lion ~~are~~ is a suitable pet.
- Either Ed or Bill ~~are~~ is a plumber.
- Neither that crocodile nor those lions ~~is~~ are suitable pets. [the verb matches its nearest subject / antecedent, “lions”]
- Neither those lions nor that crocodile ~~are~~ is a suitable pet. [the verb matches its nearest subject / antecedent, “crocodile”]

8.5 Dangling, Misplaced, and Squinting Modifiers

A modifier is a word or phrase that qualifies or changes the language beside it. A dangling or misplaced modifier is located improperly within the sentence, leading to confusion about what is being qualified within the sentence. Let’s look at some **dangling modifiers** first.

DANGLING MODIFIERS

Dangling

- Covering most of Minnesota, the illustration showed the glacier that left the state with its thousands of lakes.
[This suggests that an illustration is covering an entire state!]
- Trekking across the desert, fierce winds swirled around the riders.
[This indicates that winds are trekking across the desert, as if on an expedition!]
- First coined in 1980, historian Linda Kerber used the term “Republican motherhood” to describe a phenomenon occurring after the Revolutionary War in which women were encouraged to promote the ideals of liberty and democracy to their children.
[This implies that Linda, a person, was “coined” in 1980]

Corrected

- Covering most of Minnesota, the glacier left the state with its thousands of lakes, as depicted on the illustration.

- Trekking across the desert, the riders were assaulted by fierce winds.
- First coined in 1980, the term “Republican motherhood” was used by historian Linda Kerber to describe a phenomenon occurring after the Revolutionary War in which women were encouraged to promote the ideals of liberty and democracy to their children.

MISPLACED MODIFIERS

A **misplaced modifier**’s referent is present, but as its name implies, the modifier itself is out of place within the sentence, resulting in ambiguity or confusion. Probably the most frequently misplaced modifier is the word “only.” Observe how one sentence mutates as the word “only” is moved around, courtesy of the song “Only the Lonely” by The Motels.

A modifier’s location changes the sentence’s meaning

- It’s like I told you--**only** the lonely can play.
[Only the lonely can play: correct!]
- It’s like **only** I told you--the lonely can play.
[This means “only I” told you.]
- It’s like I told you--the lonely can **only** play.
[This means they can play but do nothing else.]
- It’s like I told you **only**--the lonely can play.
[This means that you’re the only one I told.]

Misplaced

- Eric couldn’t ride his bicycle *with a broken leg*.
[This suggests the bike has a broken leg.]
- The little girl walked the dog *wearing a tutu*.
[Aww, a doggy is wearing a tutu!]
- *Just* don’t stand there.
[“Just” is not beside the word it should modify.]

Corrected

- *With his broken leg*, Eric couldn’t ride his bicycle.
- *Wearing a tutu*, the little girl walked the dog.

- Don't *just* stand there.

SQUINTING MODIFIERS

Unlike a dangling modifier or a misplaced modifier, a **squinting modifier** is placed right next to the word it refers to, but it is also near another word that it might be modifying, which can cause confusion.

Squinting

- Cycling uphill *quickly* strengthens the leg muscles.
- Using modifiers *clearly* will improve your writing.

Corrected

- *Quickly* cycling uphill strengthens the leg muscles.
- or Cycling uphill can *quickly* strengthen the leg muscles.
- *Clearly* using modifiers will improve your writing.
- or Using modifiers will *clearly* improve your writing.

8.6 Parallelism Revisited

As you read in the Sentences to Paragraphs chapter, parallel structure is established when words within a sentence are united by consistent use of grammatical forms. This stylistic element is also referred to as **parallelism** or parallel construction. Lack of parallel structure can disrupt the rhythm of a sentence, leaving it grammatically unbalanced.⁹

Tests for parallelism

1. Do the verbs appear as **infinitives** (*to + verb*) or **gerunds** (*-ing words*), or in present or past tense? (Just be consistent.)
2. Do the nouns or pronouns and their modifiers appear in consistent form?

Not parallel

- The President traveled to several cities *meeting voters, to give speeches, and ask* for campaign funds.

⁹ Use *Parallel Structure*. Provided by Writing Commons. Located at <http://writingcommons.org/index.php/open-text/collaboration/144-common-comments/sentence-construction-541-use-parallel-structure>.

- Dr. Rodriguez challenged his students *to initiate their own learning, be creative problem-solvers, and think independently.*

Parallel

- The President traveled to several cities *meeting voters, giving speeches, and asking for campaign funds.*
[This is parallel; notice the common –ing **suffix**?]
- Dr. Rodriguez challenged his students *to become self-motivated learners, creative problem-solvers, and independent thinkers.*
[This is parallel; all descriptors connect to the verb “to become.”]

8.7 Improper Tense Shifts

The **tense** (past, present, or future time) of your writing should be logical and consistent; indeed, it is connected to parallelism. If you’re writing a memory, then you’d use the past tense; if you’re analyzing a novel, then you’d use the present tense; if you’re writing about potential policy shifts of a newly-elected leader, then you’d write in the future with subjunctive qualifiers (if, would, could, might, etc.).

Incorrect tense shifts

- In February 2003, the Sefton City Council passed an ordinance that limited the number of dogs city residents could keep on their property to three. Several residents objected and formally petitioned the council to repeal the ordinance, but the council upheld it. Their reasoning is that having more than three dogs creates potentially dangerous situations. In November 2004, however, changes in the Council’s membership resulted in the ordinance being repealed.

Correct tense shifts

- In February 2003, the Sefton City Council passed an ordinance that limited the number of dogs city residents could keep on their property to three. Several residents objected and formally petitioned the council to repeal the ordinance, but the

council upheld it. Their reasoning was that having more than three dogs creates potentially dangerous situations. In November 2004, however, changes in the Council's membership resulted in the ordinance being repealed.

8.8 Capitalization

Capitalize nouns that are the unique identification for a particular person, place or thing.

- Dana, Oregon, North America, Green Party

Capitalize the first word of every sentence. Capitalize the main words in the names of books, movies, plays, poems, operas, songs, and radio and television programs.

- *Sons of Anarchy, Wentworth, Mozart in the Jungle*

Capitalize formal titles only when used in front of a name.

- Associate Professor Ken Leighton / Ken Leighton, associate professor; Chancellor John Weispenning

8.9 Commonly Confused Words

The following words are often mistaken for one another.

accept, except

Accept means to receive or get, whereas except means to exclude.

- Macy's accepts all credit cards except the Diner's Club card.

advice, advise

Advice is a noun, a suggestion you make to someone. Advise is a verb, the process of giving advice.

- I liked your advice about the new car, so now I want you to advise me about a new laptop.

affect, effect

Affect is most commonly a verb, usually meaning “influence.” (An easy way to remember this is that “affect” starts with an “a,” as does “action.”) As a noun, it is a psychological term for personal expression, e.g., “She has a flat affect,” meaning she shows no emotion. Effect usually means “result” (cause and effect). “Effect” used as a verb means “bring about a change.”

- The game affected the standings. Its effect was overwhelming.

aid, aide

Aid is a noun meaning “assistance” or a verb meaning “assist.” An aide is a person who serves or offers assistance.

- The aide will aid the victim.

allot, a lot

To allot is to distribute or allocate, whereas a lot means many.

- She allotted one thousand tables for her guests. That’s a lot!

alter, altar

To alter means to change. An altar is a table in a religious ceremony.

- Yes, this Sunday let’s alter the layout of the altar.

brake, break

To brake is to press the brakes or slow down. To break is to sever or shatter.

- Please brake, son, so you don’t break our garage door!

breathe, breath

To breathe is to inhale air, whereas breath is the actual air itself.

- At 10,000 feet above sea level, she breathed from her masking, refreshed by a breath of oxygen at last.

can, could, may, might

Can indicates ability in the present tense; could indicates ability in the past tense. May indicates permission; might indicates possibility. These words are often used interchangeably.

- When I was fourteen, I could dunk a basketball. Now that I'm forty, I can barely touch the net!
- "Bus driver, may I use a restroom soon?" "Yes, you might be able to after we gas up in Nebraska."

compliment, complement

To compliment is to say something nice; a complement completes or matches.

- Mr. Darcy complimented Elizabeth on how her tablecloth complemented her napkins.

dessert, desert

A dessert is a sweet dish after a meal. A desert is a dry, sandy region. To desert means to abandon.

- Blackberry pie is my favorite dessert.
- In *The English Patient*, the hero deserts his lover in the desert.

it's, its

"It's" is a contraction, short for it is (it + is = it's). "Its" is the possessive form of it.

- It's my island! [This is an **allusion** to *Braveheart*.]
- The computer crashed a few minutes ago, and it's done it again.
- Cute puppy! What is its pedigree?

lay, lie

Lay is the action word. Lie is the state of being or a telling someone something untruthful on purpose.

- I will lay the Jane Austen novel on the desk.
- After writing that research project, I plan to lie in bed most of Saturday.
- Jim will probably lie to get out of being punished for breaking the window.

lead, led

To lead is to go first; its past tense is led. Lead is also a metal.

- “Lead the way, Sahel!” “But I led the way last time, and instead of finding gold, we found lead.”

let's, lets

Let's is a contraction of “let + us” and suggests or commands. Lets means permits or rents.

- Let's think about where to go during spring break.
- Grandma lets grandpa make the decision about to whom to let their spare room.

lose, loose

To lose means not to win; loose means not tight.

- The Blazers are going to lose the game because their uniforms are too loose!

moral, morale

A moral is a value or ethic, similar to a principle. Morale is the mood of a group.

- I admire your morals and devotion to the poor, Miss Theresa. You really help the morale of the people of Calcutta.

passed, past

To pass means to go by; past means something happened previously.

- Over the past summer I passed my previous English class due to my impeccable grammar.

principal, principle

A principal is the main or most important one, such as the head of a school. A principle is a rule or code of conduct, similar to a moral.

- The principal wouldn't forsake his principal principle of not using corporal punishment.

quite, quiet

Quite means rather or to a degree. Quiet means silence.

- I'm quite impressed with the quiet students during the exam.

then, than

Then indicates a sequence. Than compares.

- First we went to dinner, and then we went to the show.
- I would rather see even an Adam Sandler comedy than a horror movie.

there, their, they're

There indicates position or location. Their indicates possession. There is a contraction of "they + are."

- They're parking their limousines over there.

to, too, two

To describes a relationship between things. It is also used for an infinitive verb, as in "I live to contemplate grammar." Too describes excess or something in addition. Two is the word you use for the number "2." (Note that it is customary to spell out numbers ten and below, and in this class I ask you to spell out numbers below 100.)

- Matt is going to the doctor.
- I usually eat too many cranberries on Thanksgiving.
- You have two minutes left before class starts.

threw, through

Threw is the past tense of throw. Through means passing from one side to another.

- The Cubs pitcher threw the ball through the catcher's mitt!

versus, verses

Versus indicates opposition. Verses is the plural of verse, as related to poetry.

waste, waist

Waste is squander needlessly. Waist is the middle section of the body.

- Don't waste your healthy waist-line—exercise regularly.

who, whom, who's, whose

Who is used for the subject, whereas whom is for the object. Think of replacing the word "he" with "who" and "him" with "whom." Who's is a contraction (who + is = who's). Whose indicates possession.

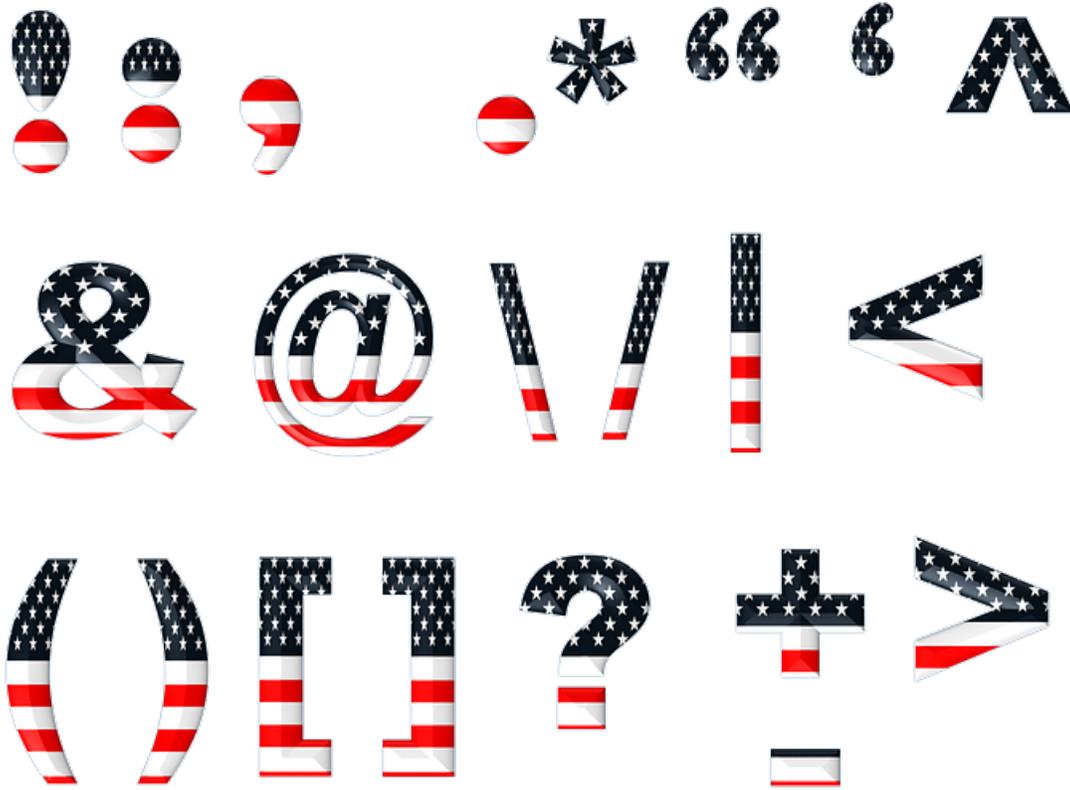
- Who is it? Who is there? (subject)
- Who's going to take out the trash? (contraction)
- With whom will you go? Whom are you bringing? (object)
- Whose line is it, anyway? (possession)

you're, your

You're is a contraction (you + are = you're). Your shows possession.

- You're really going to sell your '65 Mustang convertible?

9 Punctuation Theory



Pixabay image shows punctuation symbols.

[9.1](#) Comma Usage

[9.2](#) Comma Splices

[9.3](#) Disruptive Commas

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9.1 Comma Usage

Let's look briefly at the three most common sentence-combining errors to put them all in context.¹⁰

Correct

- The *Bounty* moored at the dock, and its sailors disembarked.

Incorrect

- Moored at the dock.
[This is a fragment, an incomplete sentence.]
- The *Bounty* moored at the dock its sailors disembarked.
[This is a run-on or fused sentence.]
- The *Bounty* moored at the dock and its sailors disembarked.
[This is a run-on or fused sentence due to improper use of "and."]
- The *Bounty* moored at the dock, its sailors disembarked.
[This is a comma splice.]

In this section we'll focus on commas, which serve several different purposes: join, emphasize, contain, and separate. While there are many different ways to use commas in writing, most comma usages fall into three situations. If you know the basic rule for these three cases, you should be set for comma usage.

Where to place a comma

1. Put a comma before a coordinating conjunction (FANBOYS = for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so) that connects two independent clauses.
 - I wanted to play soccer for my college, but the school had no team.
2. Put a comma after introductory words, phrases, or clauses in a sentence.
 - Although it was a good offer, I felt that I needed to explore other options.

¹⁰ Punctuation content largely courtesy of the *Rhetoric and Composition Wikibook*.

3. Use commas to set off elements that interrupt or add information in a sentence.

- Aaron, my younger brother, round-house kicked me for telling his secrets.

CONNECTING SENTENCES USING A COMMA + FANBOYS

Check out this paragraph, which uses no commas.

- Building consensus ends with synthesis. It begins with analysis. Of course, the ultimate goal is finding commonality. The final product is a single course of action. However, a consensus derives validity only from agreement among the many. The first step in reaching consensus is to survey the different viewpoints involved.

Here's the same paragraph with commas and coordinating conjunctions (FANBOYS).

- Building consensus ends with synthesis, but it begins with analysis. Of course, the ultimate goal is finding commonality, and the final product is a single course of action. However, a consensus derives validity only from agreement among the many, so the first step in reaching consensus is to survey the different viewpoints involved.

As you learned before, two independent clauses joined by just a coordinating conjunction (no comma) or joined by nothing at all is called a **run-on sentence** or a **fused sentence**.

Run-ons

- Several environmental organizations recognized the treaty but few endorsed it.
[This is a run-on sentence; it needs a comma before "but."]
- Internet communities redefine the notion of space they take the concept beyond physical dimensions.
[This is also a run-on; it needs a semicolon before "they."]

Two independent clauses joined by just a comma (no coordinating conjunction) is called a **comma splice**.

- Economists predicted lower personal debt loads resulting from tax cuts, this did not happen.
[This is a comma splice—we cannot join two separate sentences with only a comma. Instead, use a period, semicolon, or comma + FANBOYS.]

COMMAS WITH INTRODUCTORY WORDS AND PHRASES

Introductory words are set off with a comma when the introductory word is a participle, modifies the entire clause following it, or when not including it might lead to misreading. Short prepositional phrases are set off only for purposes of emphasis. Phrases that show inversion in sentence structure can also be followed by a comma.

Introductory commas

- Humiliated, she fled from the diner. [= participle]
- Drunk and angry, Joel burst into the room. [= inverted structure]
- Moreover, several groups actively opposed the treaty. [= modifies entire clause]
- Calling in sick for work, Beth hoped her boss would not suspect anything. [= phrase contains a verbal]
- The stock market falling in Tokyo, Alex called his stock broker. [= absolute phrase]
- Underneath the noses of her parents, Ruth had hoarded three kilograms of cocaine. [= compound prepositional phrase]

No need for commas here

- After school I went to my uncle's house. [= short prepositional phrase]
- Before the parade I want to eat pizza. [= short prepositional phrase]
- By the earthen hearth my mother read to me from Shakespeare. [= short prepositional phrase]

COMMAS WITH CUMULATIVE CLAUSES

Occurring at the end of a sentence, **cumulative clauses** hook up to a main clause and add further information. Using cumulative clauses is a good way to avoid having to use two sentences when one will do.

- Nine senators changed their vote, passing the bill into law.
- Three years of above-average rainfall raised the water table, turning formerly usable fields into wetlands.
- Peers frequently reinforce the behavior, leading it to become an ingrained habit.

COMMAS AND DEPENDENT CLAUSES

A **dependent clause** is a group of words that can't stand on its own as a sentence because it does not express a complete thought.

- Although art and digital graphic arts are separate disciplines...

Dependent clauses, as their name implies, depend on another clause to form a complete sentence. Dependent clauses must be paired with **independent clauses**.

- Although art and digital graphic arts are separate disciplines, they both are relatively recent additions to the college.

DISRUPTIVE COMMAS

A **disruptive comma** is used before a dependent clause that comes after the independent clause. Writers often make this mistake when the dependent clause begins with "because."

- The future of print newspapers appears uncertain, due to rising production costs and the increasing popularity of online news sources.
[There is no need for a comma before "due to."]
- Some argue that print newspapers will never disappear, because of their many readers.
[There is no need for a comma before "because."]

COMMAS AND PARENTHETICAL ELEMENTS

A **parenthetical expression** (think of the word "parenthesis") provides extra information or commentary in the middle of a sentence. Use a pair of commas to set off a parenthetical element.

- The candidate, much to the committee's surprise, voluntarily revealed her positions on several key controversies.
- The question has, incidentally, since become moot.

COMMAS WITH LISTS & MULTIPLE ADJECTIVES

When you use more than one descriptive word (adjective) to describe a noun or pronoun, ask yourself whether the adjectives work independently or build on each other to describe the noun. If multiple adjectives before a noun work independently, use a comma between them. If they work together, don't.

- An open, exploratory, and inclusive spirit marked the meeting. [When three more adjectives are used in a series, always add a comma + "and."]
- A direct, conversational tone made the instructions easy to understand. [There's no need for "and" when there are only two successive adjectives.]

The **Oxford comma** or **serial comma** goes after the second-to-last item in a series of three or more.

- Additional supplies include a burner, beaker[,], and safety goggles.
- The position requires expertise in building consensus, formulating policy[,], and developing long-range goals.
- The English-speaking countries include Dominica, Trinidad[,], and Jamaica.

COMMAS WITH QUOTATIONS

The comma goes inside quotation marks.

- "The ballot is stronger than the bullet," writes Abraham Lincoln.
- "Politics is the art of looking for trouble, finding it everywhere, diagnosing it incorrectly, and applying the wrong remedies," said Groucho Marx.
- "In a time of universal deceit," writes George Orwell, "telling the truth becomes a revolutionary act."

- “When will our consciences grow so tender that we will act to prevent human misery rather than avenge it?” writes Eleanor Roosevelt.

[There’s no comma here due to presence of a question mark.]

Do not use a comma after “that” or “because.”

- Emphasizing the importance of staying in touch with the populace, James Madison wrote that “a popular government without popular information, or the means of acquiring it, is but a prologue to a farce or a tragedy, or both.

[No comma is used after “that.”]

- Participating in a democracy takes a strong stomach because “it requires a certain relish for confusion,” writes Molly Ivins.

[No comma is used after “because.”]

COMMAS IN DATES & PROFESSIONAL TITLES

Use commas to separate the day of the week from the month and to set off a year from the rest of the sentence.

- On Friday, February 13, 2017, we will be having our annual Valentine’s Day dance.

You do not need to use a comma when giving only the month and the year.

- The next presidential election will take place in November 2008.

When following a name with a title, use a comma (if the title is at the end of the sentence) or two (if the title is in the middle of the sentence) to separate the title from the rest of the sentence.

- Sharon Rhew, D.C., practices chiropractic medicine in central Oregon.
- Earnings far exceeded projections last quarter, according to Luke Malone, Vice President for Operations.

Separate city, state, and country with commas.

- Lindy grew up in Pendleton, Oregon, U.S.A.

9.2 Comma Splices

Comma splice is a common punctuation error. It describes two independent clauses (complete sentences) joined improperly by only a comma.

Comma splices

- Many daycares have strict rules about sick children needing to stay away until they are no longer infectious[,] enforcing those rules can be very difficult.
[Bad comma splice! A comma alone cannot connect two separate sentences.]
- Daycare providers often undergo extreme pressure to accept a sick child[,] the parent has no other care options and cannot miss work.
[Wicked comma splice! Instead, use a period, a semicolon, or a comma + conjunction.]

Once you find a comma splice, you can then decide how to connect the clauses correctly.

Correcting a comma splice

1. You can make two complete sentences by inserting a period. This is the strongest level of separation.
2. You can use a semicolon between the two clauses if they are of equal importance; this allows your reader to consider the points together.
3. You can use a semicolon with a transition word to indicate a specific relation between the two clauses; however, use this sparingly.
4. You can use a coordinating conjunction following the comma, for this also will indicate a relationship.
5. Add a word to one clause to make it dependent.

Notice how the previous comma-spliced sentences are punctuated here.

Comma splices removed and corrected

- Daycare providers often undergo extreme pressure to accept a sick child. The parent has no other care options and cannot miss work.
[This separates with a period.]
- Daycare providers often undergo extreme pressure to accept a sick child; the parent has no other care options and cannot miss work.
[This combines with a semicolon.]
- Daycare providers often undergo extreme pressure to accept a sick child; moreover, the parent has no other care options and cannot miss work.
[This combines with a semicolon + comma + conjunctive adverb.]
- Daycare providers often undergo extreme pressure to accept a sick child, for the parent has no other care options and cannot miss work.
[This combines using a comma + FANBOYS.]
- Because the parent has no other care options and cannot miss work, daycare providers often undergo extreme pressure to accept a sick child.
[This uses subordination.]

9.3 Disruptive Commas

Disruptive commas are simply not needed. Don't put a comma between a noun and the action it's doing, even when several words come between them.

- Most organic compounds $\bar{,}$ contain oxygen, nitrogen, and halogens.
[No need for a comma to separate "compounds" from the verb "contain."]
- In the Islamic bayaa ceremony, prominent citizens $\bar{,}$ pledge allegiance to a newly elected leader.

[Again, no need to separate the noun “citizens” from the verb “pledge.”]

- A visit to Coastline Art Gallery’s exhibit on the origins of photography, provided an inspiring start to the class.
[No need for a comma here, either!]

Don’t put a comma before these words unless there is an independent clause on each side.

- The town was first settled in 1865, and incorporated in 1868.
[No need for comma here—the subject “town” simply carries over to the second verb “incorporated.”]
- The study sample was the correct size, but insufficiently diversified. [Same rule!]
- Neil Young was born in Toronto, and returned there after living in L.A. [Same rule!]

Note that if you add an additional subject, creating a compound sentence, then you do need the comma:

- Neil Young was born in Toronto, and he returned there after living in L.A.

Don’t put a comma before a list.

- The neighborhood contains several examples of classic mid-century architecture, including, the Dean Martin, Frank Sinatra, and Kennedy homes.
[No need for any punctuation after “including,” unless you write “including these: ...”]
- The recommended treatment focuses on changes in diet, such as, increased fiber, less fat, and fewer processed foods.
[No comma needed after “such as.”]
- The group of benefits considered standard is made up of, health insurance, disability insurance, and a retirement account.
[No comma needed after “of.”]

9.4 Semicolons

A semicolon “;” generally functions as a period. A semicolon joins two independent clauses within one a sentence without the use of a coordinating conjunction.

- The horse was due for an immunization; the veterinarian administered one today.
[No need for “for,” “and,” “but,” or any other coordinating conjunction when a semicolon is used!]

A semicolon may be used with a conjunctive adverb.

- I must go grocery shopping; however, I must pick up the dry cleaning today.

Semicolons also separate elements of a series when the items are long or when individual segments contain material that also must be set off by commas.

- She leaves a son, Mike Nach, of Arizona; a daughter, Emily Rosa, of Colorado; and a sister, Sara Evans, of Minnesota.

Improper use of the semicolon

- Unless you are coming home before your curfew; don't bother coming home.
[No need for semicolon here—the second part of the sentence isn't a complete idea. Instead, use a comma.]
- My favorite animal is a parakeet; a type of bird.
[Again, a semicolon functions as a period—would you put a period here? Instead, use a comma.]
- I own these cars; a Dodge Stealth, an Acura RSX, and a Geo Storm.
[Semicolons do not set up lists—instead, use a colon “:” here]

9.5 Apostrophes

Apostrophes (') indicate possession.

Possessive apostrophe

- Lena's shoe...
- Jen Davis's bicycle...
[Put -'s after words that end in -s. "Jen Davis' bicycle" without the -'s at the end is incorrect.]
- James's hot house nursery...
- The princess's diary...
- The princesses' diaries...
[Many princesses are here doing lots of journaling!]

Apostrophes also indicate contractions, meaning two words are shortened into one.

Contraction apostrophe

- He's going to grab some carne asada.
[He + is = he's]
- They're = they + are, she's = she + is, etc.

Do not use apostrophes in nouns that are not possessive.

- Some parent's are stricter than mine.
[An apostrophe is not necessary here; there is no possession or contraction. It should read simply "parents."]

Do not use an apostrophe with possessive pronouns such as "its, whose, his, hers, ours, yours, theirs." Remember, "it's" is a contraction for "it is," whereas "its" shows possession already so needs no apostrophe.

- It's raining in Garden Grove!
- The basketball lost its air.

9.6 Quotation Marks

Quotation marks give the original writer or speaker credit for his or her work. If you are **paraphrasing**, you do not need quotation marks. Use quotation marks around the titles of short works such as magazine articles,

poems, short stories, songs, and chapters. Periods and commas should be placed inside the quotation marks unless you provide a citation at the end.

Quotation marks and end punctuation

- She said, “I know what it’s like to be dead.”
[Period goes inside the quotation.]
- She said, “I know what it’s like to be dead” (*Revolver*, “She Said,” 1966).
[Period goes after the citation.]

If you must use a quotation of four or more lines, then you should indent the entire quotation instead of using quotation marks; this is called a **block quotation**. However, this length of quotation is usually unnecessary in freshman comp. Instead, use ellipses (. . .) to remove unnecessary language or choose a shorter, more precise quotation. If your quotation has a quote within it, the inner quote needs ‘one quotation mark’ and the outer quote needs “two quotation marks.”

- John Lennon sang, “She said, ‘I know what it’s like to be dead.’”

USING QUOTATIONS IN YOUR WRITING

A quotation cannot sit by itself on a page. (In Research and Documentation you’ll learn how to affix **in-text citations** or **parenthetical citations** in MLA/APA style to your quotations.) You must always introduce, set up, or lead into a quotation with a **signal phrase**.

- According to economist Dan Spulber, “More money, more problems!”
- Economist Dan Spulber of Northwestern contends, “More money, more problems!”
- Econ professor Dan Spulber argues / believes / claims / denies / disputes / observes / recommends / reports / suggests that “More money results in more problems!”
[Do not place a comma after “that” when setting up a quotation.]

After leading into the quotation, you must then lead out. This is where you interpret, comment on, and analyze the quoted passage. This example

shows in APA style (author, year, page #) how to lead in to a quotation, quote, and lead out.

- In her first book, *Sin and Syntax* (1999), Constance Hale writes that “Some prepositional phrases are more dungeons than closets” (p. 106). With this metaphor she distinguishes dead-end phrases—dungeons—from phrases that might be rehabilitated or emerged from—closets.

Other tips on quoting

- If a quotation is being used with “he said” or “she said,” use a comma after the verb.
- If a quotation is blended into the writer’s sentence, you can use a comma, although no punctuation may be more appropriate.
- If a quotation is used at the beginning of a sentence, use a comma after the quote unless the quote ends in a question mark or exclamation point.
- If you choose to break up the quotation with your own words, use commas to offset the quotation from your explanation.

9.7 Dashes and Hyphens

Dashes mark an interruption within a sentence.

- Three unlikely companions—a canary, an eagle, and a parrot—flew by my window in an odd flock.

A **hyphen** joins two parts of a compound word.

- deep-blue water, good-tasting hamburger, happy-faced child, governor-elect, twenty-five, half-baked, self-esteem

Hyphens can also be used to make compound words more understandable.

- man-eating dog
[It’s a ferocious dog!]
- man eating dog

[A man is eating a dog?!]

- flaming-red pickup truck
[A truck is painted a bright red color.]
- flaming red pickup truck
[A red pickup truck is on fire!]

9.8 Parentheses

Parenthesis show additional details or “side comments.”

- Be sure to call me (extension 2104) when you get this message.

Parenthesis show sources in citations.

- Copyright affects how regulation is enforced (Lessig, 2014, p. 37).
[This is an example of an APA citation.]

When putting parenthesis around a complete sentence, the period goes inside the parenthesis.

- Parachuting?! I’d totally to do that any time! (Having said that, I doubt I’d ever do it.)
[Note that the parenthesis function as an **aside** or side comment here.]

9.9 Colons

Colons set up a list, quotation, or definition.

CORRECT USE OF COLONS

Purpose	Example
List	I have three sisters: Katie, Kellie, and Mary.

Purpose	Example
List, cont'd	A delish sandwich requires several ingredients: bread, butter, cheese, ham, and tomatoes.
Appositive	My mom has three pets: two cats and a dog.
Definition	There was only one possible explanation: the train had never arrived.
Quotation	In the words of Homer: "Doh!"
Between independent clauses	Life is like a box of chocolates: you never know what you're going to get.
Introduction of a definition	Hypernym of a word: a word having a wider meaning than the given one.
After salutation	Dear Sir or Madam:
In a dialogue	Patient: Doctor, I feel like a pair of curtains. Doctor: Pull yourself together!
Separation of title from subtitle	<i>Star Wars Episode IV: A New Hope</i>
Separation of the chapter and the verse numbers of religious scriptures	John 3:14–16 (or John III:14–16) <i>Qur'an</i> , Sura 5:18
Separation within time of the day	The concert finished at 23:45. This file was last modified today at 11:15:05.

Table Ch. 9.9a Correct use of colons

INCORRECT USE OF COLONS

Purpose	Example
Between a verb and its object	Some important computer programs are: Word, Excel, and Publisher. [Do not use a colon after a verb; remove it.]

Purpose	Example
Between verb and object, cont'd	A sandwich requires: bread, butter, cheese, ham, and tomatoes. [Again, no colon after a verb; remove it]
Between a preposition and its object	My cars of choice consist of: Honda Accord and Ford GT. [No colon after a preposition such as "of," either.]
After "such as," "including," or "for example"	I dig blues artists such as: Howling Wolf and Robert Johnson. [No need for colon after "such as"; delete it.]

Table Ch. 9.9b Incorrect use of colons

9.10 Punctuation and Grammar Exercises

Choose the correct option. Answers appear at the bottom of the page. For a comprehensive list of punctuation and grammar exercises and quizzes, visit http://grammar.ccc.commnet.edu/grammar/quiz_list.htm.

EXERCISES

Is the sentence a run-on (RO), fragment (F), comma splice (CS), or correct (C)?

- Laila is helpful Martha is productive.
- Laila is helpful and Martha is productive.
- While Laila is helpful. Whereas Martha is productive.
- Laila is helpful; Martha is productive.
- Laila is helpful, and Martha is productive.
- Laila is helpful, Martha is productive.
- Because Laila is so helpful.
- Laila is helpful, however, Martha is productive.
- Laila is helpful; however, Martha is productive.
- Martha is productive because Laila is so helpful.

Which apostrophes are placed correctly?

- (It's / Its / Its') a lovely day, isn't it, ('mam / ma'am)?

2. (Poison's / Poisons' / Poisons) *Look What the Cat Dragged In* is my fave (80's / '80s) album.
3. Seung-min (possesses / possess's / possesses') more brain-power than (our's / ours / ours') combined.
4. (James' / James's / Jameses') Oldsmobile was left at the (Davis' / Davis's / Davises') residence.
5. (Fatens' / Faten's / Fatens) brother, Aamir, is at Dr. (Harrises' / Harris's / Harris') wedding.
6. (Childrens' / Children's / Childrens) clothing is on the second floor, and (womens' / women's / womens) attire is on the third floor.
7. That (city's / cities' / citys') lost (it's / its / its') bid to host the Olympics.
8. My (finger's/fingers'/fingers) were tired after jamming with The Rolling (Stones/Stones'/Stone's) song "Moonlight Mile."
9. I looked out (your / you're / yours) window to see the (trees' / tree's / trees) colorful leaves.
10. Kullnat (would'nt / wouldn't / wont' / won't) hesitate to say (hes' / his / he's) a genius!

Which subjects-verbs and pronouns-antecedents agree?

1. Ken as well as Janelle (is / are) going to see Fleetwood Mac. Ken and Janelle (is / are) also going to see Ry Cooder.
2. Somebody has forgotten (their / his or her) iPhone. Everyone forgets (his or her / their) belongings at some point!
3. None of the players (has / have) practiced (his / their) free-throws so far.
4. Either my aunts or my sister (is / are) meeting us for coffee, but neither of the two coffee shops (is / are) open. Afterward, either my sister or my aunts (is / are) driving back to Tennessee.
5. Each person (is / are) expected to do (their / his or her) best.

Dangling, misplaced modifier (MM) or correct (C)?

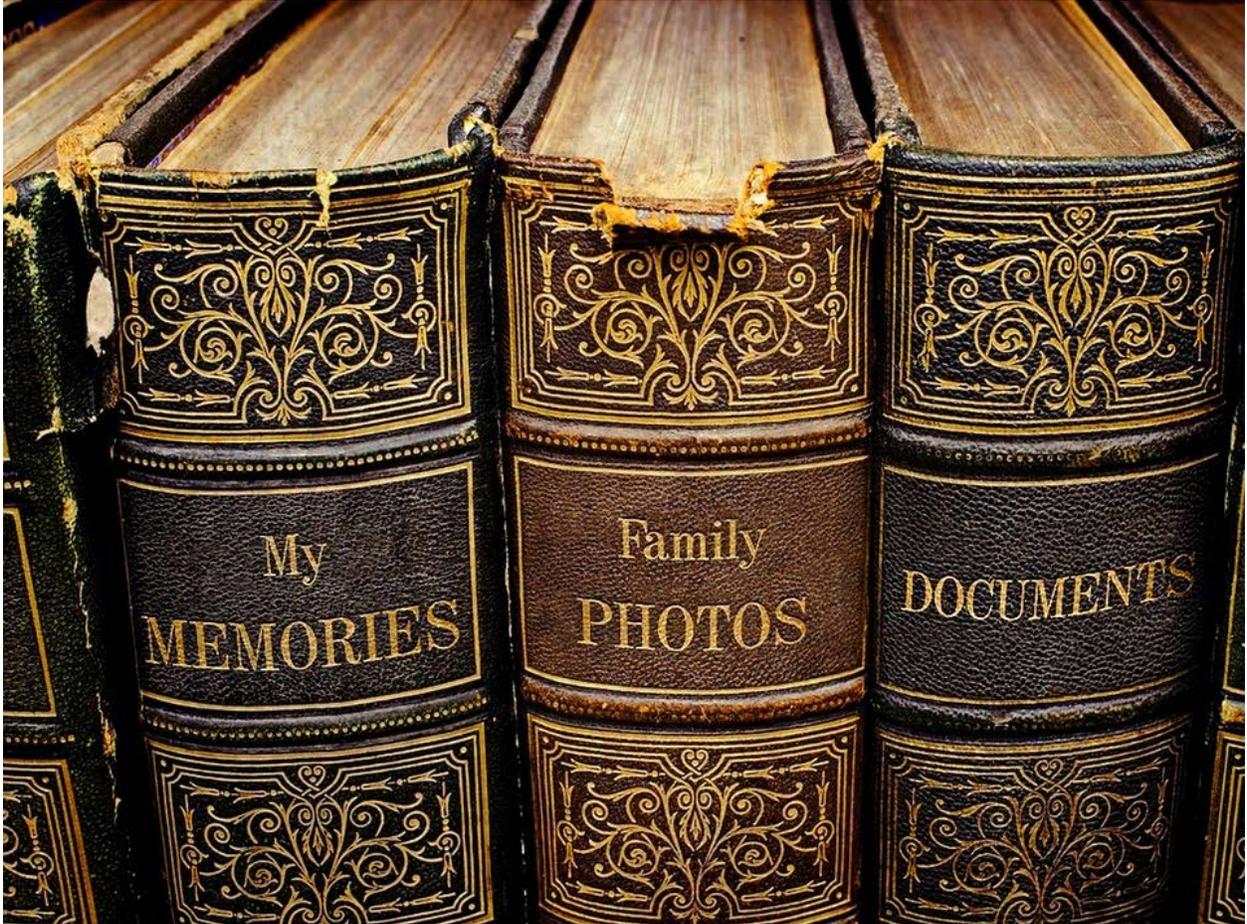
1. Drinking lustily from his flagon of mead, glances were cast at the king.
2. Drinking lustily from his flagon of mead, the king's court glanced at him.

3. Drinking lustily from his flagon of mead, the king endured glances from his court.
4. According to my palm reader, I've only been born twice before.
5. According to my palm reader, I've been born only twice before.

ANSWERS

- | | | |
|-------|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| 1. RO | 1. It's, ma'am | 1. is, are |
| 2. RO | 2. Poison's, '80s | 2. his or her, his or her |
| 3. F | 3. possesses, ours | 3. has + his OR have + their |
| 4. C | 4. James's, Davises' | 4. is, is, are |
| 5. C | 5. Faten's, Harris's | 5. is, his or her |
| 6. CS | 6. Children's, women's | |
| 7. F | 7. city's, its | |
| 8. CS | 8. fingers, Stones' | 1. MM |
| 9. C | 9. your, trees' OR tree's | 2. MM |
| 10. C | 10. wouldn't OR won't, he's | 3. C |
| | | 4. MM |
| | | 5. C |

10 Research and Documentation



Pixabay image shows weathered, leather-bound books.

10.1 Credible Sources

Discovery

ADAM

10.2 Originality

10.3 Citing Sources

MLA

APA

10.4 Bibliography

MLA

APA

10.5 Format

MLA

APA

10.1 Credible Sources

Audience, purpose, and argument should be considered since they affect how sources are evaluated. For example, Phillip Morris (a tobacco company and cigarette marketing giant) has a web site that touts the company's programs to curb smoking among young people. Obviously, that source can be considered biased. You must ask yourself whether its program is effective and whether the content of the site can be trusted. Should you never use that source? It depends on what side of the argument is going to be supported in your research project. Many assignments will ask you to acknowledge the other side of the argument, so be sure to research your topic thoroughly and from many angles. A paper that is based solely on your opinion will likely require much less research than one that covers a highly scientific subject.

DISCOVERING RELIABLE SOURCES

Primary sources include original documents created by an author or group of authors such as historical documents, literary works, or lab reports. They also include any field research you conduct on your own such as interviews, experiments, or surveys. **Secondary sources** are sources written about primary sources and include scholarly books and articles, reviews, biographies, and textbooks.

The author of the source will always be an important consideration, as your view of the quality of the article may change depending upon the author's **credibility**. In addition, you must ask yourself whether your source is scholarly. The ability to locate and discern credible sources is called **information literacy**. You must also be aware of the author's possible biases. Even the most credible sources may exhibit forms of bias, as most authors' past experiences will come into play. **Bias** is most likely to occur in controversial topics such as politics or religion, but it is still likely to be present whenever an opinion is voiced. The author's beliefs and experiences can thus affect the objectivity of the text.

Another case may be when the author or publisher has ties to a special interest group that may allow him or her to see only one side of the issue.

Lastly, make sure to evaluate how fairly the author treats the opposing viewpoints. Complete **objectivity** is very difficult to attain in writing, but try to find sources that are not **subjective**. Nonetheless, the most important thing is simply to be aware of possible biases so that you are not misled.

EVALUATING SOURCES

There are a number of academic databases that provide credible sources. These sites generally require some form of a subscription in order to access them; however, most colleges provides complimentary access to students. Once logged into the site, users are able to search and sort the articles by criterion such as date, subject, author, and more importantly, whether or not they have been peer reviewed and are scholarly. Examples of these sites include EBSCO, JSTOR, and ProQuest; these links can be found through a college's Online Library link.

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

When assessing print or web-based sources, the quickest way to evaluate reliability is to remember the acronym ADAM.

ADAM

Age

How old is this source? For almost every topic, search for the most current sources that can be found.

Depth

Does the source go in-depth, or does it just skim over the surface? Does it feature the many details and long discussions that are expected from academic sources, or does it seem to cover just the main ideas? Always

use substantive sources. Is it a scholarly journal or magazine, or did you find it beside romance novels at a newsstand at LAX?

Author

Who is the author? What is known about his/her qualifications? Is he/she really an expert? Can any bias be seen? What is his/her purpose? What are his or her professional affiliations? Who is the publisher? For example, *The Los Angeles Times* is considered politically progressive, while its neighbor *The Orange County Register* is considered libertarian. Books published by a university press undergo significant editing and review to increase their validity and accuracy. When assessing a book published by a commercial publisher, be aware of vanity presses (companies that authors pay to publish their works, rather than vice versa).

Money

Follow the money. Is the source coming from a place that's trying to "sell" something? Is there advertising where this source appears that might affect what will be printed?

10.2 Originality

(See also the Academic Honesty and Plagiarism sections at the start of this book.) After using other sources to gain information for a report or paper, you might decide to use that information in your paper. If the ideas expressed in your paper are not your original thoughts, you must **cite** where you obtained that information. If you do not cite where you obtained your information, you are **plagiarizing**. Copying and pasting from multiple sources, slightly modifying the language, and passing off the work as your own is called **patchwork plagiarism** or **patch-writing**. Using and correctly citing outside sources is crucial to writing ethics. It also shows that you are a thoughtful writer who takes this work or subject seriously, who respects the hard work of others, and who contemplates the intricacies of research and discovering truth. (Again, as general rule, your Similarity Score or Originality Score should not exceed 15 to 20%.)

The most common forms of citation are direct quotations, summarizing, and paraphrasing. After a direct quote or at the end of a summarized or paraphrased thought, you should cite the author and page number of your source. Information on how to cite sources can be found in the section below. If you are using other sources in your report and are unsure whether or not you need to use citations, it is better to be safe than sorry, so cite the information.

The two most common style guides for citations are MLA (Modern Language Association) and APA (American Psychological Association). Each is specific to the field in which the research is done. For example, if you are researching for a psychology class, it is most likely going to be cited in APA format. On the other hand, MLA is used in the liberal arts and humanities fields. The essay instructions in this class will specify the style guide.

10.3 Citing Sources

The specific details of how to cite sources are prescribed in various style guides. One of the most common writing systems in English courses is The Modern Language Association (MLA) style of writing. Most students learn first how to write using the MLA format in elementary school. Another very common writing system frequently used by the social sciences is the American Psychological Association (APA) format.

MLA PARENTHETICAL (IN-TEXT) CITATIONS

In-text citations, also called **parenthetical citations**, inform your reader where you found the data or quotation. In MLA you should include the author's or editor's name and the page number in your parenthetical citation: (Jones 127). If you are only using a single source which is already identified elsewhere in the text, simply use the page number.

- Hemingway repeatedly reported of the natural beauty that would be destroyed by exploring for oil in Alaska (Booth 216). Later that year, Hemingway went on to request, and to be

granted, an audience with the President where he shared a multitude of research against drilling (Goodview 98).

You may also mention the author's name within the text rather than in a parenthetical citation.

- According to Booth, Hemingway repeatedly reported of the natural beauty that would be destroyed by exploring for oil in Alaska (216). Goodview reports that later that year Hemingway went on to request, and to be granted, an audience with the President where he shared a multitude of research against drilling (98).

APA PARENTHETICAL (IN-TEXT) CITATIONS

APA citations are similar to MLA's, though in APA you also include the publication date: (Jones, 2010, p. 127).

- In a 1949 visit to members of Congress, Hemingway repeatedly reported of the natural beauty that would be destroyed by exploring for oil in Alaska (Booth, 2000, p. 216). Later that year, Hemingway went on to request, and to be granted, an audience with the President where he shared a multitude of research against drilling (Goodview, 1998, p. 98).

You may also mention the author's name within the text.

- According to Booth (2000), Hemingway's arguments against oil drilling in Alaska continued to intensify in his later life. In a 1949 visit to members of Congress, Hemingway repeatedly reported of the natural beauty that would be destroyed by exploring for oil in Alaska (p. 216). Goodview (1998) notes that Later that year Hemingway went on to request, and to be granted, an audience with the President where he shared a multitude of research against drilling (p. 98).

If you need to cite two authors of the same work who are mentioned within the text, use both their last names and separate it with "and."

- According to Chandler and Goodview (2004), Hemingway's arguments against oil drilling in Alaska continued to intensify in

his later life. In a 1949 visit to members of Congress, Hemingway repeatedly reported of the natural beauty that would be destroyed by exploring for oil in Alaska (p. 216).

If you do not mention the two authors' names within the text, you do so in parenthesis using an ampersand (&) instead of the word "and."

- Hemingway's arguments against oil drilling in Alaska continued to intensify in his later life. In a 1949 visit to members of Congress, Hemingway repeatedly reported of the natural beauty that would be destroyed by exploring for oil in Alaska (Chandler & Goodview, 2004, p. 216).

If you do not know the author's name, use a portion of the article or book title instead. Titles of articles are placed within quotation marks. Book and report titles are italicized or underlined.

- Hemingway's arguments against oil drilling in Alaska continued to intensify in his later life ("Hemingway's battle for Alaska," 2001).

10.4 Bibliography

The list sources goes at the end of your paper into a bibliography section. A full identification of a source usually includes the year of publication, authors, title of the work, publishing organization, and location. In MLA, you do this on your **Works Cited** page. To write your MLA works cited list, follow the model below. Note that article titles go in quotation marks, whereas names of books do not.

MLA Works Cited sample

Works Cited

Allyn, Fredrick. *The Effect of Monopolies on Economies Throughout the World*. Hartford: Wilmington UP, 1998.

Collier, Sally, Sharon Pat, and Stephanie Quake. *Capitalism: the Good and*

- the Bad. New York: Barton, 2003.
- Fey, C. Jean, ed. *The New Deal Today*. Milwaukee: Wisconsin UP, 2004.
- Rogers, Kent. "Do We Really Want to Raise the Minimum Wage." *Economic Realities in Today's Global Economy*. 2005.
<http://warathome.org/soundpolicies/review>. Accessed 2 May 2016.
- Tift, Mary. *How Did We Get Here: Economic Analysis of Carter through G.W.* Minneapolis: Dunkday, 2005.
- Urbanski, Jenny and Helen Carter. *How We Continue Competing*. Chicago: Tribune, 2003.

APA References sample

References

- Creakly, P. (2008). *Whatever you said is true: Unless you are lying*. New York: Penguin.
- Tresure, J. C., S. Kuepers, & J. Edward. (2000). How to determine whether people are lying to you by watching their eyes. *Human Behavior*, 22(16), 24-64.
- Wertjes, A. (2007). Facts on finding truth. Retrieved January 21, 2008, from <http://freedinformationforall.com>

10.5 MLA and APA Formats

Essays in MLA style should be formatted thus:

Smith 1

John Smith

English C100—Professor Davis

October 27, 2016

Argumentative essay

Clipped Again: Why the Clippers Thrive and the Lakers Dive

If you stopped following the NBA over the past decade, you can be forgiven for overlooking the ascendance of one basketball franchise and the waning of another. You might assume, too, that the Clippers are mired in mediocrity. However, since the trade for Chris Paul,

Image shows MLA format.

- You can see that your last name should appear in the upper right corner of each page beside the page number. This is called the **running head**.
- Below that, appearing on only the first page, is the **heading**—it contains your name, the course title and my name, the date, and the name of the assignment.
- Centered below the heading is the **essay title**.
- The indented **introductory paragraph** appears below that. Your essays in both MLA and APA styles should always be **double-spaced, Times New Roman font, size 12 point**.
- Aside from being double-spaced, there should be no additional spaces or gaps in the essay (no extra spaces between paragraphs, for example).

Unlike MLA, essays in APA style use a **title page** and should be formatted thus:

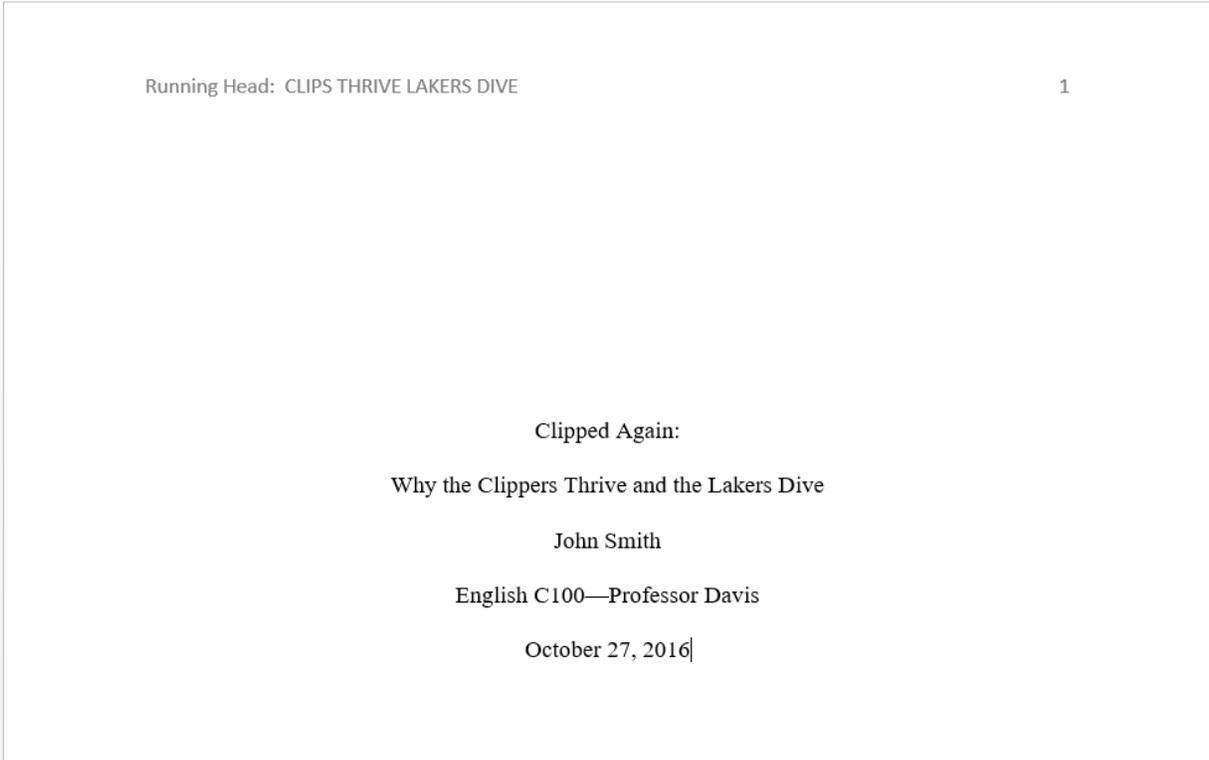


Image shows APA cover page / title page.

The first content page in APA style looks like this:

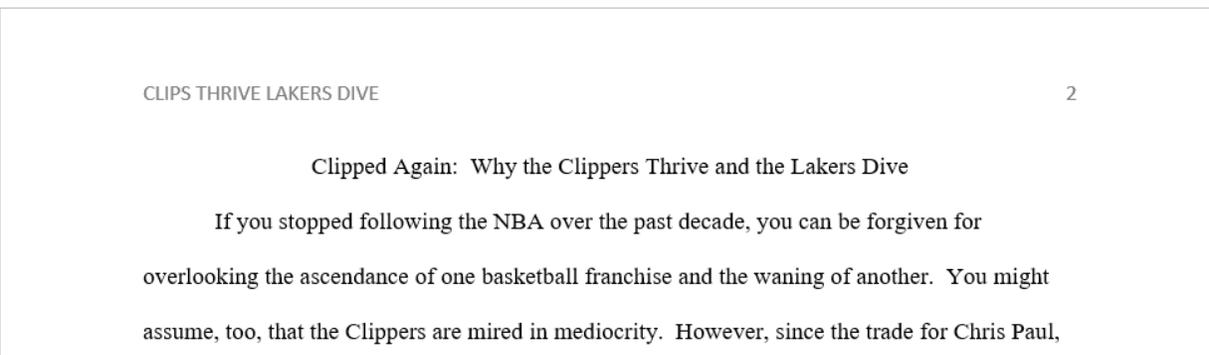


Image shows APA first content page.

- You see that the running head, a shortened version of the title, appears in the upper left corner. The page number appears in the upper right corner.
- The full title of your essay, your name, the class and my name, and date appear centered in the middle of your title page.

- After the title page, your instructor *may or may not* require you to provide an abstract, which is a summary of your essay. The **abstract page** also includes **keywords** from your essay.

11 The Analytical Mind



Pixabay image shows silhouettes of seated students.

11.1 Self-Awareness and Point of View

11.2 Critical Reading

Interrogate the Text

Annotate

11.3 Inferences

11.4 Rogerian and Aristotelian Argumentation

11.5 Toulmin's Method

11.1 Self-Awareness and Point of View

The ancient Greek aphorism “know yourself” is perhaps the first step toward critical thinking. Divorce yourself intellectually from tradition, sentiment, and **hearsay**, and train your mind to disassemble thought-walls. To learn your habits of mind, first assess your personality type using the **Myers Briggs** self-assessment (Google it). Here you’ll learn, for example, whether you get your energy from being around groups of people (extroversion) or from solitude (introversion).

Second, recognize in which environment you learn best. Do you need silence, seclusion, and long hours, or are you in the habit of studying with music and other stimuli while taking regular breaks?

Third, identify your intellectual strengths and weaknesses. Do you read often for pleasure or for class only? Do you investigate a variety of topics or only a handful? Do you casually debate with friends and family members? When you do exchange ideas, do you rely on logic and evidence or on emotion and authority to persuade your audience?

Fourth, identify your **ken**, your range of knowledge of what you know you know, what you know you don’t know, what you don’t know you don’t know; this third item is your **blind spot**.

Critical thinking also requires the ability to conceive of and assess possibilities along a continuum. To think, read, and write in a given discipline, you will uncover **binary oppositions** in the texts, objects, and phenomena you are examining. After identifying the “poles” of a topic, you may fill in everything between and arrive at a conclusion that is **sound**: logically valid and factually correct.

ARTICULATING MULTIPLE SIDES OF AN ISSUE

I have mentioned that knowledge is unified. Regardless of the discipline you choose to pursue, you will be arriving as an apprentice in the middle of an ongoing conversation. Moreover, when we speak of critical thinking, we also mean critical viewing (film, ads, TV, graphs and charts, stats, political cartoons, and so on) and critical listening (speeches, songs, and jingles).

Recognizing the long-standing positions and oppositions in individual disciplines can help you make sense of the specific issues, themes, topics, and controversies you will encounter as a student and professional.

BINARY OPPOSITIONS

Discipline	Binary Oppositions (Binary A—Binary B)
Business	production—consumption labor—capital
Natural and applied sciences	empiricism—rationalism observer—subject
Social sciences	nature—nurture free will—determinism
Humanities	artist—culture text—context

Table Ch. 11.1: Binaries

These binary oppositions move freely from one discipline to another, often becoming more complicated as they do so. Remember when I mentioned earlier that we must divorce ourselves intellectually from tradition as we examine all possibilities? There are many examples of academic disciplines evolving over time as different subject areas pollinate each other. Likewise, your thinking should evolve, too.¹¹

For example, the binary opposition in the natural and applied sciences between **empiricism** (the so-called scientific method) and **rationalism** (using pure reason to speculate about one's surroundings) originated as a debate in philosophy, a branch of the humanities. In the social sciences, empirical data about brain functions in neuroscience have challenged rationalistic theories in psychology. Even disciplines in business are using

¹¹ Original content courtesy of *Handbook for Writers*. Revised by S.D.

increasingly empirical methods to study how markets work, as rationalist economic theories of human behavior increasingly come under question.

In addition, the binary opposition between **text** and **context** in the humanities is borrowed from the social sciences. Instead of viewing texts as self-contained creations, scholars and artists in the humanities began to appreciate and foreground the cultural influences that helped shape those texts. Borrowings from business disciplines such as economics and marketing furthered the notion of a literary and artistic “marketplace,” while borrowings from the natural and applied sciences helped humanists examine more closely the relationship between the observer (whether the critic or the artist) and the subject (the text). In short, knowledge is unified rather than atomized.

MODELING CRITICAL THINKING

For a model of how to think critically about a text, let’s draw on a short but famous piece of writing (available through the Avalon Project in the Note 2.5 “Gallery of Web-Based Texts”), Abraham Lincoln’s “Address at the Dedication of the Gettysburg National Cemetery,” composed and delivered in November of 1863, several months after one of the bloodiest battles in the American Civil War.

Let's imagine how a **military historian**, a **social psychologist**, and a **political scientist** would read this text. Follow the color-coding below to find which words and phrases a practitioner in each discipline might emphasize:

Fourscore and seven years ago our fathers brought forth on this continent a new nation, conceived in liberty and dedicated to the proposition that all men are created equal. Now we are engaged in a great civil war, testing whether that nation or any nation so conceived and so dedicated can long endure. We are met on a great battlefield of that war. We have come to dedicate a portion of that field as a final resting-place for those who here gave their lives that that nation might live. It is altogether fitting and proper that we should do this. But in a larger sense, we cannot dedicate, we cannot consecrate, we cannot hallow this ground. The brave men, living and dead who struggled here have consecrated it far above our poor power to add or detract. The world will little note nor long remember what we say here, but it can never forget what they did here. It is for us the living rather to be dedicated here to the unfinished work which they who fought here have thus far so nobly advanced. It is rather for us to be here dedicated to the great task remaining before us--that from these honored dead we take increased devotion to that cause for which they gave the last full measure of devotion--that we here highly resolve that these dead shall not have died in vain, that this nation under God shall have a new birth of freedom, and that government of the people, by the people, for the people shall not perish from the earth.

Image shows how three different readers might interpret a text.

A military historian (red passages) might focus on Lincoln's rhetorical technique of using the field of a previous battle in an ongoing war (in this case a victory that nonetheless cost a great deal of casualties on both sides) as inspiration for a renewed, redoubled effort.

A social psychologist (blue passages) might focus on how Lincoln uses this historical moment of unprecedented national trauma as an occasion for shared grief and shared sacrifice, largely through the rhetorical technique of an extended metaphor of "conceiving and dedicating" a nation/child whose survival is at stake.

A political scientist (green passages) might focus on how Lincoln uses the occasion as a rhetorical opportunity to emphasize that the purpose of this

grisly war is to preserve the ideals of the founders of the American republic (and perhaps even move them forward through the new language of the final sentence: “of the people, by the people, for the people”).

Notice that each reader, regardless of academic background, needs a solid understanding of how rhetoric works, something we’ll cover in detail later in *Fresh English*. Your responsibility as a critical reader is to conceive of a topic from all perspectives rather than through the narrow lens of any one academic background—or through just your personal experience.

11.2 Critical Reading

American author John Steinbeck wrote in his last work *The Winter of Our Discontent* that “A story has as many versions as it has readers. Everyone takes what he wants or can from it and thus changes it to his measure. Some pick out parts and reject the rest, some strain the story through their mesh of prejudice, and some paint it with their own delight.” When you read critically, you pursue not only meaning but also intention and analysis. You want to know not just what the text says, but also how and why it says what it says.

As you read a text critically, you are also reading skeptically. Read and re-read passages. Turn foreign ideas into ordinary ones by following up on readings with some research. Keep a list of new vocabulary terms. Google is your friend, and your college professors are always available to help you synthesize ideas. Finally, annotate. A book is paper, a learning tool, rather than scripture, so don’t be afraid to write comments, questions, and challenges in the book.

CONNECT READINGS TO YOUR EXPERIENCES

Can you connect with what you are reading? Can you imagine yourself in the passage? Does it remind you of things from your life? Typically, the

more closely we readers connect to the text, the higher our level of comprehension.¹²

- Visualize. Picture yourself in the story and think about how the setting and characters look.
- Focus on the characters. Compare them to yourself and people you know.
- Put yourself in the story and think about how would react, and how you reacted when you were in a similar situation.
- Look at problems. How do they compare to problems you have faced?
- Ask yourself questions as you read. Think about how the story relates to your life, and things that you know.
- When reading nonfiction, think about ways the information relates to what you already know.

INTERROGATE THE TEXT WHEN READING CRITICALLY

Purpose?

- To explain? Inform? Anger? Persuade? Amuse? Motivate? Sadden? Ridicule? Attack? Defend?¹³
- Is there more than one purpose? Does the purpose shift at all throughout the text?

Methods?

- Narration? Description? Definition? Comparison? Analogy? Cause and Effect? Example?
- Why does the writer use these methods? Do these methods help in his/her development of ideas?

Organizational patterns?

- Particular to general, broad to specific, spatial, chronological, alternating, or block?

¹² Authored by Elisabeth Ellington and Ronda Dorsey Neugebauer. Provided by Chadron State College. Kaleidoscope Open Course Initiative. CC BY.

¹³ Content courtesy of *Rhetoric and Composition Wiki Book*. Remixed by S.D.

- Does the format enhance or detract from the content? Does it help the piece along or distract from it?

Coherence?

- Do you think the transitions work well? In what ways do they work well?
- What are these patterns like if there are some? Does the writer use any fragments or run-on sentences?

Quotations and citations?

- To what effect? For what purpose is this dialog or quotation used?

Diction?

- Is the language emotionally evocative? Does the language change throughout the piece? How does the language contribute to the writer's aim?

Punctuation?

- What punctuation or other techniques of emphasis (italics, capitals, underlining, ellipses, and parentheses) does the writer use?
- Is punctuation over- or under-used? Which marks does the writer use where, and to what effect?

Thematic repetitions?

- Are these repetitions effective, or do they detract from the text?

Imagery?

- What is the effect of these images on the writer's purpose?

Figurative language?

- When does he/she use it? For what reason(s)? Are those devices used to convey or enhance meaning?

Humor, wordplay, irony, sarcasm, understatement, or parody?

- Is the effect comic relief? Pleasure? Hysteria? Ridicule?

Credibility?

- Is the writer an acceptable authority on the subject? How do you know?

SAMPLE ANNOTATIONS

In the first **annotation**, let's consider Roger (Student A) and Rhonda (Student B), both who read the speech without any advance preparation and without examining their biases and preconceptions. Take a look at the comment boxes attached to the excerpt of the first five paragraphs of Kennedy's "Inaugural Address."

First sample annotation

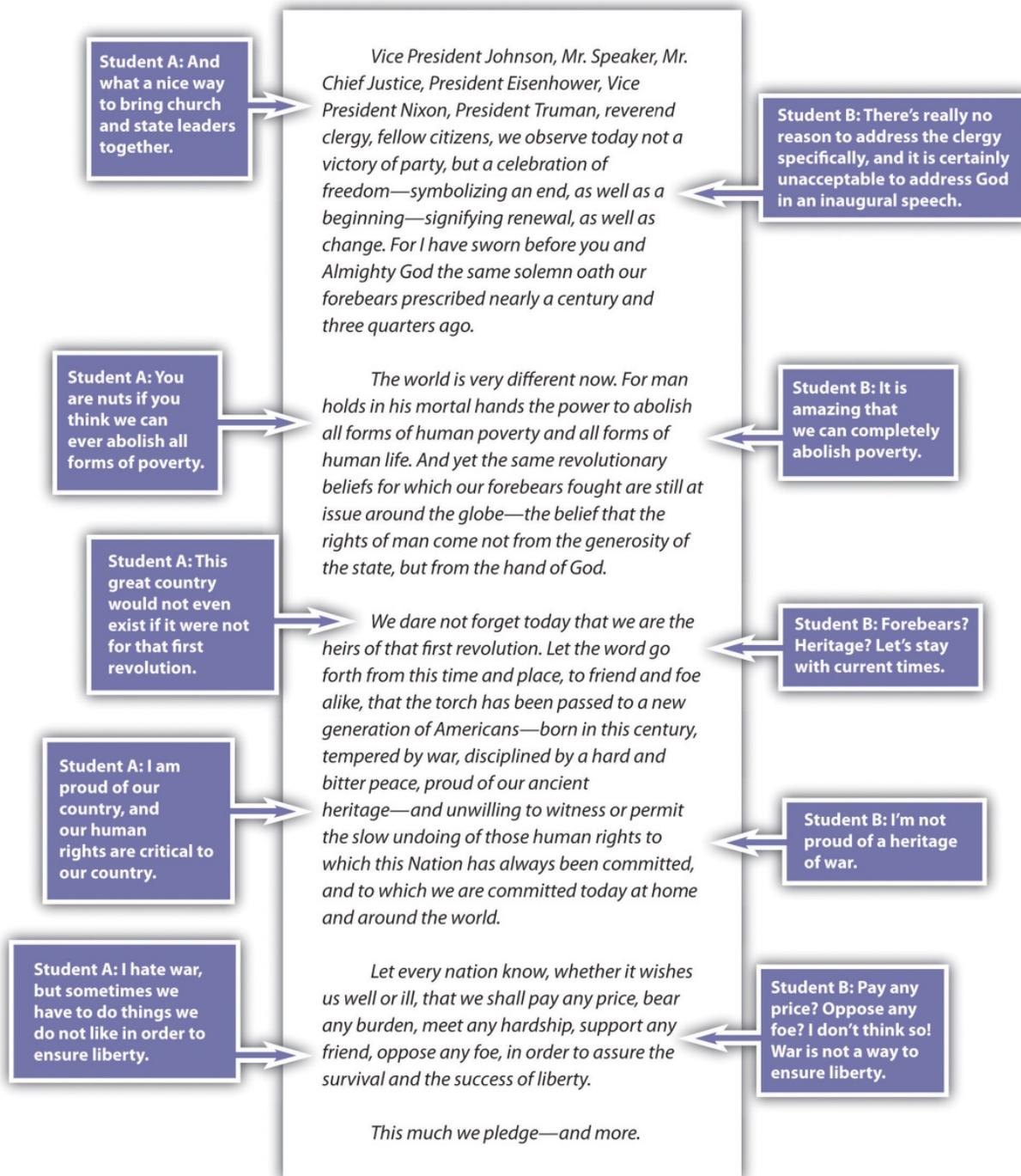


Image shows first sample annotation.

Second sample annotation

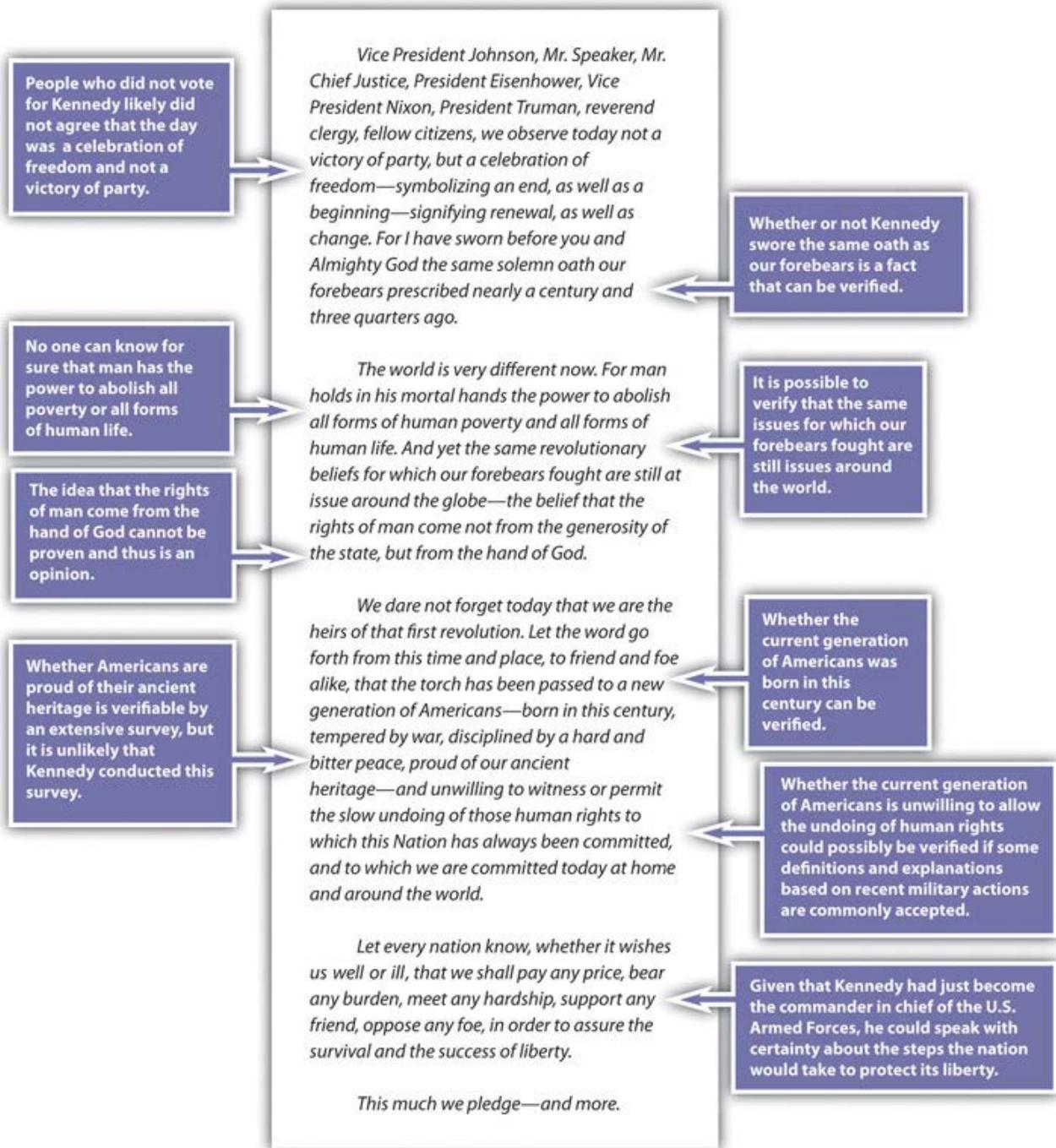


Image shows second sample annotation.

Third sample annotation

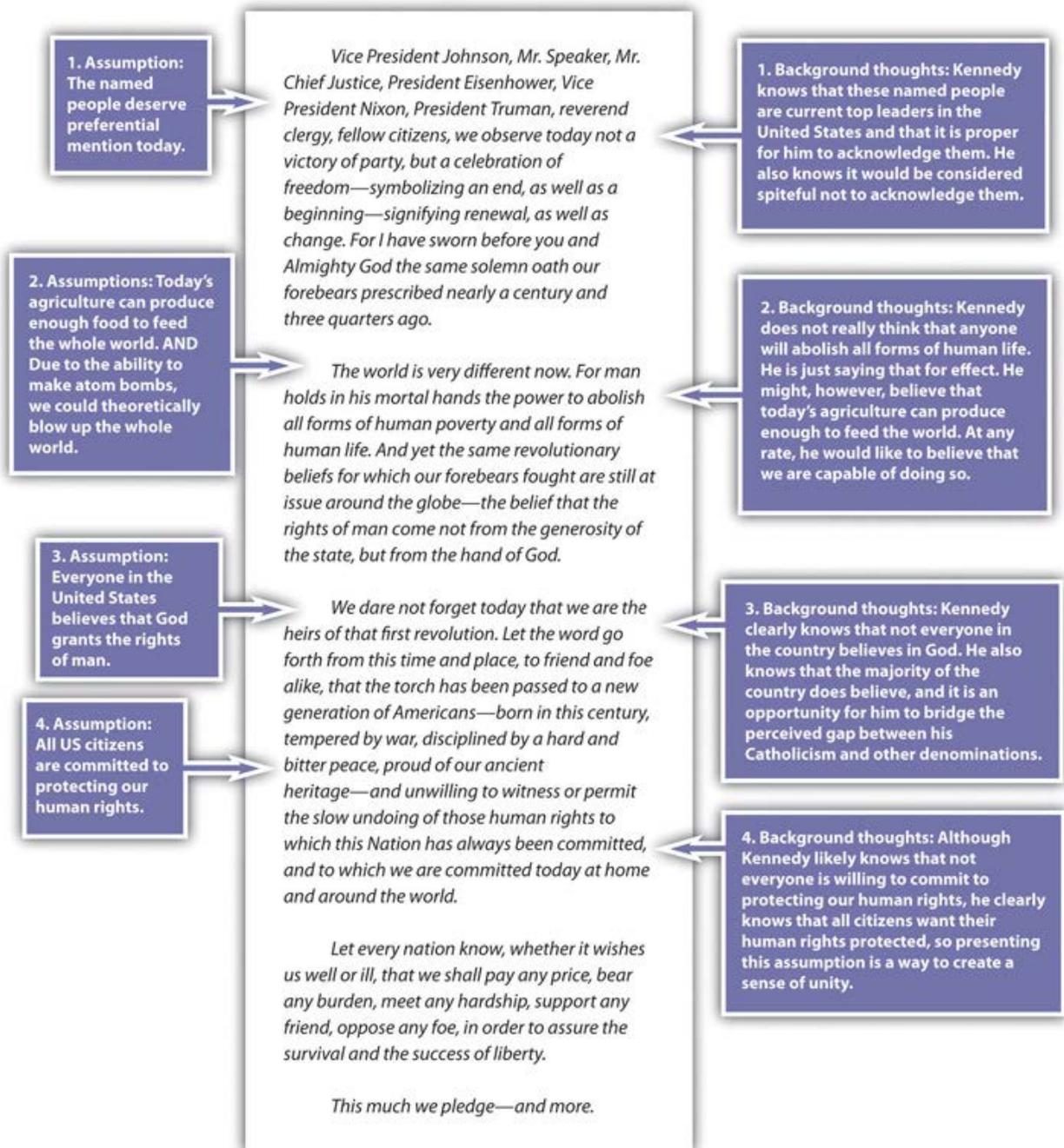


Image shows third sample annotation.

11.3 Inferences

You make inferences all the time. For example, imagine you go over to a friend's house, and she points at the sofa and says, "Don't sit there; Jasmine came over with her baby again." What would you logically infer? First, you know there must be a reason not to sit where your friend is pointing. Next, the reason not to sit there is related to the fact that Jasmine just visited with her baby. So you don't know what exactly happened, but you can infer that you do not want to sit there.¹⁴

INFER AS YOU READ

To make inferences from reading, take two or more details from the reading and see if you can draw a conclusion. Remember, making an inference is not just making a wild guess. Let's practice with a passage.

- Hybrid cars are good for the environment, but they may not perform as well as cars that run only on gasoline. The Toyota Prius gets great gas mileage and has low emissions, making it a good "green" option. However, many people think that it is unattractive. The Prius also cannot accelerate as quickly as other models, and it cannot hold as many passengers as larger gas-fueled SUVs and vans. Compared to similar gas-fueled options, hybrid cars also cost more money up front. A new hybrid car costs almost \$3,500 more than a similar model configured to run just on gasoline.

Which of the following can you infer from the passage?

1. Hybrid cars are more dangerous than other options.
2. Toyota is making a lot of money from the Prius.
3. Cars that use gasoline are going to destroy the environment.
4. Hybrid cars may not be the best choice for everyone.

¹⁴ *Making Inferences*. Authored by Elisabeth Ellington and Ronda Dorsey Neugebauer. Provided by Chadron State College. Kaleidoscope Open Course Initiative. CC BY.

All four answers are about hybrid cars in some way, but none of the answers can be found directly from the text. Read through and see what hints you can find from the text.

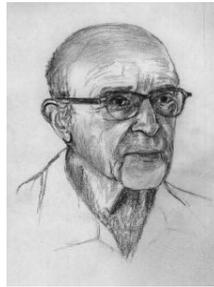
You will notice right away that there is nothing about car safety in the passage at all, so you can eliminate choice 1. Choice 2 is implied: if the car costs \$3,500 more than other cars, then Toyota would be making a lot of money by selling the car. But is it the most reasonable conclusion? To be sure, you need to go through all of the answers—don't just stop when you find one that looks okay. You may think that choice 3 is true. After all, people want to make hybrid cars because they believe that emissions are contributing to environmental damage, but this is not mentioned in the paragraph. Even if you think it is true, the answer has to be supported by the text to be the correct answer to the problem. Choice 4 could be inferred from the text. If a person had a large family, was short on money, or needed a car that could accelerate quickly, then a hybrid might not be the best choice for them.

Compare choice 4 with the other possible answer, choice 2. Now you are thinking choice 2 might not be as good an answer because you don't know how much it costs Toyota to make the cars, and you don't know how many they sell, so you can't reasonably infer that they are making a lot of money! By **process of elimination**, choice 4 has to be the correct answer.

11.4 Rogerian and Aristotelian Argumentation

Through academic training you are familiar with **Aristotelian Argumentation**, which involves statements of position followed by evidence and **refutation** of the “other side.” It's a mostly **zero sum game** whereby one side wins by presenting more and better evidence, and the other side loses because it was roundly refuted. Even the term “argumentation,” which has the multiple **denotations** of a dispute, disagreement, or **dialectical** exchange (meaning intended to reveal the truth), has the **connotation** of aggression and hostility.

In our study of critical thinking, though, we recognize that the Aristotelian method, built on a sort of mathematical inductive and deductive logic, does not reward its participants. As we all know after an argument (in the ordinary sense), we feel bad afterwards, knowing that a friendship might be damaged. From that perspective, there are no winners. The alternative? **Rogerian Argumentation** to the rescue!



Drawing shows Carl Rogers.¹⁵

Rogerian argument, formulated by psychologist Carl Rogers, aims to find compromise on a controversial issue. Since the goal of Rogerian argument is to find **common ground** between two opposing positions, you must identify the shared beliefs or assumptions of each side. Here's how I ask students to structure a **Rogerian dialogue** (a term preferred to "argument" for obvious reasons).

Rogerian dialogue outline

1. First, what was the occasion of the disagreement (context, background)?
2. Second, describe how you employed these four steps of Rogerian dialogue with your "adversary" (I prefer the term "partner"). Again, here are the steps you must follow during your conversation with the person:
 - a. Summarize for the person the grievance between you two.
 - b. State your "partner's" position. Make sure he or she agrees that you've stated correctly his/her position.
 - c. Grant the validity of his or her position.

¹⁵ Illustration by: Didius. Provided by: Wikimedia. Image of Carl Rogers is located at http://commons.wikimedia.org/wiki/File:Carl_Ransom_Rogers.jpg. CC BY.

- d. Show how his or her position will be improved if he or she also accepts your position.
3. Finally, how did your partner in the discussion respond? Was the grievance resolved, stayed the same, or escalated?

11.5 Toulmin's Method

In addition to Carl Rogers, we also have Stephen Toulmin, an English philosopher and logician who identified elements of a persuasive argument.¹⁶

A **claim** is a statement that you are asking others to accept. This includes information you are asking them to accept as true or actions you want them to accept and enact. For example, "You should enroll full-time at this college." Many people start with a claim, but then they find that it is challenged. Why? Well, if you ask me to do something, I will not simply agree with whatever you want. I will ask why I should agree with you. I will ask you to prove your claim. This is where grounds become important.

The **grounds** (or data, evidence) are the basis of real persuasion and are made up of hard facts plus the reasoning behind the claim. These are the truths on which the claim is based. Grounds may also include proof of expertise and the basic premises on which the rest of the argument is built. An example of a ground would be "Over 70% of students enrolled full-time at this college express high satisfaction."

Information is usually a very powerful element of persuasion, although it does affect people differently. Consequently, you must be attuned to your audience—learn to read the table as a winning poker player would. Those who are **dogmatic**, logical, or rational will more likely to be persuaded by factual data. Those who argue emotionally and who are highly invested in their own position will challenge it or otherwise try to ignore it. Some people will accept evidence without question. Some will dismiss it out of hand.

¹⁶ Toulmin's Argument Model. Provided by Metapatterns. Located at <http://www.designmethodsandprocesses.co.uk/2011/03/toulmins-argument-model/>. CC BY-NC-SA.

Others will dig deeper, requiring more explanation. This is where the warrant comes into its own.

A **warrant** links data and other grounds to a claim, legitimizing the claim by showing the grounds to be relevant. The warrant may be explicit or unspoken and **implicit**. It answers the question “Why does that data mean your claim is true?” For example, “A high satisfaction rate at this college is correlated with higher graduation rates and thus better job placement and higher income.”

The **backing** (or support) for an argument gives additional support to the warrant by answering different questions. For example, “Enrolling full-time at this college takes only ten minutes via the website.”

The **qualifier** (or modal qualifier) indicates the strength of the leap from the data to the warrant and may limit how universally the claim applies. Qualifying words are “most,” “usually,” “always,” and so on. These qualifiers help add accuracy to your statements, as arguments may range from strong assertions to vague and uncertain posits. For example, “Students who enroll full-time at this college sometimes express high satisfaction rates.” Another variant is the **reservation**, which may give the possibility of the claim being incorrect. Qualifiers and reservations are much used by advertisers who are constrained not to lie. Thus they slip terms such as “usually” and “unless” into their claims.

Despite the careful construction of the argument, there may still be counter-arguments that can be used. These may be **rebutted** either through a continued dialogue or through pre-empting the counter-argument by rebutting during the initial presentation of the argument. For example, “This college’s support desk deals with dozens of students who were confused by the online registration process.” A rebuttal is an argument in itself, and thus may include a claim, warrant, backing, and so on. A rebuttal itself can be rebutted! When first proposed, this Toulmin layout of argumentation was based on legal arguments; now, of course, we can see its applications to critical thinking.

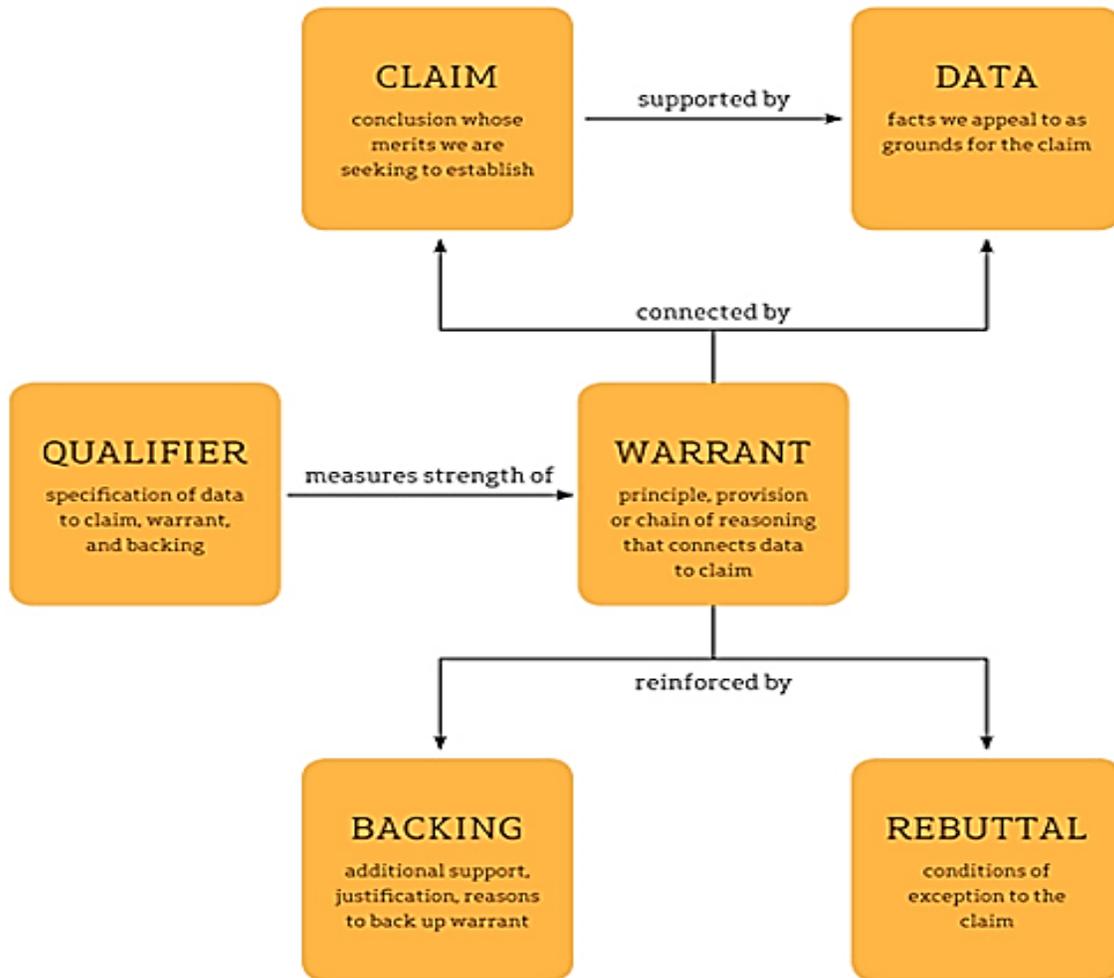


Image shows the Toulmin Model.

12 Rhetoric



Pixabay image shows a medieval scholar holding a rhetoric book.

12.1 Rhetoric Overview

Moves

Techniques

12.2 Three Greek Appeals

Ethos

Logos

Pathos

Rhetorical Triangle

12.3 Deductive & Inductive Reasoning

12.4 Basic Logical Fallacies

12.1 Rhetoric Overview

Rhetoric is a term that is widely used in many forms, and by itself can mean a great many things. Some use the term (often disparagingly) in association with political rhetoric. Rhetoric is the ability to communicate an intended message, whether it is via argumentation, persuasion, or another form of communication. In our class, rhetoric means, simply, the art of persuasion.

A rhetorical analysis refers to the process of analyzing a text, given source, or artifact. The goal of a rhetorical analysis is to take into consideration the purpose, audience, genre, stance, and media/design of the given rhetorical situation. In other words, the analysis explores not only what everything means in the given source (content), but also why the author wrote about it (the purpose), who the author is (background), how the piece was organized (structure), where and/or when it was published (forum), and the intended message conveyed to the audience (topic).

The **process** of completing a rhetorical analysis requires the use of different rhetorical strategies. These strategies are critical reading, strategies for effective communication, persuasive appeals, argumentation, and avoidance of logical fallacies. The **purpose** of a rhetorical analysis is to engage in critical thinking with the intention of effectively communicating an intended message to a predetermined audience. In order to successfully determine the intended message of a particular text, a good question to guide your analysis is “how did the author craft his/her argument”?

RHETORICAL MOVES

Consider the **rhetorical moves** writers make so you can begin to use language more creatively in your writing. Good writers learn to improvise with the language, to make it work both as a tool for thinking and as a vehicle for communication and, yes, for manipulation. Here are four categories of rhetorical moves you will encounter and begin to use as you develop a rhetorical habit of mind. (For a more comprehensive view of the rhetorical lexicon, see the chapter titled Rhetorical and Literary Terms.)

Rhetorical Move	Examples
<p>Connotative language Using a word beyond its denotation (or primary definition) to suggest or incite a desired response in readers. Sometimes a connotation can be a euphemism designed to make something sound better than it really is; at other times, a connotation can put a negative spin on something.</p>	<p>“welfare” (or “entitlement”) “economic stimulus” (or “recovery”) “death panel” (or “managed care”) “pro-choice” (or “pro-abortion”) “estate tax” (or “death tax”) “global warming” (or “greenhouse effect”)</p>
<p>Figurative language Using metaphors, similes, and analogies can help you and your readers uncover previously unseen connections between different categories of things.</p>	<p>“That professor’s lecture was <i>like</i> a metronome.” (Similes use <i>like</i> or <i>as</i>.) “That test was a bear.” (Metaphors don’t use <i>like</i> or <i>as</i>.) “The current panic in education about students’ addiction to texting and video games is reminiscent of concerns in earlier eras about other kinds of emerging technology.”</p>
<p>Humorous language Audiences who are entertained are more likely to receive your message. Within reason and boundaries of taste, there’s nothing wrong with using wit to help you make your points. Examples include plays on words (like puns, slang, neologisms, or “new words”), as well as more elaborate kinds of humor (such as parody and satire).</p>	<p>Recent additions to the dictionary (like “telecommuting,” “sexting,” and “crowdsourcing”) usually began as plays on words. Parody and satire are ironic ways of imitating a subject or style through caricature and exaggeration.</p>

Rhetorical Move	Examples
Humorous language , cont'd	Note: These kinds of humor require precise knowledge of your audience's readiness to be entertained in this way. They can easily backfire and turn sour, but when used carefully, they can be extremely effective.
Metacognitive language Thinking about your thinking (metacognition) can help you step outside yourself to reflect on your writing (the equivalent of "showing your work" in math).	"At this point, I'd like to be clear about my intentions for this essay..." "Before I began this research project, I thought...but now I've come to believe..."

Table Ch. 12.1 Rhetorical moves

As you survey this table, remember that clear, simple, direct communication is still your primary goal, so don't try all these techniques in the same piece of writing. Just know that you have them at your disposal and begin to develop them as part of your toolkit of rhetorical moves.

BASIC RHETORICAL TECHNIQUES

There are many different strategies a communicator may employ to effectively communicate his/her message to his/her intended audience. While the rhetorical strategies for effective communication are discussed in terms of writing about your findings, pertaining to your rhetorical analysis, it should be noted that these rhetorical strategies can be employed during the critical analysis or reading portion of your rhetorical analysis project.

Technique	Definition	Qs for critical thinking
Exemplification	Provide examples or cases in point	Are there examples-- facts, statistics, cases in point, personal

Technique	Definition	Qs for critical thinking
Exemplification, cont'd	Cont'd	experiences, interview quotations--added to the essay?
Description	Detail sensory perceptions of a person, place, or thing	Does a person, place, or object play a prominent role in the essay?
Narration	Recount an event	Are there any anecdotes, experiences, or stories in the essay?
Process Analysis	Explain how to do something or how something happens.	Does any portion of the essay include concrete directions about a certain process?
Comparison and contrast	Discuss similarities and differences	Does the essay contain two or more related subjects? Does it evaluate or analyze two or more people, places, processes, events, or things?
Division and classification	Divide a whole into parts or sort related items into categories	Does the essay reduce the subject to more manageable parts or group parts?
Definition	Provide the meaning of terms you use	Is there any important word in the essay with many meanings and is defined or clarified?
Cause and effect analysis	Analyze why something happens and describe the	Does the essay examine past events or their outcome? Does it explain

Technique	Definition	Qs for critical thinking
Cause and effect, cont'd	consequences of a string of events	why something happened?
Repetition	The constant use of certain words, sounds, or themes	Why, with all words at her disposal, does the writer choose to repeat particular words?
Counterpoints	Contrasting ideas such as black/white, darkness/light, good/bad	Does the writer acknowledge and respond to counterpoints to her position?
Imagery	Language that evokes one or all of the five senses: sight, sound, touch, taste, smell	Does the essay use any provocative language that calls upon readers' senses?
Metaphor and simile	Two essentially unlike things are compared; in a simile, a phrase introduces the comparison with "like" or "as"	Does the essay make connections between things to make a point or elicit an idea?
Style, tone, and voice	The attitude a writer takes toward a subject or character: serious, humorous, sarcastic, ironic, satirical, tongue-in-cheek, solemn, objective	What tone does the essay have? How does the writer portray himself or herself? What choices does he or she make that influence her position?
Analogy	The comparison of two pairs that have the same relationship	Are there any comparisons made by the writer to strengthen the message?

Technique	Definition	Qs for critical thinking
Flashback	A memory of an event in the past	Does time shift effectively? Is parallel verb tense maintained?
Hyperbole	Exaggeration or overstatement	Does the writer make any claims that seem extreme?
Personification	Giving human qualities to animals or objects	Is something without conscience thinking or talking?
Irony	An expression or utterance marked by deliberate contrast between apparent and intended meaning, often humorous	Does the writer really support her own assertions? Does she seem to be claiming the opposite you expect her to claim?
Oxymoron	A contradiction in terms such as “faithless devotion,” “searing cold,” “deafening silence,” “virtual reality,” “act naturally,” “peacekeeper missile,” or “larger half”	Do any of the writer’s terms seem to obviously clash?
Paradox	Reveals a kind of truth which at first seems contradictory; Red wine is both good and bad for us	Do any contradictions used in the essay contain some grain of truth?
Symbolism	An object suggests more than its literal meaning, e.g., skull and crossbones symbolize death.	Does the writer seem to assert that a thing has meaning outside of the obvious?

Technique	Definition	Qs for critical thinking
Parody	An imitation or impersonation; think of Weird Al or <i>Saturday Night Live</i>	What is the purpose of parody? Humor? If the purpose is to ridicule something or bring about social awareness, then the technique moves from parody to satire.
Sarcasm	Sarcasm is mean-spirited irony, the statement of something while meaning its opposite	Does a sarcastic tone help or hurt a writer's credibility and appeal?
Satire	Literary tone used to ridicule or make fun of human vice or weakness, often with the intent of correcting, or changing, the subject of the satiric attack	Does the writer's humor aim to fix its target? If the technique is imitative and has no larger social aim, then it is parody instead of satire.
Diction	An author's choice of words	Why, with all words at his or her disposal, does the writer choose to use those particular words?
Parallelism	The use of identical or equivalent constructions in corresponding clauses	Are there any syntactic similarities between two parts of a sentence?

Table Ch. 12.1b Rhetorical moves

12.2 Three Greek Appeals

Writers and speakers are concerned with **telos** (purpose) and **kairos** (timing). At its heart, though, rhetoric fits into three categories: **ethos** (credibility of writer or speaker), **logos** (the evidence-based arguments used by the writer), and **pathos** (the emotional persuasion experienced by the audience). Aristotle argues that ethos is the most influential of the three, though as we see in the **rhetorical triangle**, all three Greek appeals are inter-connected.

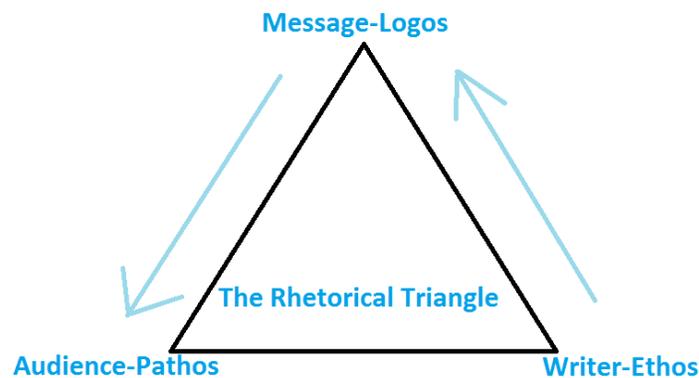


Image shows the rhetorical triangle.

ETHOS

Ethos can be seen as the credibility that authors, writers, and speakers carry when they present themselves in front of an audience. If your professor walked in late with a baseball cap turned backward and had forgotten his textbook on the first day of class, how would you perceive him? What would your view of the class be? How confident would you be that he knows what he talking about, even if he is actually an expert?

Ethos encompasses a large number of different things that can include what people wear, the words they use, their tone of voice, their credentials, their experience, their charge over the audience, their verbal and nonverbal behaviors, and so on. It can be as important to know who the person presenting the material is as what he or she is saying about a topic. If an automotive company uses a famous sports figure to endorse a product, we might wonder what that person knows about this product. The campaign

and celebrity are not being used to inform the consumer, but rather to catch our attention with what is actually a **specious** example of ethos.

Your ethos counts. Enhance it by using college-level diction. Writing that “the death penalty sucks” is not the best way to convince your audience that you are serious or credible. It may happen that you as a writer adopt different voices for different assignments, but the word choice and your approach to the assignment should reflect your rhetorical intent. Keep this in mind when you contact your professors!

LOGOS

Logos is the logical appeal of an argument. Logos includes data, evidence, facts, statistics, and other artifacts that appeal to an audience’s reason. In English class, you will rely on logical argumentation above all other skills. Note that the presentation of your evidence is part of your persuasiveness. Coherent, well-ordered paragraphs appeal to reason; similarly, grammar and punctuation errors undermine your delivery (and damage your ethos, too).

PATHOS

Pathos can best be described as the use of emotional appeal to sway another’s opinion in a rhetorical argument. It is often used to cause anger or sorrow in the minds and hearts of the audience. Pathos is often the rhetorical vehicle of public service announcements. A number of anti-smoking and second-hand smoking ads use pathos heavily. When you see babies, puppies, happy families, cheerful bar scenes, and sunsets, you are being appealed to emotionally.

12.3 Deductive and Inductive Reasoning

Deductive reasoning begins with a generalization and then applies it to a specific case. The generalization you start with must be based on a sufficient amount of reliable evidence. Inductive reasoning takes a specific representative case, or facts, and then draws generalizations or conclusions from them. **Inductive reasoning** must be based on a sufficient

amount of reliable evidence. In other words, the facts you draw on must fairly represent the larger situation or population.

DEDUCTIVE ARGUMENT

A deductive logical argument works from the top to the bottom. It should be internally consistent, rather like a mathematical proof. It begins with what is known as a “major premise,” adds a “minor premise,” and attempts to reach a conclusion. A major premise is a statement that names something about a large group, a minor premise takes a single member, and the conclusion attempts to prove that because this single member is a part of the larger group, they must also have the trait named in the original statement. For example, here is a three-part **sylllogism** expressing an inductive argument.

Sylllogism

- Men are tall = a **major premise** as it works with a large group of people
- Bob is a man = a **minor premise** as we hear about only one individual of that group
- Therefore, bob is tall = we make a **conclusion** based upon what we have already been told

Now, if it is true that men are tall, and that Bob is a man, then we can safely infer that Bob must be tall. However, beware the **logical fallacy**. Though it may be true that in certain cultures men are, on average, taller than women, certainly this is not always the case. Being that our major premise is not altogether true, we can now say that this argument is flawed.

Furthermore, we might ask what our definition of “tall” is. Tall is relative if we are talking about the average population or about basketball players. Also, what is a man? Do transgendered individuals count? We see that the problem becomes far more complex the more we look into it.

In order to be a **sound**, a syllogism must be both logically consistent--formally valid--as well as factually correct. If an argument or **proof** implies rather than states a plank (e.g., the major premise, minor premise, or conclusion), then the proof is called an **enthymeme**.

INDUCTIVE ARGUMENT

An inductive logical argument is built around observations and applying general trends to prove specific trends, or vice versa. In that sense, induction is looser, more susceptible to fallacies such as hasty generalizations, and more “outward looking” than deduction, which relies on steadfast internal logic. (Again, deduction is like a math proof: $A=B$, $B=C$, so $A=C$ --a syllogism.) In induction, we get the audience to agree with an initial premise or claim, and the argument moves to the next “logical” step. It proceeds in this manner until the argument has led you from one seemingly reasonable conclusion to another that you may not have originally agreed with.

Inductive arguments

- My grandma gave me a sweater two years ago and another sweater last year; therefore, she may give me a sweater this year, too.
- Eighty percent of women love shoes. She is a woman; therefore, she probably loves shoes.
- Paul has been seeing Mary for three years now, and he says he wants to be with her forever. He just went shopping for a diamond ring. Consequently, it is probable that he will ask Mary to marry him.

12.4 Basic Logical Fallacies

When an arguer is able to identify an opponent’s **fallacious** positions, he or she can point them out and expose a weakness. Arguers comfortable with fallacies also have an easier time avoiding them, making their positions more tenable. Sometimes a fallacy will be labeled with a conventional English term, and other times it may be referred to by a Latin synonym, e.g., “argument against the person” is often called an “ad hominem” argument, and an “appeal to the people” (a.k.a. “bandwagon fallacy”) is called an “argumentum ad populum.” As an English student you are expected to avoid fallacies in your own writing and identify them in others’. Note that there are hundreds of fallacies, so this list provides only common ones.

FALLACIES

Fallacy	Definition	Example
Appeal to force (<i>ad baculum</i>)	Arguer threatens reader/listener	If you don't agree with me, I will beat you up.
Appeal to pity (<i>ad misericordium</i>)	Arguer elicits pity from reader/listener	If you don't give me an A in this course, professor, I will have to flip burgers the rest of my life.
Appeal to the people, a.k.a. Appeal to the mob (<i>argumentum ad populum</i>)	Arguer arouses mob mentality	The terrorists came from the Middle East. Our only course of action is to colonize that region.
Indirect appeal to the people	Arguer appeals to the reader/listener's desire for security, love, respect, etc.	Of course you want to read my book; it's what all the intellectuals read.
Abusive argument against the person (<i>ad hominem</i>)	Arguer verbally abuses the other arguer	You're a stupidhead; therefore, your point is invalid.
Circumstantial argument against the person (<i>ad hominem</i>)	Arguer presents the other arguer as predisposed to argue in this way	Of course you'd say I need braces; you're a dentist.
Consistency argument against the person (<i>tu quoque</i>)	Arguer presents other arguer as a hypocrite	How can you tell me to pay my back taxes when you drink and drive? (Note: don't drink and drive.)

Fallacy	Definition	Example
Accident	General rule is applied to a specific case it was not intended to cover	Americans are entitled to freedom of speech, so you cannot arrest him for yelling “fire” in the theater. (Note: don’t yell “fire” in the theater.)
Straw man	Arguer distorts opponent’s argument and then attacks the distorted argument	My college doesn’t allow alcohol on campus. Obviously the administration is composed of a bunch of puritans who don’t speak for the majority and can be ignored.
Missing the point	Arguer draws conclusion different from that supported by the premises	College education costs are rising exponentially; therefore, we should reduce the number of years needed to obtain a degree.
Red herring	Arguer leads reader/listener off track	People continually talk about the negative effects of tobacco, but did you know that the Native Americans used to smoke tobacco? Many Native American folk remedies are still used today in holistic medicine.
Appeal to unqualified authority	Arguer cites untrustworthy authority	My sixteen year old cousin Billy said that there was no moon

Fallacy	Definition	Example
Appeal to authority, cont'd	Cont'd	landing, and he wants to be an astronaut, so it must be true.
Appeal to ignorance	Premises report that nothing is known or proved, and then a conclusion is drawn	There is no way of disproving the existence of God; therefore, He exists. Or conversely: There is no way of proving the existence of God; therefore, He doesn't exist.
Hasty generalization	Conclusion is drawn from atypical sample	Mrs. Dobson's Rottweiler bit a neighbor boy; therefore, all Rottweilers are violent.
False causality (<i>post hoc ergo propter hoc</i>)	Conclusion depends on nonexistent or minor causal connection	Every time I change the channel, my sports team scores. Therefore, any time I want my team to score, I need only change the channel
Slippery slope	Conclusion depends on unlikely chain reaction	If Americans' rights to bear assault rifles is taken away, then foreigners will view the country as weak and will attack, crushing our crippled defenses and enslaving us.
Weak analogy	Conclusion depends on defective analogy	My cousin Aaron is just like Shaq; he is tall and

Fallacy	Definition	Example
Weak analogy, cont'd	Cont'd	loves basketball. Therefore, he will play in the NBA.
Begging the question (also known as circular argument)	Arguer creates the illusion that inadequate premises are adequate by leaving out key premises, by restating the conclusion as a premise, or by reasoning in a circle	Of course animals have rights; just look at how they're being treated.
Loaded question	Multiple implied claims are concealed in a question	Have you stopped sleeping with your secretary? (Question implies a relationship in the first place.)
False dichotomy (also a false dilemma or binary fallacy)	"Either/or" statement that hides additional alternatives	Either you buy Axe body spray, or you will never get a date. Obviously you want to get a date, so you will buy Axe body spray.
Suppressed evidence	Arguer ignores important evidence that requires a different conclusion	Of course that child can't practice medicine; he is only a boy. (But what if the "boy" is Doogie Howser, M.D.?)
Equivocation	The meaning of a word or phrase shifts	The sign read, "Fine for parking here," so I thought it was fine to park here, officer!

Fallacy	Definition	Example
Amphiboly (see grammar discussion about misplaced modifiers)	Conclusion depends on the wrong interpretation of a syntactically ambiguous statement	John rode his bike past the tree with a helmet. (The tree has a helmet?)
Composition	Attribute is wrongly transferred from parts to whole	Bleach and ammonia individually are strong chemical cleaners; therefore, if I mix them I will have a stronger chemical cleaner. (This combo actually produces lethal gases.)
Division	Attribute is wrongly transferred from whole to parts	My college is over forty years old; therefore, every building on campus is over forty years old.

Table Ch. 12.4: Logical fallacies

13 Interdisciplinary Writing



Pixabay image shows an observatory reflected on water.

13.1 Writing in the
Humanities

13.2 Writing in the Social
Sciences

Psychology
Anthropology
Political Science
Sociology

Education
Economics

13.3 Writing in the Natural
Sciences

Life Sciences
Physical Sciences
Earth Sciences
Applied Sciences

13.1 Writing in the Humanities

“All great literature addresses directly or indirectly two questions: *What kind of world is this? How should we live in it?*”

--Christopher Clausen

The tools you have learned from previous sections will help you be a more successful writer with advanced topics. The disciplines discussed in this section are humanities and sciences.¹⁷

Humanities includes not only literature but also philosophy, ethics, performing arts, fine arts, history, aspects of anthropology and cultural studies, foreign languages, linguistics, jurisprudence, political science, and sociology. In a humanities class, you might be asked to analyze a poem, a performance or a play, a painting, a film, or a musical performance. Writing in the humanities often includes posing questions dealing with human values. Writing in the sciences may be **convergent** (meaning oriented toward finding or articulating a specific answer to a specific question), whereas writing in the humanities may be **divergent** (meaning oriented toward exploration of multiple answers to multiple questions). In previous chapters we reviewed the common essay modes, including compare/contrast, argumentative, research, literary, interpretive, and analytical. In this humanities section, we'll look briefly at the creative mode.

CREATIVE WRITING

Creative writing uses imaginary scenarios to create an effect in the minds of the readers. The intention may be to expound on the grieving and recovery process (**catharsis**) or to make a person laugh or cry. The potential results are unlimited. Creative writing can also be used as an outlet for people to get their thoughts and feelings out and onto paper. Creative writing can take place in a variety of forms. Poems, short stories, novels, and even song lyrics are all examples of creative writing.

A **first-person** narrator is when one person narrates the story. A reader will recognize a first-person narrator because the pro-nouns “I” and “my” will be

¹⁷ Content for this chapter is remixed from and built upon the *Rhetoric and Composition Wikibook*.

used. Because the story is narrated by one person, we are limited to the thoughts and observations of that person. There are many reasons that an author may choose to use a first-person narrator, but the main reason is to share the thoughts and evolution of one particular character. **Third-person limited** is when the narrator is limited to the thoughts of one particular character, but there is a little more freedom than with a first-person narrator because the narrator can more easily observe the behavior of others. A **third-person omniscient** point-of-view is when the lens of the storyteller is pulled back even further, so we are able to dive into the minds of any and all characters. A second-person p.o.v. uses “you” and is rather like a choose-your-own-adventure tale.

LITERARY ERAS

Like culture and technology, English language and literature have changed over time. Various eras and sub-movements influence style and interpretation.

- Old English and Anglo Saxon literature: 450-1066
- English medieval literature: 1066-1509 [the end of this era is called “Tudor”]
- Renaissance and reformation literature: 1510-1603 [reign of Elizabeth I, 1558–1603, is called Elizabethan Era]
- Revolution and Restoration literature: 1603 [Jacobean, metaphysics, Cromwell – reign of James I]
- Augustan Empire literature: eighteenth century
- Romanticism abroad literature: 1780-1837
- Reign of Victoria literature: 1838-1901
- Modernist literature: 1900-1945
- Post-modern and contemporary literature: 1945- present

The Early Modern Era extended from about 1500 to 1800, marked by the advent of colonialism and capitalism. Modernist writing and art began at the start of WWI (1914) through the end of WWII (1945).

Postmodernism flourished in the late twentieth century, partly in response to Modernism. A common theme in this kind of work is **self-reflexiveness**,

meaning the author expresses awareness of the writing process and the reader.

Multiple modes of **literary criticism** exist to interpret literature: Formalism, New Criticism, Marxist, Reader-Response, Post-Colonial, Feminist, Race Theory, Queer, and Psychoanalytic are enduring schools.

Deconstructionism, a branch of Post-Structuralism, suggests that literary works do not yield a single, fixed meaning because we can never say what we truly mean in language. (This is not an excuse not to use clear, crisp prose, of course!)

13.2 Writing in the Social Sciences

While writing in the humanities is used to explore the human condition, writing in the sciences is used to examine nature, human experience, and/or technology. Writing in the sciences requires data, evidence, facts, and precision, which in turn require intimate attention to detail. The goal is to present clearly what you have discovered or what you did. This generally requires the writing to be done in the past tense. The nature and subject matter of the ideas in your paper must be presented in a factual style, leaving out figurative or emotional language. There are two categories of sciences writing: **social sciences** and **natural sciences**. In this section we will examine the social sciences.

When writing in the social sciences, the writer may spend time in the library researching data and time observing and documenting actual events. Writing in the social sciences is the study of human behavior, the value systems of people, and the interactions among people. Writing in this discipline can be a very challenging experience. Interviews may be conducted, and attitudes must be examined and recorded. But recording data gathered from studying human beings is difficult because the human mind is an ever-changing thing; moreover, humans sometimes aren't aware of their own impulses or don't accurately relay their thoughts, feelings, and actions to the scientist!

When you write a social sciences paper, you might wish to choose a topic about which you possess first-hand knowledge, know a great deal of information, or are passionate. Choose your topic, make your claim, provide evidence to support your claim, and finally, convince your reader that your claim is the one with which to side. Take a hard look at all sides of the issue you address. Doing so will prepare you to defend arguments in opposition to your viewpoint. Because issues in the social sciences are often subjective, you should expect some opposing opinions and even, possibly, some controversy.

Charts and graphs are common elements included in the social sciences paper. A valuable source of information for the social scientist is a government document. These documents contain the most up-to-date information in a variety of fields. The social sciences can be broken down into disciplines. Note that writing in the social sciences requires a discipline-specific, technical vocabulary.

ELEMENTS OF THE SOCIAL SCIENCES PAPER

When it comes down to actually writing your paper, be sure to include the following elements: an introduction, a thesis statement, the body of the paper, and the conclusion. Many social scientists use these headings in their paper. A social science paper may also include many other elements such as a title page, abstract, and bibliography. One element of the social science paper that greatly differs from the humanities paper is that it should be written so that the reader can take any section from the paper and read it independently from the rest of the paper, without having to look back at any other section. It is this type of technical writing that sets the social sciences paper apart from the humanities paper; each section is its own mini-paper. Knowing your audience members will greatly assist you in writing your social sciences paper.

Title page

Your **title page** should include the subject or title of your paper, your name, and the current date. (See the chapter on Research and Documentation for more info.) An **abstract** is a short summary (100 to 300 words) of the ideas you will be proposing in your paper. It is the place to state the

argument you intend to address. When writing your abstract, consider what experiments you did and what kinds of interviews you conducted.

Intro

Your **introduction** will introduce your paper's main ideas. Keep them succinct, but make them interesting. Some questions to answer in your introduction may include: Why did you choose this topic? Is there a need for the general public to know about this issue, and why? How does this issue affect you, if at all? Define the problem clearly. Give examples so the reader knows exactly why this is a problem and how it affects society. Your instructor may want your introduction to be a separate element of the paper or a part of the body of your paper. The **thesis statement** will state the purpose of your argument and will introduce your claim to a specific type of human behavior. Your thesis appears at the end of your intro paragraph.

Body

The **body paragraphs** of the social sciences paper will include many elements: the background of the problem or issue you are addressing (which addresses the issue of topic importance), your rationale (which justifies your choice of topics), your statement of qualification (which outlines why you, as a writer, are qualified to write on the subject), a survey of literature (which denotes the sources you used in forming your hypothesis), the methods of research used, the time estimate outline (for completing your experiments/projects), and any information about budget limitations. The body is where you will include any charts or graphs that will assist you in reporting your information. Supporting details should be written to explain these elements.

Conclusion

In the **conclusion** of the social sciences paper, you should recap the information you addressed in the body of the paper. Did your test results differ from your hypothesis? If so, why? The conclusion should explain how the data supported or did not support your hypothesis. In your conclusion you should reinforce the main theme or purpose of your paper.

Sources

Include a **bibliography** to credit any sources used in your paper. Also, many education research papers include an appendix. Most social sciences papers use the APA (American Psychological Association) format for documentation style; however, you will want to discuss style with your instructor before you begin your paper.

PSYCHOLOGY

The **case study** is one of the main writing choices in psychology. These are often studies of a patient seeking help through psychotherapy. These types of case studies can generally be divided into five sections.

Background Information

This section describes the person based on information a therapist would get from the person during an intake interview. This would include but is not limited to demographic information, family history, and history of symptoms.

Psychoanalytic Therapy

This type of treatment could be a traditional or contemporary style of psychoanalysis. In other words, the typical patient laying on a couch and talking about his or her feelings, or a more contemporary approach of question and answer, or another setting in which the patient feels more comfortable. A form of psycho-dynamic therapy (changing up the environment for the patient) could also be used.

Behavioral Therapy

This could be a form of behavioral therapy, cognitive therapy, or a mixture of both.

Humanistic Therapy

This could be existential therapy, gestalt therapy, Zen therapy, or whatever style seems to fit the patient. This is a very progressive form of psychotherapy.

Conclusion

This section should draw an overall conclusion of how the person in question would react to each kind of considered therapy. The patient's feelings do need to be taken into account when recommending the best

treatment, as no one can be helped when they do not want to be. A final recommendation is made, and the case study is usually reviewed by colleagues, or a board or some kind, to comment and recommend a course of action to the psychologist.

ANTHROPOLOGY

Presenting a case study is a common form of presenting the anthropology paper. The writer is looking at and analyzing the past. There are specific guidelines to follow when writing an anthropology paper. Stick to the facts and document these thoroughly in the reference list. Quotations are important, but not as important as data. Because anthropology is such a specialized field, be sure that you re-read your paper several times to be sure that it is comprehensible yet scholarly.

POLITICAL SCIENCE

Writing case studies is the main type of writing in this discipline. When writing a paper in political science, you will probably be analyzing how different political organizations function individually and as a group. While many of the other categories of the social sciences involve directly observing the group dynamics, writing a paper for political science involves **indirect observation**.

Writing for political science can include any level of the government: city, state, or federal. Places you may want to look for current information include government documents and newspaper articles. You should expect to be able to support and defend the chosen topic or argument that is the subject of your paper, and do so in a convincing and scholarly manner.

SOCIOLOGY

Writing about sociology is about studying human behavior and the interaction between individuals or groups. An effective sociology paper will analyze these interactions and remain objective. The pitfall that many writers fall into when writing a sociology paper is that they take sides, and as a result they will slant their tone or argument toward one view or another. A trick to a successful sociology paper is staying neutral. The

case study to be the primary focus in sociology writing. In this discipline, writing about group dynamics is a key element.

EDUCATION

Many topics are covered in the education section of the social sciences, including students with special needs and child development. The instructor may choose to assign a topic for each individual student or the class as a whole. This gives the group the opportunity to work together and developed a more refined paper. The case study is a common type of paper chosen for a group assignment. Other times, the education instructor may allow each student to choose his or her own topic related to the education field. Some of the possible types of papers you may be required to write include literature reviews, an analysis paper, case studies, research papers, and lab papers.

ECONOMICS

An econ paper may be as simple as a journal review or as complicated as original research using surveys and raw data. One important thing to remember when writing in this discipline: be sure your vocabulary reflects the nature of the subject. Use topic-specific words and avoid personal observations. Be as factual as possible, avoiding jumping to unsubstantiated conclusions.

13.3 Writing in the Natural Sciences

Writing in the natural sciences means writing about the natural aspects of our world. Theories are tested in order to solve problems. The natural sciences paper is used to evaluate and conclude from this testing. Besides lab reports and literature reviews, writing in the sciences also includes reviews for a peer or textbook, grant proposals, or equipment and facility requests. You should know your audience and avoid using words it will not understand; likewise, include definitions where appropriate. Space occasionally becomes an issue when writing in the sciences. For example, grant proposal applications and abstracts require the text to be limited to a

short paragraph. Therefore, an indispensable tool for the scientific paper is the ability to summarize quickly and get to the point.

The natural sciences can be broken into two categories: **pure sciences** and **applied sciences**. Pure sciences include the life sciences, physical sciences, and earth sciences. **Life sciences** focus on how plants, animals, and organisms (living things) relate to each other and how they interact with their surroundings, and include biology, ecology, molecular biology and genetics, and food sciences. To write about the **physical sciences** is to write about matter (anything that occupies space) and energy (what causes matter to move) rather than living things. There are many topics in the field of physical science: aerodynamics, thermodynamics, chemistry, and even astronomy. **Earth science** is the study of the earth and its history and includes geology (the study of the structure of the earth and how it formed), meteorology (the study of weather), oceanography (the study of the ocean and the creatures living in it), and space science (the study of the planets, stars, and everything else out there). **Applied science** includes medical sciences (i.e. forensics, pharmaceuticals), engineering sciences (i.e. electrical/mechanical engineering) and computer science.

ELEMENTS OF THE SCIENCE PAPER

Fact is preferred over flair. Write about experiment outcomes, the process of information gathering, and the hypothesis. It is good pedagogic practice to require student write-ups to be near in style to what would be expected in a published paper. There is a tradition in science of using a **neutral tone** (the third person and the passive voice), and some institutions may require this style. Be aware of the requirements of the course, assignment, and audience.

Seven steps to writing in the natural sciences

1. The problem being addressed is stated in an objective fashion.
2. Unbiased relevant information is gathered.
3. The information gathered is analyzed.
4. A hypothesis is formulated.

5. Experimentation proves or disproves the hypothesis. (Keeping a detailed journal of experiment outcomes is important for this step.)
6. Analyze your journal notes.
7. Arrive at your conclusion, which may or may not prove your original hypothesis.

When it comes down to writing your paper, be sure to include the following elements, too.

Title

The title of the natural sciences paper is very important. It should be concise and clearly describe what your paper is about.

- Synthesis of 2-phenyl-2-butanol via a Grignard Reaction

This title describes the molecule of interest and the reaction of interest, making it easy for the reader to determine if this paper is one they would want to read.

Abstract

This is a brief description of your paper. Take the main ideas and summarize them in 250 words or less. (Note that APA style may require keywords at the end of the abstract for searchability.) This is an abstract for a paper written in the organic chemistry field:

- This experiment synthesized 2-phenyl-2-butanol using a Grignard reagent under reflux conditions. Learning to utilize Grignard reagents is an important skill for any future chemist. After performing the experiment, it has been concluded that there was a moderate to poor yield of 2-phenyl-2-butanol produced. Unwanted oxidization of Magnesium metal during the formation of the Grignard reagent is a possible explanation. However, the characterization of the product using IR spectroscopy and ^1H NMR spectroscopy has reinforced the production of a pure product.

The nature of modern computer searches has meant that the abstract of a published paper is paramount. There may be a hundred people reading

the abstract for everyone who reads the full paper. Anything useful which the paper contains therefore must be mentioned in these 250 words.

INTRODUCTION

The paper should begin by introducing and forming a question in the introduction. The introduction should include relevant theories and equations used in your experiment. If other scientists have conducted similar experiments, recognize these predecessors of your work. Any hypotheses you have formed should be stated here. A brief description of the experiments conducted should be outlined in the introduction also, saving the intimate details of the experiments for the body of the paper.

The reaction itself was developed by Victor Grignard of France in the late 1800s. His preparation of magnesium alkyl halides (now referred to as Grignard reagents) was first presented to the Académie des Sciences in France on May 11, 1900. (Nobel Prize.org) The reaction uses Magnesium metal to create an electron rich carbon atom from an alkyl or aryl halide. This is the Grignard reagent. The electron rich carbon atom becomes a nucleophile, attacking any other molecule that is electron poor. If placed in solution with a molecule containing a ketone, the Grignard reagent will attack the ketone carbon, creating a new carbon-carbon bond connected to a negatively charged oxygen atom. That oxygen is then easily turned into an alcohol using any weak acid. ...

This introduction goes into detail regarding the synthesis used and what is synthesized in the experiment. This provides ample background information for the reader who may not be an expert in the experiment performed.

Thesis statement

The thesis statement of a scientific paper is a clear and concise statement of your topic of study. This could be included at the end of your introduction.

The compound synthesized in this reaction, 2-phenyl-2-butanol, is a chiral molecule.

This thesis statement clearly defines what is being accomplished (or trying to be accomplished) through this experiment.

BODY PARAGRAPHS

Since the goal of the scientific paper is to present facts supported by evidence, there are general rules to follow in the paper. Avoid adjectives and adverbs (being descriptive), and instead focus on the nouns (the focus of the paper) and the verbs (how it acted). Structure your sentences so that they are clear and easy to understand. Keep your audience in mind when using technical jargon. The body of the paper will include the following sections:

Experiment

This section contains all of the reagents you used in your experiment, most likely accompanied by any hazard warnings they might carry. If colleagues want to reproduce your experiment, they need to know what they are getting themselves into. Also described here should be all of the equipment used in your data collection process, including specific equipment names and numbers.

Procedure

This section contains the steps taken during your experiment. If you used a procedure previously recorded elsewhere, feel free to simply reference that procedure to save time and precious space for data. If you are using a self-written procedure, you need to meticulously write every step down so that your experiment could be repeated in exactly the same way by a different team of scientists.

Results

Here you would record all of the numerical data you generated during your experiment. Refrain from drawing conclusions. Simply enter tables, graphs, and numbers that are pertinent to your conclusions.

CONCLUSION

In your conclusion, you should focus on the data you presented. Share and discuss your results. Here you are allowed to give your opinion on what the

results mean. Although you are given the freedom to interpret your data how you see fit, avoid linking your findings with other, unexplored subject matter. If you didn't cover it in your introduction or experiment, leave it out of the conclusion.

Acknowledgments

Sometimes you will need to put this section in, such as when you have used a service to run spectra or analysis for you, or someone has given you help by lending some part of their apparatus. Acknowledgment sections are very appropriate and recommended for academic writing, as all equipment utilized usually belongs to the college.

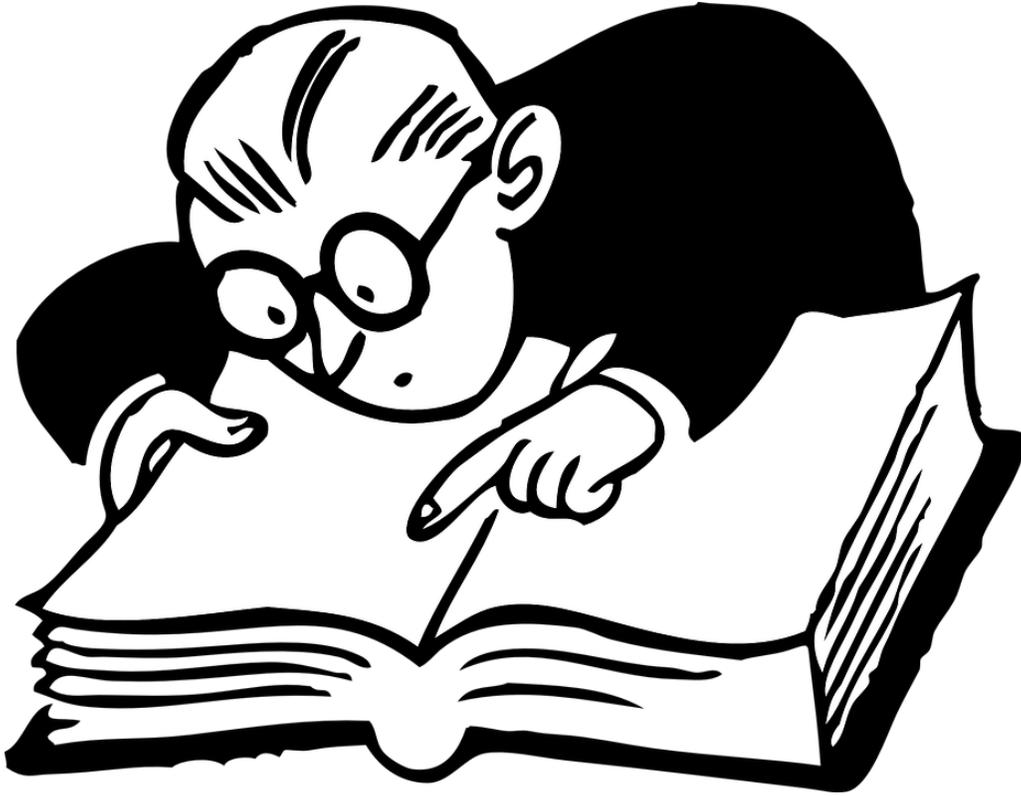
References

Follow the specific documentation style chosen or required. If citing, for example, a huge reference book of analytical and preparatory chemistry, give the page or chapter number so the reader stands a chance of finding the text you used. It is a good idea to make sure you cite any important references already cited for you in the laboratory instructions and add some more to show that you have looked further than just reading your assignment brief. (See the chapter Research and Documentation for more on in-text / parenthetical citations as well as Works Cited and References bibliographies.)

Appendix

This section is reserved for calculations and notes that you made during the actual experimentation process to prove that you did observe what you claim in your paper. This section usually contains a photocopy of the laboratory notebook pages that contain data and comments relevant to your paper.

14 Literary and Rhetorical Terms



Pixabay image shows a scholar discovering meaning in a book.

A to Z Glossary

A to Z Glossary

A¹⁸

allegory

Extended narrative that may be read as a straightforward story but also conveys a deeper, parallel meaning, often about world events. *Animal Farm* by George Orwell tells a fantasy story of animals taking over a farm, but it is also a thinly-disguised history of the USSR.

alliteration

Consecutive words beginning with similar sounds, as in Tennyson's "Morte D'Arthur": "Lo! The level lake." Compare to **assonance**.

ambiguity

The deliberate use of a word that can be taken to have two or more meanings, with the intention of enriching the text by allowing the reader to accept both meanings simultaneously. See also **equivocation**.

allusion

A subtle implication that the reader is expected to recognize. Note that a **reference** would overtly state the thing being referred to.

anachronism

Making a reference that is clearly out of place in a work set in a particular time. A famous example is Shakespeare's reference in *Julius Caesar* to a clock striking.

anaphora

The repetition of an opening word or phrase, often for emphasis.

antistasis

Using a word twice with different meanings: "As God in His *wisdom* ordained, the world would not find him by its *wisdom*" (I Corinthians 1:21).

antithesis

¹⁸ Terms and definitions courtesy of the open *Rhetoric and Composition Wikibook*. Built upon by S.D.

This means **juxtaposing** two phrases or sentences of similar structure but opposite or sharply different meaning.

APA style

A writing style and formatting standard widely used in the social sciences and published by the American Psychological Association, a professional organization representing psychologists in the U.S.A.

aposiopesis

A form of ellipsis where an argument is presented and the conclusion is deliberately omitted, to be supplied by the reader or listener.

apostrophe

In rhetoric, this does not mean the punctuation symbol ('). It is a direct address to someone who cannot answer, such as when a person speaks to a photograph of a deceased grandparent.

appositive

A noun or noun phrase is placed beside the subject, e.g.,
"Rudolph, *the red-nosed reindeer*, had a very shiny nose."

archaism

The deliberate use of obsolete expressions. This may be done because of the nature of the subject matter, to create a particular rhythm or mood (for example, solemnity).

assonance

The recurrence of a similar vowel sound in several words close together, e.g., Keats's "Ode on a Grecian Urn" with its "i" sounds:
"Thou still unravished bride of quietness, / Thou foster child of silence and slow time."

asyndeton

Consecutive phrases are not connected by a conjunction where one would be expected, e.g., "I came, I saw, I conquered" should have an "and" in it. This example also shows the sentence error of **comma splice**.

B

bathos

(From the Greek for *depth*.) This means you seem to be saying something very profound but then undermine the **gravitas** with a frivolous anticlimax.

bombast

An inflated, verbose style used by self-important people or used for deliberate satirical or comic effect.

brainstorming

A method of problem solving or discovery by spontaneously coming up with an exhaustive list of ideas and critiquing them later.

C

cacophony

Harsh and unpleasant language. Contrast **euphony**.

capitalization

The use of uppercase characters in sentences, proper names, and titles.

chiasmus

A pair of clauses or phrases where the second has the same language as the first except that the syntax is changed. The two phrases can be very similar, as in Yeats's "An Irish Airman Foresees His Death": "The years to come seemed waste of breath, / A waste of breath the years behind."

circumlocution

Saying things in a very roundabout way; using many words when saying things directly would use far fewer words. It is also called **periphrasis**.

clustering

Similar to **mapping**, clustering is a prewriting technique of writing a central idea within a circle with related ideas radially joined to the circle.

comic relief

The use of comedy, especially low comedy such as slapstick, to ease the tension of a particularly dramatic or melodramatic passage.

comma splice

An error consisting of joining two independent clauses with only a comma instead of with a semicolon or with a comma + FANBOYS.

conceit

An extended, elaborate, metaphorical parallel between two situations or objects.

conclusion

May be the final sentence wrapping up a paragraph or may be the final paragraph of an essay.

copy editing

The correction of spelling, grammar, formatting, etc. of printed material and preparing it for typesetting, printing, or online publishing.

cosmic irony

A literary work in which God, “the gods,” or Fate manipulates events to give one false hope, only to mock and frustrate that hope.

D

dangling modifier

A misplaced word or clause causing confusion with regard to the speaker’s meaning, such as “Trekking across the desert, fierce winds swirled around the riders”: it was not “winds” that were trekking across the desert, so another subject (say, “the caravan”) is needed after “the desert.”

dash

The symbol “–” (en-dash) or “—” (em-dash), used to mark an interruption in a sentence.

dead metaphor

A metaphor that is so familiar that people have generally forgotten that it is a metaphor, such as “the heart of the matter.”

deductive reasoning

“Top-down” reasoning in which one begins with a major premise and a minor premise and from these draws a conclusion.

major premise: applies to all things within a particular category.

minor premise: applies to a particular case rather than to a general category.

syllogism: Men are tall. John is a man. Therefore, John is tall.

enthymeme: implies rather than states a section of an argument or proof.

dependent clause

A group of words that contains a subject and a verb but is not a complete sentence; may be a **fragment**. Contrast with **independent clause**.

deus ex machina

Literally “god from a machine,” this originally referred to the classical Greek practice of resolving all the difficulties in a play by having a god descend on the stage via a mechanical apparatus. It now, metaphorically, refers to a sudden and arbitrary plot twist to solve a problem.

diction

The style of a work, as manifested by the choice of vocabulary, phrasing and figures of speech. It is often used in the phrase “poetic diction.”

doggerel

Poorly-written or comedic poetry.

dramatic irony

Audience knows things that a character does not, and can therefore be amused when things are said or done that have a different meaning from what that character imagines.

E

ellipsis

The omission of words. Use ellipses as punctuation (. . .) when you remove the middle of a quotation.

enjambment

In poetry when sentences spill over from line to line rather than stopping at the end of each line (contrast with **end-stopping**).

epigram

A short poem that ends with a witty or surprising turn.

epithet

An adjective or adjectival phrase that is used to describe the special quality of a thing or person (“my flaxen-haired beauty”). May also be pejorative, as in a racial epithet.

epithalamion

A poem in celebration of a wedding.

equivocate

A word or phrase with different meanings, perhaps used intentionally to create ambiguity or to resist taking a position.

essay

A short piece of non-narrative writing, including argumentation, compare/contrast, literary criticism, research, etc.

euphemism

Replacing an unpleasant word or expression with a more pleasant one, e.g., “The dog died” becomes “He passed away.”

euphony

Writing designed to be very smooth and pleasant, often almost musical in effect. It is designed to heighten the effect of pleasant emotions in a passage. Contrast **cacophony**.

euphuism

A prose style that is elaborate and formal. It was most popular in the 1580s and was parodied by Shakespeare in several of his plays.

exposition

The writing that mainly explains and instructs, assuming no prior knowledge of the reader; exposition is a basic writing mode and should not be confused with argumentation or analysis.

eye-rhyme

In poetry, rhyming two words that are spelt the same (hence seem to rhyme to the eye) but are pronounced differently (so would not rhyme to the ear), e.g., through/trough or machine/fine.

F

figurative language

Writing where the intended meaning is not what would be implied by the literal meaning of the words and the standard rules of syntax.

See **metaphor, personification, simile, synecdoche**, etc.

figure of speech

A saying, common expression, or idiom. It may also be figurative language, e.g., “I said I could eat a horse, but that was just a figure of speech!”

H

heroic couplet

Style of poetry consisting of iambic pentameters rhyming in pairs “aa bb cc ...” It was used extensively by Chaucer and many subsequent poets.

hyperbole

(From the Greek for “overshooting.”) Exaggeration or overstatement for serious or comic effect.

hyphen

Symbol “-” is typically used to join two related words to form a compound noun, or to indicate that a word has been split at the end of a line.

I

independent clause

A group of words forming a sentence that expresses a complete thought. Contrast with **dependent clause** or **fragment**.

inductive reasoning

Observes and examines (as during social science research) some cases or groups and concludes whether results can be applied to other cases and groups.

invective

Denunciation of someone via derogatory epithets.

inversion

The reversal of the usual order of words for rhetorical or stylistic effect.

invocation

A request by an author for a muse to help him or her write.

irony

A statement where the superficial assertion is not what the author really means. For example, one may ironically say, “Another lovely day!” when it is pouring rain.

L

litotes

An ironic understatement, e.g., saying “He’s not the tallest boy in the school” to suggest that he’s short.

logos

A rhetorical technique that appeals to logic or reason. For types of logical arguments, see **deductive** and **inductive** reasoning.

M

manuscript

A text that has not been published. In our English class, may be synonymous with **draft**.

mechanics

Spelling, punctuation, and grammar--technical aspects of writing.

melodrama

A form storytelling marked by exaggeration, e.g., the heroes are paragons of virtue, while the villains are unredeemable monsters.

metaphor

A figure of speech in which someone or something is said to be something else, e.g., “You are my sunshine, my only sunshine” from the popular song. (Contrast with **simile**, which uses “like” or “as” to compare.)

metonymy

A figure of speech (from the Greek “change of name”) in which the term for someone or something is replaced by a term for something closely associated, as “the crown” for “the king.”

mixed metaphor

The use of two **metaphors** in the same passage, with ludicrous results if the literal meaning is considered. “A torrent of brimstone descended on him, and he was frozen out of the discussion.” - Stephen Leacock.

MLA style

The style of writing and citing for scholars of language and literature, published in *MLA Style Manual* by the Modern Language Association.

N

narration

A story or series of events that may be fiction or non-fiction.

O

onomatopoeia

A word or words whose sounds suggest their meanings. Simple examples include “hiss” and “buzz.”

oxymoron

(From the Greek *oxus*, sharp + *moros*, foolish) A figure of speech where two contradictory words are juxtaposed, e.g., “open secret” or “seriously funny.”

P

paradox

A statement that seems contradictory but is actually true.

parallelism

The use of consecutive or nearly consecutive phrases of similar meaning and structure. It is common in Biblical poetry and song lyrics.

parody

A light-hearted imitation (vs. **satire**) that resembles the original fairly closely in style and subject though not in tone.

pathetic fallacy

Attributing human feelings and abilities to plants and inanimate objects. The term was coined by John Ruskin.

pathos

An attempt to persuade an audience by evoking pity, anger, patriotism, righteousness, or other feelings. May be used to manipulate an audience.

personification

A concept or an inanimate object is portrayed as a person, something endowed with life and feelings. We also say **anthropomorphism** or **prosopopeia**.

pleonasm

Wordiness; a superfluous or redundant expression.

poetic license

The liberties that a poet may take in the name of poetry. These may be grammatical or factual. Supposedly, prose writers should not take such liberties, but they do. Also known as **artistic license**.

portmanteau

A new word (**neologism**) created by fusing two existing words. The term was coined by Lewis Carroll, who gives as an example “slithy” meaning “lithe and slimy”; many examples of such words occur in his books *Through the Looking Glass* and *The Hunting of the Snark*.

prewriting

An early stage in the writing process, consisting of loose activities such as brainstorming and outlining; it is a preparation for writing.

proofreading

Reading and correction of the final draft, with the focus on spelling, punctuation, formatting, typographical conventions, and prevention of textual inconsistencies. See also editing and revising, and copy editing.

prosopopeia

See personification.

pun

A humorous play on words, using homonyms or similar-sounding words with very different meanings. “When is a door not a door? When it’s ajar.”

punctuation

These signs indicate the structure of a sentence and spoken dialogue. They include periods, colons, semi-colons, commas, question marks, exclamation points, apostrophes, hyphens, parentheses, brackets, and dashes.

purple prose

A passage (usually of prose but also of poetry) where the sudden heightening of flowery **diction** makes the passage stand out as silly or overly grandiose.

R

refrain

This is a phrase or line that recurs at the end of each stanza of a poem. Sometimes it is repeated with slight variations. In some songs, the refrain is an opportunity for others to join in singing, and it is then called a **chorus**.

rhetoric

The art of persuasion. A rhetorician uses character (**ethos**), a sound argument (**logos**), and awareness of the audience's emotions and state-of-mind (**pathos**).

rhetorical question

Asking a question not for an answer but for emphasis. In *Julius Caesar* Mark Anthony says not, "This was not ambition" but asks, "Was this ambition?"

rough draft

An early or first draft.

S

sarcasm

A sort of mean-spirited irony in which someone means the opposite of what he or she says.

satire

Evoking scorn and derision towards a public figure by making the subject seem ridiculous. Satire often highlights social ills and absurdities.

scheme

A pattern often used to establish a regular rhyme, meter, or beat in a poem.

simile

A figure of speech in which someone or something is claimed to be like something else. "Nor dim, nor red, like God's own head, the glorious Sun uprist." --Samuel Taylor Coleridge's "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner"

Socratic irony

A form of irony, named after Socrates, in which a questioner pretends to be ignorant and sympathetic to an assumption or point of view so that his seemingly innocuous questions can undermine the assumption.

soliloquy

The act of talking to oneself, either silently or aloud. It is used mainly in plays; Shakespeare has several examples, such as Hamlet's "To be or not to be" and Macbeth's "Is this a dagger."

symploce

A combination of **anaphora** and **epiphora**.

synecdoche

A figure of speech (from the Greek for "taking together") in which the name for someone or something is replaced by the name of part of it, e.g., "hand" for "workman."

T

thesis

The central claim of an essay, the thesis sentence appears at the end of the introductory paragraph.

tone

The manner in which speech or writing is expressed, such as serious, humorous, satirical, conversational, etc.

transition

A phrase, clause, or sentence at the beginning of a paragraph that supports the shift of the reader's attention from the subject treated in the previous paragraph to the new subject.

trope

A literary device that uses words in non-literal ways, changing or modifying the general meaning of a term. "Life's but a walking shadow; a poor player that struts and frets his hour upon the stage." -
-William Shakespeare, *Macbeth*

U

understatement

Implying that something is far less important or significant than it is. This is often done for ironic emphasis, e.g., "I got up at 4 am today-- just slightly earlier than normal." Compare to **litotes**.

W

writer's anxiety

Anxiety with which writers sometimes have to deal when trying to write while staring at a blank paper, especially in the early phases of the writing process.

Z

zeugma

This comes from the Greek for "yoking." It means having one word in the same grammatical relation to two or more other words in a way that means that the first word has different meanings with respect to each of the others, e.g., "Or *stain* her honour, or her new brocade" (Alexander Pope).