Intersections: An Integrated Reading and Writing Textbook

Third Edition

Excerpts taken from "Becoming a Critical Reader", chapter 2 from the book Writers' Handbook (index.html) (v. 1.0).

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Chapter One: Academic Reading

Academic Reading

Starting college can be intimidating. So can college reading and writing assignments. College not only requires you to read and comprehend the material largely on your own, it also requires that you learn to think critically about the information and apply it to new settings. The unit will explore critical reading and writing.

Examining the Status Quo

Why are you here?

The question sounds simple enough, and you may well have developed some stock answers by now.

I'm here because…

- I want to be a_______________when I grow up.
- college graduates make more money.
- my parents wanted me to go here.
- my boyfriend or girlfriend got accepted here.
- I couldn't get in anywhere else.
- I just got laid off.

Maybe the truth is, deep down, that you don't really know yet why you're here, and that's OK. By the end of your college experience, you'll have developed several good answers for why you were here, and they won't necessarily look anything like your first stock response.

But what does this personal question about your motivations for being in college have to do with examining the status quo? Well, the first way to learn how to examine the status quo (literally, "the state in which") is to examine your place in it. By enrolling in higher education, you're making a choice to develop your skills and intellect beyond a baseline level of proficiency. Choosing to become a college-educated person obligates you to leave your mark on the world.

You're investing time and money into your college education, presumably for the real benefits it will provide you, but it's important to remember that others are investing in you as well. Perhaps family members are providing financial support, or the federal government is providing a Pell Grant or a low-interest loan, or an organization or alumni group is awarding you a scholarship. If you're attending a state school, the state government is investing in you because your tuition (believe it or not) covers only a small portion of the total cost to educate you.

So what is the return a free, independent, evolving society expects on its investment in you, and what should you be asking of yourself? Surely something more than mere maintenance of the status quo should be in order. Rather, society expects you to be a member of a college-educated citizenry and workforce capable of improving the lives and lot of future generations.

Getting into the habit of "examining" (or even "challenging") the status quo doesn't necessarily mean putting yourself into a constant state of revolution or rebellion. Rather, the process suggests a kind of mindfulness, a certain disposition to ask a set of questions about your surroundings:

- What is the status quo of__________? (descriptive)
- Why is________the way it is? (diagnostic)
- What (or who) made_________this way? (forensic)
- Was________ever different in the past? (historical)
- Who benefits from keeping_______the way it is? (investigative)

Only after these relatively objective questions have been asked, researched, and answered might you hazard a couple of additional, potentially more contentious questions:

- How could or should_______be different in the future? (speculative)
- What steps would be required to make________different? (policy based)

These last two types of questions are more overtly controversial, especially if they are applied to status-quo practices that have been in place for many years or even generations. But asking even

the seemingly benign questions in the first category will directly threaten those forces and interests that benefit most from the preservation of the status quo. You will encounter resistance not only from this already powerful group but also from reformers with competing interests who have different opinions about where the status quo came from or how it should be changed.

Before you risk losing heart or nerve for fear of making too many enemies by roiling the waters, think about the benefits the habit of privately examining the status quo might have for your thinking, writing, and learning.

Since we began this section with a discussion about education and your place in it, let's close by having you exercise this habit on that same subject. For starters, let's just apply the questioning habit to some of what you may have been taught about *academic writing* over the years. Here is one description of the status quo thinking on the subject that might be worth some examination.

What Is the Status Quo of Academic Writing?

- Writing can and should be taught and learned in a certain, systematic way.
- Writing has been taught and learned in much the same way over time.
- Becoming a good writer is a matter of learning the forms (genres, modes, etc.) of academic writing.
- Students are blank slates who know next to nothing about how to write.
- Writing done outside of academic settings (e-mail, texting, graffiti, comics, video game design, music lyrics, etc.) is not really writing.
- Knowing what you think is a must before you turn to writing.
- Writing is largely a solitary pursuit.
- Good writing can happen in the absence of good reading.
- Using agreed-on norms and rubrics for evaluation is how experts can measure writing quality based on students' responses to standardized prompts.

Your list might look a little different, depending on your experience as a student writer. But once you have amassed your description of the status quo, you're ready to run each element of it

through the rest of the mindfulness questions that appear earlier in the section. Or more broadly, you can fill in the blanks of those mindfulness questions with “college” (as you have just described it):

Exercises

1.So why are you here? (Be honest, keep it private if you want, but repeat the exercise for the next twenty-eight days and see if your answer changes.)

2.Near the end of this section, you were invited to apply the mindfulness questions to traditional practices in the teaching and learning of academic writing. Now it’s time to try those questions on a topic of your choice or on one of the following topics. Fill in the blank in each case with the chosen topic and answer the resulting question. Keep in mind that this exercise, in some cases, could require a fair amount of research but might also net a pretty substantial essay.

The Mindfulness Questions

◦What is the status quo of________? (descriptive)

◦Why is_______the way it is? (diagnostic)

◦What (or who) made________this way? (forensic)

◦Was_______ever different in the past? (historical)

◦Who benefits from keeping______the way it is? (investigative)

◦How could or should______be different in the future? (speculative)

◦What steps would be required to make_______different? (policy based)

3.Do some research on an aspect of K–12 or college-level education that you suspect has maintained the status quo for too long. Apply the mindfulness questions to the topic, performing some research and making policy recommendations as necessary.

Reading Assignment:

Text: School Matters - Mindset. Some people believe the way to increase graduation rates is to tap into student motivation. The following article by Carol S. Dweck explores the relationship between mindset and student success.

Active Reading:

- Read and annotated for key ideas of Dweck's mindset theory.
- If you have questions about how to annotate, see the "How to Annotate a Text" resource at the at the end of the chapter.
- Skim back over the text and highlight areas that you think might address the "Mindful questions" listed above. How does Dweck attempt to answer some of these questions with her research?
- Choose three quotes or "Golden Lines" from the reading. You can choose them because you disagree or disagree with the author, the author raises a question that you too have thought about or because you are not sure what the author means. Do the following for each sentence:

o Write the sentence as is.

o Paraphrase the sentence (put the idea in your own words) to the best of your ability. If you chose a sentence because you are not sure what it means, take your best guess, based on your background knowledge or things the author stated in other parts of the text.

o What do you think the author means? Why did you choose this sentence? Write a few sentences about that and be prepared to discuss your selections in class.

Posing Productive Questions

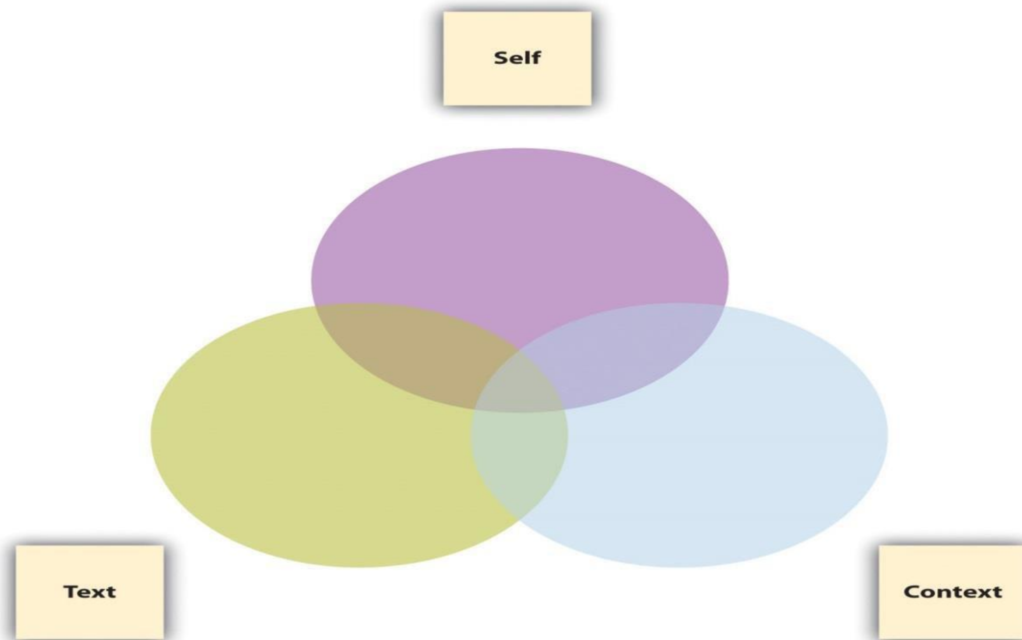
In this section, we'll explore other ways to open up thinking, reading and writing through the systematic process of critical inquiry. Essentially three elements are involved in any act of questioning:

1. The self doing the questioning
2. The text about which the questions are being asked
3. The context of the text being questioned

For our purposes, **text** should be defined here very broadly as **anything** that can be subjected to analysis or interpretation, including but certainly not limited to written texts. Texts can be found everywhere, including but not limited to these areas:

- Music
- Film
- Television
- Video games
- Art and sculpture
- The Internet
- Modern technology
- Advertisement
- Public spaces and architecture
- Politics and government

The following Venn diagram is meant to suggest that relatively simple questions arise when any two out of three of these elements are implicated with each other, while the most complicated, productive questions arise when all three elements are taken into consideration.



Asking the following questions about practically any kind of text will lead to a wealth of ideas, insights, and possible essay topics. As a short assignment in a journal or blog, or perhaps as a group or whole-class exercise, try out these questions by filling in the blanks with a specific text under your examination, perhaps something as common and widely known as "Wikipedia" or "Facebook" or "Google" (for ideas about where to find other texts, see the first exercise at the end of this section).

Twenty Questions about Self, Text, and Context

Self-Text Questions

- What do I think about_____________?
- What do I feel about____________?
- What do I understand or what puzzles me in or about_____________?
- What turns me off or amuses me in or about_____________?
- What is predictable or surprises me in or about_____________?

Text-Context Questions

- How is____________a product of its culture and historical moment?
- What might be important to know about the creator of____________?
- How is____________affected by the genre and medium to which it belongs?
- What other texts in its genre and medium does____________resemble?
- How does____________distinguish itself from other texts in its genre and medium?

Self-Context Questions

- How have I developed my aesthetic sensibility (my tastes, my likes, and my dislikes)?
- How do I typically respond to absolutes or ambiguities in life or in art? Do I respond favorably to gray areas or do I like things more clear-cut?
- With what groups (ethnic, racial, religious, social, gendered, economic, nationalist, regional, etc.) do I identify?
- How have my social, political, and ethical opinions been formed?
- How do my attitudes toward the "great questions" (choice vs. necessity, nature vs. nurture, tradition vs. change, etc.) affect the way I look at the world?

Self-Text-Context Questions

- How does my personal, cultural, and social background affect my understanding of ________?
- What else might I need to learn about the culture, the historical moment, or the creator that produced____________in order to more fully understand it?
- What else about the genre or medium of____________might I need to learn in order to understand it better?
- How might____________ look or sound different if it were produced in a different time or place?
- How might____________ look or sound different if I were viewing it from a different perspective or identification?

We've been told there's no such thing as a stupid question, but to call certain questions "productive" is to suggest that there's such a thing as an **un**productive question. When you ask rhetorical questions to which you already know the answer or that you expect your audience to answer in a certain way, are you questioning productively? Perhaps not, in the sense of knowledge creation, but you may still be accomplishing a rhetorical purpose. And sometimes even rhetorical questions can produce knowledge. Let's say you ask your sister, "How can someone as intelligent as you are do such self-destructive things?" Maybe you're merely trying to direct your sister's attention to her self-destructive behavior, but upon reflection, the question could actually trigger some productive self-examination on her part.

Hypothetical questions, at first glance, might also seem unproductive since they are usually founded on something that hasn't happened yet and may never happen. Politicians and debaters try to steer clear of answering them but often ask them of their opponents for rhetorical effect. If we think of hypothetical questions merely as speculative ploys, we may discount their productive possibilities. But hypothetical questions asked in good faith are crucial building blocks of knowledge creation. Asking "What if we tried something else?" leads to the formation of a hypothesis, which is a theory or proposition that can be subjected to testing and experimentation.

This section has focused more on the types of genuinely interrogative questions that can lead to productive ideas for further exploration, research, knowledge creation and deeper, more critical reading once you decide how you want to go public with your thinking.

Exercises

1. Read "Brainology" or another text selected by your instructor and annotate for Key Ideas. In addition, choose one or two questions from the Twenty Questions about Self, Text, and Context to focus on as you annotate "Brainology" or another text assigned by your instructor. These questions will serve as your GUIDING PURPOSE for reading.

2. You can annotate directly on the article, or use the Reading Log/note-taker.

3. If you still have questions about how to annotate, see the How to Annotate a Text: Insert Annotating sheet from http://faculty.catawba.edu/jmbitzer/War/TextAnnotation.pdf at the end of the chapter

Reading Log/Note-taker

Student Name: ___________________________________

Title of
Text:____

Focus questions from **20 Questions about Text, Self and Context**:

1.

2.

3.

Evidence from the Text	**How the evidence from the text helps you answer or think about the question**

Becoming a Critical Reader

Understanding How Critical Thinking Works

"Critical thinking" has been a common phrase in education for more than a quarter century, but it can be a slippery concept to define. Perhaps because "critical" is an adjective with certain negative connotations (e.g., "You don't have to be so critical" or "Everybody's a critic"), people sometimes think that critical thinking is a fault- finding exercise or that there is nothing creative about it. But defined fairly and fully, **critical thinking** is in fact a precondition to creativity.

Critical thinkers consider multiple sides of an issue before choosing sides. They tend to ask questions instead of accepting everything they hear or read, and they know that answers often only open up more lines of inquiry. Critical thinkers read between the lines instead of reading only at face value, and they also develop a keen sense of how their own minds operate. Critical thinkers recognize that much of the information they read and hear is a combination of fact and opinion. To be successful in college, you will have to learn to differentiate between fact and opinion through logic, questioning, and verification.

Facts are pieces of information that you can verify as true. **Opinions** are personal views or beliefs that may have very little grounding in fact. Since opinions are often put forth as if they were facts, they can be challenging to recognize as opinions. That's where critical thinkers tend to keep questioning. It is not enough to question only the obviously opinionated material in a text. Critical thinkers develop a habit of subjecting all textual statements to a whole constellation of questions about the **speaker** (or writer), the intended **audience**, the **statement** itself, and the **relevance** of it.

Considering the **speaker**:

- Who is making this the statement?
- What are the speaker's affiliations?
- How does the speaker know the truth of this statement?

Considering the **audience**:

- Who is being addressed with this statement?
- What could connect the speaker of the statement with the intended audience?
- Would all people consider this statement to be true?

Considering the **statement**:

- Can this statement be proven?
- Will this statement also be true tomorrow or next year?
- If this statement is true, what else might be true?
- Are there other possible interpretations of the facts behind this statement?

Considering **relevance**:

- What difference does this statement make?
- Who cares (and who should care)?
- So what? What now? What's next?

Writers naturally write with some basic assumptions. Without a starting point, a writer would have no way to begin writing. As a reader, you have to be able to identify the assumptions a writer makes and then judge whether or not those assumptions need to be challenged or questioned. As an **active reader**[6], you must acknowledge that both writers and readers make assumptions as they negotiate the meaning of any text. A good process for uncovering assumptions is to try to think backward from the text. Get into the habit of asking yourself, "In order to make this given statement, what else must this writer also believe?"

Whether you recognize it or not, you also have biases and preconceptions on which you base many decisions. These biases and preconceptions form a screen or a lens through which you see your world. Biases and preconceptions are developed out of your life's experiences and influences. As a critical thinker who considers all sides of an issue, you have to identify your personal positions and subject them to scrutiny.

Just as you must uncover assumptions—those of the writer as well as your own as a reader—to truly capture what you are reading, you must also examine the assumptions that form the foundation of your writing. And you must be prepared to do so throughout the writing process; such self-questioning can, in fact, be a powerful strategy for revision.

Exercises:

1. Use the questions sets for speaker, audience, statement considering relevance provided at the end of this chapter to guide your reading of "You Can Grow Your Brain" or another selection provided by your instructor. Select one or two questions to focus on as you read.

2. While reading, annotate the text to highlight the following:

a. Important ideas.

b. Anything you wonder about or agree/disagree with.

c. Anything that will help you address the questions you have chosen.

3. Be prepared to discuss the readings and your ideas in class.

4. If you wish you may use the double column note taking sheet provided or just annotate directly on your article.

Using Text Clues

So far in this chapter, we have discussed questions, knowledge and experience you bring to the table as a reader, and how to use your knowledge of world the to help you make sense of a text, and to read it critically. Keep in mind that reading is a conversation between the reader and the writer. To help keep the conversation clear, writers use certain text features to say "Hey, this is an important idea! Slow down and pay attention." The following chart highlights some of these features, and how they help communication between reader and writer. These are additional things to highlight or take notes about when reading.

You can believe it's a main idea if…	Because Writers often…
There are details that reflect or refer to the title.	Summarize their thesis in the title of their work.
Details are located and the beginning or end of the essay.	Introduce their **key ideas and thesis** in the i**ntroduction** and reinforce their ideas in the **conclusion**.
Repetition of an idea, or a word (can be phrased differently or be a synonym of the word).	Writers use repetitive words or phrases to make **transitions** between ideas in the text.
Surprises, revelations, whenever your expectations are not met	Surprises revelations and unmet expectations are **attention grabbing devices** authors uses to indicate that something is important.
Lots of attention given to a detail – for instance, long explanations or description, but BEWARE! Usually, the key idea is the thing being explained or described not the description itself.	Writers use **description and examples** to make their topic interesting to readers, and to help the reader understand an unfamiliar concept. BUT THE CONCEPT IS THE MAIN IDEA, NOT THE EXPLANATION OR EXAMPLE.
It's a title, sub-heading, italicized or in bold print	Writers create sections within their text to highlight important ideas. They will also use italics or bold print to catch the readers' attention.
A question near the beginning or end of the text, but BEWARE! The answer the author gives to the question is the main idea- not the question itself.	Asking a question is a rhetorical device used to engage the reader. Authors always attempt to answer the question within the essay.
Indicates a change in mood, character, plot or setting.	Change in mood, character, plot or setting is the author's way of indicating that something important has shifted with a character or with the author's point of view on a topic.

Name: ____

Reading Log/Note-taker

Title of
Text:____

Focus questions for **speaker, audience, statement or relevance**:

1.

2.

3.

Evidence from the Text (quote or parphrase information from the book here)	How does this piece of text help answer your chosen questions or reflect an author assumption? Does the piece of text you chose reflect a key idea?

How to Annotate a Text

Source: http://faculty.catawba.edu/jmbitzer/War/TextAnnotation.pdf

What is Text Annotation?

Textbook annotation is part of a system of textbook marking that involves the reader (the student...you!) in:

1. Writing brief summaries in the text's margins
2. Listing or numbering multiple ideas (causes, effects, reasons, characteristics)
3. Sketching pictures and charts to explain difficult processes/ concepts
4. Predicting & writing possible test questions
5. Noting puzzling or confusing ideas that need clarification by the professor
6. Underlining key ideas or concepts

What Can Text Annotation Do for Me?

Text annotation can have several advantages for the reader (you!). It will:

1. Improve your concentration so you will not become distracted and have to reread the text.
2. Provide an immediate self-check for your understanding of the text's key ideas.
3. Help you remember more.
4. Assist you in getting ready for tests on the material.
5. Negate the need of time spent in rereading the chapters.
6. Help you state ideas in your own words.

What Should I look for When I Annotate?

Here are some important factors/areas to look for when reading and annotating:

What am I looking for?	**How do I annotate it?**
Definitions	*Def.* * [ ]
Lists, features, causes, effects, characteristics, reasons	*1.* (done in the text/margin) *2.*
Names, dates, events that are key	*Underline or*
(circle)	
Examples of main idea	*ex* (in the margin)
Good summary of the passage	*{* (in the margin)
Good test questions of the passage	*T.Q.* (in the margin)
Something you didn't understand	*??* (in the margin or the text)

How Should I Annotate a Text?

Here are some steps to applying annotation to texts:

1. Skim through the chapter. Note the organization of the chapter (are there subheadings, pictures, graphs, etc.)

2. Skim the introduction, THEN the conclusion, before reading the entire chapter. This will help you get a sense as to what exactly you should know before diving in and reading.

3. Read one or more paragraphs. Then STOP. The amount of text you can read will vary from text to text, according to difficulty and organization.

4. Think about the key ideas that you have read—what is the author arguing, or how is the author supporting the argument?

5. Briefly write the key ideas in the margin, looking for the following:

    - Definitions
    - Examples
    - Lists
    - Causes and effects
    - Characteristics
    - Likenesses/differences
    - Names or dates or other important information

6. Check your annotations to be sure that they make sense to you.

7. Go on to the next section or paragraph. Remember, not every paragraph will have a key concept that should be annotated, but every page or section usually does.

How Can I Study Based on This System?

How can you study based on this system?

1. Cover the text.

2. Read your annotations. Ask yourself the following questions:

    - Do my annotations make sense?

    - Do I understand the concepts identified?

3. If not, uncover the text and reread only the key material. Do not reread the entire section.

4. In essence, you want to talk yourself through the entire chapter/text and actively learn the material.

Academic Writing

Academic Writing

Differences between High School and College Writing

If you're like most first-year college students, you're probably anxious about your first few writing assignments. Transitioning from being a successful high school writer to being a quality college writer can be difficult. You have to adjust to different learning cultures. You have to accept that college writing is different from high school writing and come to understand how it is different.

These students relay a typical range of first-year college experiences:

Emma: I always got As on my high school papers, so I thought I was a good writer until I came to college and had to completely rewrite my first paper to get a C–.

Javier: I received an F on my first college paper because I "did not include one original thought in the whole paper." I thought I was reporting on information I had researched. I didn't know that I was supposed to add my own thoughts. Luckily, the professor had a policy to throw out each student's lowest grade of the semester.

Danyell: The professor in my Comp 101 class said that he didn't want us turning in anything meaningless or trite. He said that we were to show him that we had critical thought running through our heads and knew how to apply it to the readings we found in our research. I had no idea what he was talking about.

Pat: I dreaded my first college English class since I had never done well in English classes in high school. Writing without grammatical and mechanical errors is a challenge for me, and my high school teachers always gave me low grades on my papers due to all my mistakes. So I was surprised when I got a B+ on my first college paper, and the professor had written, "Great paper! You make a solid argument. Clean up your grammar and mechanics next time and you will get an A!" Suddenly it seemed that there was something more important than grammar and punctuation!

What's "Higher" about Higher Education?

Despite the seeming discrepancy between what high school and college teachers think constitutes good college writing, there is an overall consensus about what is "higher" about higher education.

Thinking with flexibility, depth, awareness, and understanding, as well as focusing on how you think, are some of the core building blocks that make higher education "higher." These thinking methods coupled with perseverance, independence, originality, and a personal sense of mission are core values of higher education.

Differences between High School and College Culture

The difference between high school and college culture is like the difference between childhood and adulthood. Childhood is a step-by-step learning process. Adulthood is an independent time when you use the information you learned in childhood. In high school culture, you were encouraged to gather knowledge from teachers, counselors, parents, and textbooks. As college students, you will rely on personal assistance from authorities less and less as you learn to analyze texts and information independently. You will be encouraged to collaborate **with others, but more to discuss ideas and concepts critically than to secure guidance.**

How the Writing Process Differs in College

It's important to understand that no universal description of either high school or college writing exists. High school teachers might concentrate on skills they want their students to have before heading to college: knowing how to analyze (often literary) texts, to develop the details of an idea, and to organize a piece of writing, all with solid mechanics. A college teacher might be more concerned with developing students' ability to think, discuss, and write on a more abstract, interdisciplinary level. But there are exceptions, and debates rage on about where high school writing ends and college writing begins.

The Writing Process

We might not think much about our process for creating text, but each of us has cultivated our own methods since we could hold a crayon. Writing is steeped in so much of what we do, especially our digital world of social media, instant messaging, email, and texting.

Our ability to share what we write to anyone with an Internet connection and computer device is quite remarkable. Even though it might not seem like writing, each of the little "masterpieces" we create and then share with the click of a **Send** or **Publish** button celebrates how far we've come from the days of publishing with the printing press.

Unfortunately, many students would admit they do not enjoy academic writing—and some would even say they hate it! But you have many more college papers left to write, and likely will continue writing beyond college and into the workplace. There are strategies that can help you improve your academic writing skills and this module will explore the processes proficient writers use to develop academic writing. You may even find some joy in it!

The writing process is different for every person and for every writing type, but there are common steps that are important to practice. Generally, the writing process consists of:

- *Prewriting* (the early planning stages often as mindmapping, brainstorming, freewriting)
- *Organizing* (developing logical order)
- *Drafting* (creating the paper and demonstrating the recursive nature of writing)
- *Revising* (conforming to Standard Edited English and style formatting, such as MLA and APA, for most academic writing)
- *Publishing* (the final version that is submitted)

Prewriting

Many students see prewriting as a waste of time and jump right into drafting. However, when you skip over the first steps of writing and move straight to drafting, the process of writing may take much more time.

Proficient writers know prewriting is important because it allows you to generate ideas to frame your thinking and provide a broad range of content.

Spending time planning your writing will ensure that the best of your ideas come together in a cohesive way. This will also make the drafting and revising process easier and result in a higher quality finished piece.

Review Brainstorming

Brainstorming is a technique of listing as many ideas as possible about your writing topic. The greatest rule of Brainstorming is to keep the process as broad and open as possible. Review the video below about brainstorming.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DQbPv3jm1E4

Review Mindmapping

Mindmapping is similar to Brainstorming, but it is much more visual. It allows you to create connections between ideas. It can be a useful step after Brainstorming, or it may match your style better if Brainstorming seems too random. Review the video below about Mindmapping.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_3r6ZbE3ci0

Review Freewriting

Freewriting is a process of simply writing. It helps you get started and can expand your thinking. Review the video below about freewriting.
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ASw_iAd1TZo

Exercise

Complete a prewriting about the following topic:

My Writing Process
Think about the type of writing you did in school. What are your memories of those experiences? Do you look back at the type of writing you did with joy or disdain? Did you love or hate writing in school? Do you carry these same feelings today about writing, good or bad, with you to college assignments? How would you describe your writing process? What are your writing strengths and weaknesses?

Organizing

After prewriting, you'll want to develop an initial draft that starts the writing. With this draft, you just want to aim to get some ideas down, not worry about spelling or grammar, and begin to organize your thoughts on paper. This is a time for developing your thinking.

Once you develop this draft, take some time to reflect about the organization of your ideas by asking the following questions: how logical is my writing? Are there any gaps in the development of ideas? Is there repetition? Does the paper flow easily?

You may also want to develop a Reverse Outline to assist you in checking the organization of your paper. Watch the video below to learn more about a Reverse Outline.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1hutF4fq5H0

Exercise

In this activity, you will explore and practice drafting and reverse outline techniques.

DIRECTIONS
1. Review your Prewriting.
2. Complete an initial draft about the *My Writing Process* topic (listed below):
   Writing Prompt: My Writing Process
   Think about the type of writing you did in school. What are your memories of those experiences? Do you look back at the type of writing you did with joy or disdain? Did you love or hate writing in school? Do you carry these same feelings today about writing, good or bad, with you to college assignments? How would you describe your writing process? What are your writing strengths and weaknesses?
3. Complete a reverse outline (as described in the video above) of your initial draft.

Drafting

Although we have started our approach to writing as a process of stages, writing is not a linear or fixed method. Proficient writers would argue that writing is “recursive” in nature, which means it is not a series of steps, but instead a means of revisiting, and reworking what you’ve written until you reach an end point…although this end may likely elude perfection! Debating if any writing is ever “perfect” is another conversation in itself. For the purposes of academic writing, your goal might not be perfection, but it most certainly is completion.

The Recursive Nature of Writing

Drafting can be thought of as your work through the recursiveness of the writing process. It is essential to the organization and flow of your paper. Once your general ideas are developed from the prewriting, initial draft, and reverse outline, writing out specific ideas and quotations can make the final writing process much easier. Each draft brings your writing process a little closer to the final product.

It is difficult for instructors to give a grade for drafting for it is not as easy as grading draft one and draft two. Drafting is likely the most under-appreciated aspect of writing for it is how you reveal to your writing self your progress from thoughts to the final paper. Proficient writers would also argue this is the most exciting and daunting stage of writing because it is where the writer struggles with their work . . . but in a good way.

Always write down any ideas you have in the drafting process. It is much easier to cut content from your paper than it is to work on adding content. If you collect all your resources, quotations, facts, ideas, and come up with your main point during the drafting process, your paper will show it. The idea is to provide yourself with as much information as possible in order to create a solid and well thought-out piece. Do less worrying and more writing.

Revising, Editing, Proofreading

Drafting also concerns revising, editing, and proofreading.

Revising

- Revising is done throughout the writing process, with special emphasis on the first few drafts.
- Focus = big issues
    - Audience
    - Organization

    - Content
    - Support
    - Conclusion

Editing

- Editing is done throughout the writing process, with special emphasis on the middle and final drafts.
  - Focus = technical issues
    - Usage
    - Word choice
    - Transitions
    - Mechanics

Proofreading

- Proofreading is used for the final draft.
- Focus = mechanics and presentation
    - Spelling
    - Punctuation
    - Format
    - Typographical errors
    - Textual inconsistencies

Thesis Based Writing

Most academic writing includes a thesis, which is the main stance you decide to take toward your topic. Your thesis tells readers what your paper will be about. It also serves as a target you must ultimately hit as you write, though that target may move around quite a bit as you go through the drafting process. You might have an idea about your thesis early on, or you might only decide upon it once you have worked with your topic and plan for a while. You might continually tweak your thesis as you learn more and develop your opinions about your topic. This table shows how topics and personal stances relate:

Topic	Personal Stance
College students' schedules	College students' schedules should be set by the students, not by their parents.
Fallen logs in national parks	Fallen logs in national parks should be harvested rather than left to decay and increase the likelihood of forest fires.

Developing your personal stance is critical for several reasons. It narrows your topic to a final manageable level, and it makes the written work uniquely yours. Taking a personal stance gives you a point of view to develop, support, and defend. When you present your stance, it ultimately awakens emotions in your readers as they determine for themselves whether they agree or disagree with your stance.

If you have trouble deciding on a thesis, keep in mind that your thesis ties directly to the main purpose and audience of your writing project. It is the main point you want to make to your audience. Ask yourself how you personally relate to the topic. Take the college students' schedules topic, for example. Your response to how you are personally related to the topic could be one of the following:

1. I am a person with knowledge to share since my mother always set my college schedules for me resulting in me having little understanding about designing a schedule that works.
2. I am an angry student since my father insisted on setting up my schedule, and my classes are all spread out in a way that will make my year miserable.
3. I am an interested observer since my roommate's mother always set her schedules and almost always ruined our plans to have some common free blocks of time.
4. I have an opinion that I would like to share about "helicopter parents," and this is a particularly good example of the phenomenon.
5. This semester, after talking with an advisor, I sketched out the rest of the coursework in my major, and I see for the first time how everything's going to fit together.

Once you see how you personally relate to your topic, you can then more clearly see what stance you want to take. Once you take a stance, work on wording it effectively, and you will have a working thesis.

Exercise

1. For each of the following topics, think of a personal stance that might work for a thesis:
    1. Student housing
    2. Healthy food in restaurants
    3. Online classes (and/or partially online or hybrid classes)
    4. The future of hard-copy newspapers
    5. Minimum age for college students

Testing Your Thesis

Now that you have formed your working thesis, you are ready to test it. The purpose of the test is to satisfy yourself that your thesis will work well. To test your satisfaction, answer the following questions. Read the tips if you need some help answering the questions.

Questions:

Question #1: Is your proposed thesis **interesting**?

Tip: When you read the thesis statement, do you find yourself wondering about different aspects of the topic? In other words, do you want to know the answer to the thesis question? Do you think others will also want to know?

Question #2: Is your proposed thesis **arguable**?

Tip: If you are writing an argumentative essay and developing a thesis for a topic that is controversial, make sure you can also formulate in your head what the thesis for "the other side" would sound like.

Question #3: Is your proposed thesis **specific** enough?

Tip: Make certain that your thesis addresses a specific point about a specific person, place, idea, or situation. Do not proceed with vague wording, such as "all over the world," "many people," or "will cause problems." Avoid relying too much on qualitative, superlative, or hyperbolic language, such as excellent, awesome, interesting, sad, or silly. Such words do not carry any concrete meaning.

Question #4: Is your proposed thesis **manageable**?

Tip: If you would have to research for two solid months to cover the breadth of the thesis, it is not suitable for a five-page paper. On the other hand, if a reader can understand the whole point simply by reading the thesis, the thesis is not suitable.

Question #5: Is your proposed thesis **researchable**?

Tip: Make sure you are confident that you will be able to find the information you need. Proceeding when you think you will have trouble finding enough information can cost you a lot of time if you come to a point where you think you have to start over.

Question #6: Is your proposed thesis **significant** to you and others?

Tip: If you choose a thesis that you care deeply about, others are likely to also find it significant. After you determine that your thesis is something about which you care deeply, you should double-check that your desired audience will also care.

After you have chosen a topic and a thesis and have begun work on the essay, you will be invested in your idea, so it won't be as easy to answer these questions objectively. But doing so early on is worth the effort since the process will likely result in a more successful essay in the long run.

Exercise

Each of the following six thesis-testing questions is followed by two sample theses. In each case, choose the thesis for which the answer to the question is "yes." Explain why the option that wasn't chosen does not receive a "yes" answer.

Each of the following six thesis-testing questions is followed by two sample theses. In each case, choose the thesis for which the answer to the question is "yes." Explain why the option that wasn't chosen does not receive a "yes" answer.

1. Is your proposed thesis interesting?
    1. Textbooks are unpleasant to read.
    2. Students who have a steady love interest in college tend to receive higher grades.
2. Is your proposed thesis arguable?
    1. America's foreign policy in the Balkans from 1991 to the present has had a stabilizing influence in the region.

    2. The world would be a better place if we would just give peace a chance.

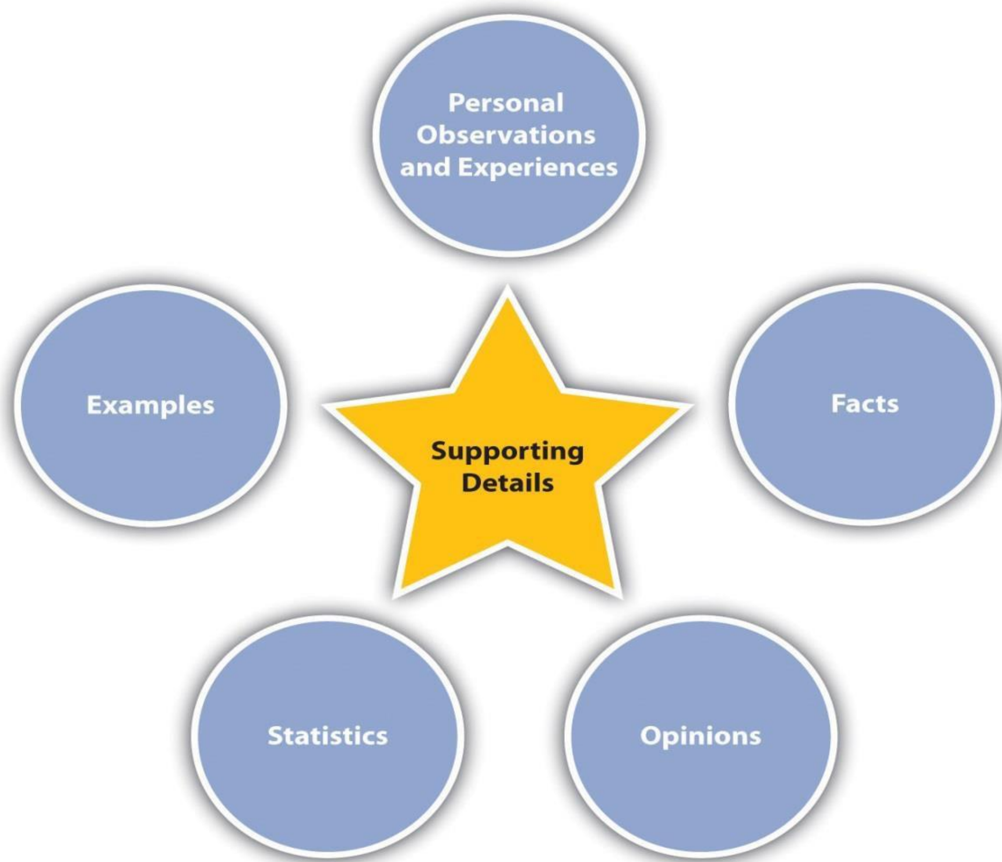
3. Is your proposed thesis specific?
    1. American toddlers who live with small pet dogs are more comfortable playing by themselves without the attention of a playmate or parent.
    2. Girls who marry young have lifelong self-esteem problems.
4. Is your proposed thesis manageable?
    1. Native Americans in North America want to maintain old customs.
    2. Music can actually provide a helpful studying background for some students.
5. Is your proposed thesis researchable?
    1. Milk chocolate doesn't taste as good as it did when I was a kid.
    2. Costa Rica's declining cacao crop over the last twenty years has been caused by several factors: climate change, natural disasters, and a changing workforce.
6. Is your proposed thesis significant?
    1. Reality television and social networking sites have contributed to changes in how eighteen- to twenty-nine-year-olds view their own privacy.
    2. Television provides an inexpensive and meaningful form of entertainment.

Supporting Your Thesis

Supporting your thesis is the overall goal of your whole paper. It means presenting information that will convince your readers that your thesis makes sense. You need to take care to choose the best supporting details for your thesis.

Creating Supporting Details

Figure 6.1



You can and should use a variety of kinds of support for your thesis. One of the easiest forms of support to use is **personal observations and experiences**. The strong point in favor of using **personal anecdotes** is that they add interest and emotion, both of which can pull audiences along. On the other hand, the anecdotal and subjective nature of personal observations and experiences makes them too weak to support a thesis on their own.

Since they can be verified, **facts** can help strengthen personal anecdotes by giving them substance and grounding. For example, if you tell a personal anecdote about having lost twenty pounds by using a Hula-Hoop for twenty minutes after every meal, the story seems interesting, but readers might not think it is a serious weight-loss technique. But if you follow up the story with some facts about the benefit of exercising for twenty minutes after every meal, the Hula-Hoop story takes on more credibility. Although facts are undeniably useful in writing projects, a paper full of nothing but fact upon fact would not be very interesting to read.

Like anecdotal information, your **opinions** can help make facts more interesting. On their own, opinions are weak support for a thesis. But coupled with specific relevant facts, opinions can add a great deal of interest to your work. In addition, opinions are excellent tools for convincing an audience that your thesis makes sense.

Similar to your opinions are details from **expert testimony** and **personal interviews**. Both of these kinds of sources provide no shortage of opinions. Expert opinions can carry a little more clout than your own, but you should be careful not to rely too much on them. However, it's safe to say that finding quality opinions from others and presenting them in support of your ideas will make others more likely to agree with your ideas.

Statistics can provide excellent support for your thesis. **Statistics** are facts expressed in numbers. For example, say you relay the results of a study that showed that 90 percent of people who exercise for twenty minutes after every meal lose two pounds per week. Such statistics lend strong, credible support to a thesis.

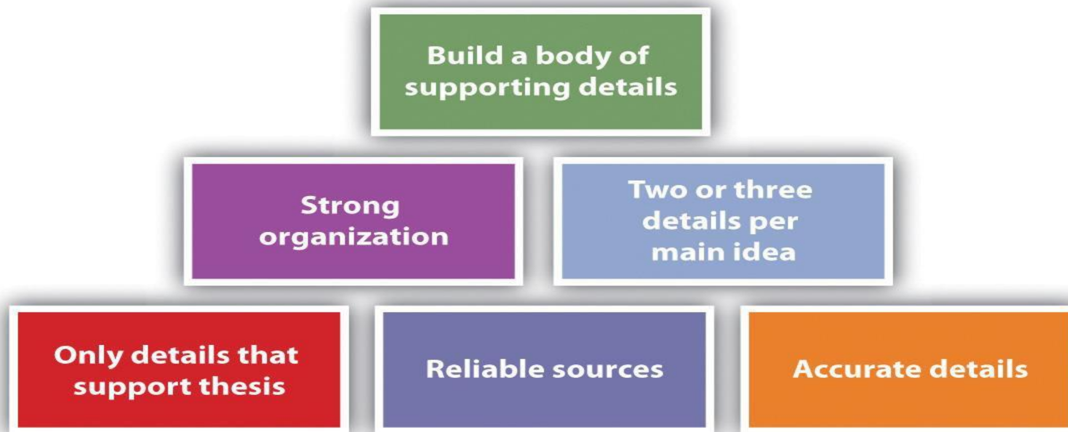
Examples—real or made up—are powerful tools you can use to clarify and support your facts, opinions, and statistics. A detail that sounds insignificant or meaningless can become quite significant when clarified with an example. For example, you could cite your sister Lydia as an example of someone who lost thirty pounds in a month by exercising after every meal. Using a name and specifics makes it seem very personal and real. As long as you use examples ethically and logically, they can be tremendous assets. On the other hand, when using examples, take care not to intentionally mislead your readers or distort reality. For example, if your sister Lydia also gave birth to a baby during that month, leaving that key bit of information out of the example would be misleading.

Procedures for Using Supporting Details

You are likely to find or think of details that relate to your topic and are interesting, but that do not support your thesis. Including such details in your paper is unwise because they are distracting and irrelevant.

In today's rich world of technology, you have many options when it comes to choosing sources of information. Make sure you choose only reliable sources. Even if some information sounds absolutely amazing, if it comes from an unreliable source, don't use it. It might sound amazing for a reason—because it has been amazingly made up.

Figure 6.2



When you find a new detail, make sure you can find it in at least one more source so you can safely accept it as true. Take this step even when you think the source is reliable because even reliable sources can include errors. When you find new information, make sure to put it into your essay or file of notes right away. Never rely on your memory.

Take great care to organize your supporting details so that they can 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 whatever method you think will most clearly support your thesis.

Make sure to use at least two or three supporting details for each main idea. In a longer essay, you can easily include more than three supporting details per idea, but in a shorter essay, you might not have space for any more.

Exercises

1. Choose a topic of interest to you. Write a personal observation or experience, a fact, an opinion, a statistic, and an example related to your topic. Present your information in a table with the following headings.

Topic:	
Personal observation or experience	
Fact	
Opinion	

Topic:	
Statistic	
Example	

2. Choose a topic of interest to you. On the Internet, find five reliable sources and five unreliable sources and fill in a table with the following headings.

Topic:			
Reliable Sources	Why Considered Reliable	Unreliable Sources	Why Considered Unreliable

3. Choose a topic of interest to you and write a possible thesis related to the topic. Write one sentence that is both related to the topic and relevant to the thesis. Write one sentence that is related to the topic but not relevant to the thesis.

Paragraphing

Each paragraph in a piece of writing has to function well independently so that the work as a whole comes together. This section presents a variety of ideas you should think about and methods you should consider using when writing paragraphs.

Starting with an Introduction or a Transition

Each paragraph needs to start with an introduction, a transition, or a combination of the two. The first sentence of a paragraph always has to help a reader move smoothly from the last paragraph. Sometimes two paragraphs are close enough in content that a transition can be implied without actually using transition words. Other times, specific transitions are needed. When no transition is used, an introductory sentence is needed so the reader knows what is going on. If a transition sentence is used, it is logical to follow it with an introductory sentence or to have one joint sentence.

Here are some examples:

- **A transition sentence:** Canned goods are not the only delicious foods available at a farmers' market.

- **An introductory sentence:** Farmers' markets feature a wide variety of fresh produce.
- **A transition/introductory combination sentence:** Along with canned goods, farmers' markets also feature whatever produce is fresh that week.

Sticking to One Main Idea

By definition, all sentences in the paragraph should relate to one main idea. If another main idea comes up as you are drafting a paragraph, it is most likely time to start a new paragraph. If in revising a draft you notice that a paragraph has wandered into another main idea, you should consider splitting it into two paragraphs. The main idea should be clear and obvious to readers and is typically presented within the topic sentence. The topic sentence is, in essence, a one-sentence summary of the point of the paragraph. The topic sentence is often the first sentence in a paragraph, but it does not have to be located there.

Building around a Topic Sentence

While the main idea is presented within the topic sentence, the rest of the sentences in the paragraph support it. The other sentences should present details that clarify and support the topic sentence. Together, all the sentences within the paragraph should flow smoothly so that readers can easily grasp its meaning.

When you choose sentences and ideas to support the topic sentence, keep in mind that paragraphs should not be overly long or overly short. A half page of double-spaced text is a nice average length for a paragraph. At a minimum, unless you are aiming for a dramatic effect, a paragraph should include at least three sentences. Although there is really no maximum size for a paragraph, keep in mind that lengthy paragraphs create confusion and reading difficulty. For this reason, try to keep all paragraphs to no more than one double-spaced page (or approximately 250 words).

Structuring Specialized Paragraphs

Many of the same common patterns of organizing your writing and thinking are available at the paragraph level to help you make your case to support your thesis. Using these common patterns helps readers understand your points more easily. Here are common organizational structures:

Description	You can use description to bring something to life so that the readers can get a clear impression of it.	The farmers who sell their wares at the farmers' market near my house are as natural as their foods. They are all dressed casually so that they look more like they are hanging out with friends than trying to entice people to purchase something from them. The women aren't wearing makeup and the men have not necessarily shaved in a few days. 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.
Examples	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. It is not uncommon to see kumquat jam and garlic spears. The farmers' market is truly an adventuresome way to shop for food.
Narration	Narration is writing that sounds like a story. You might use narration within a nonfiction paper as a means of personalizing a topic or simply making a point stand out.	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. Perhaps the one was telling the other about the big brown thing that nearly crashed down upon him. For him, I expect it was a harrowing moment. For me, it was just another charming trip to the farmers' market.

Chronological	Chronological arrangement presents information in time order.	As soon as I arrived at the farmers' market, I bought a large bag of lettuce. I walked around the corner and saw the biggest, most gorgeous sunflower I had ever seen. So I bought it and added it to my lettuce bag. The flower was so big that I had to hold the bag right in front of me to keep it from being bumped. At the Wilson Pork Farm booth, I tasted a little pulled pork. You guessed it—I had to buy a quart of it. I went on with a plastic quart container in my left hand and my lettuce and flower in my right hand. I was handling it all just fine until I saw a huge hanging spider plant I had to have. Ever so gently, I placed my pulled pork container inside the spider fern plant pot. Now I was holding everything right in front of me as I tried to safely make my way through the crowd. That's when I met up with little Willie. Willie was about seven years old and he was playing tag with his brother. I'm not sure where their mother was, but Willie came running around the corner and smacked right into me. You are probably thinking that poor Willie had pulled pork all over his clothes and an upside-down plant on his head. But no, not at all. That was me. Willie didn't even notice. He was too busy chasing his brother.

Closing the Paragraph

Each paragraph needs a final sentence that lets the reader know that the idea is finished and it is time to move onto a new paragraph and a new idea. A common way to close a paragraph is to reiterate the purpose of the paragraph in a way that shows the purpose has been met.

Introductions and Conclusions

From The Writing Center at UNC Chapel Hill

The Role of Introductions

Introductions and conclusions can be the most difficult parts of papers to write. Usually when you sit down to respond to an assignment, you have at least some sense of what you want to say in the body of your paper. You might have chosen a few examples you want to use or have an idea that will help you answer the main question of your assignment; these sections, therefore, are not as hard to write. But these middle parts of the paper can't just come out of thin air; they need to be introduced and concluded in a way that makes sense to your reader.

Your introduction and conclusion act as bridges that transport your readers from their own lives into the "place" of your analysis. If your readers pick up your paper about education in the autobiography of Frederick Douglass, for example, they need a transition to help them leave behind the world of Chapel Hill, television, e-mail, and *The Daily Tar Heel* and to help them temporarily enter the world of nineteenth-century American slavery. By providing an introduction that helps your readers make a transition between their own world and the issues you will be writing about, you give your readers the tools they need to get into your topic and care about what you are saying. Similarly, once you've hooked your reader with the introduction and offered evidence to prove your thesis, your conclusion can provide a bridge to help your readers make the transition back to their daily lives. (See our handout on conclusions.)

Why Bother Writing a Good Introduction?

You never get a second chance to make a first impression. The opening paragraph of your paper will provide your readers with their initial impressions of your argument, your writing style, and the overall quality of your work. A vague, disorganized, error-filled, off-the-wall, or boring introduction will probably create a negative impression. On the other hand, a concise, engaging, and well-written introduction will start your readers off thinking highly of you, your analytical skills, your writing, and your paper. This impression is especially important when the audience you are trying to reach (your instructor) will be grading your work.

Your introduction is an important road map for the rest of your paper. Your introduction conveys a lot of information to your readers. You can let them know what your topic is, why it is important, and how you plan to proceed with your discussion. In most academic disciplines, your introduction should contain a thesis that will assert your main argument. It should also, ideally, give the reader a sense of the kinds of information you will use to make that argument and the general organization of the paragraphs and pages that will follow. After reading your introduction, your readers should not have any major surprises in store when they read the main body of your paper.

Ideally, your introduction will make your readers want to read your paper. The introduction should capture your readers' interest, making them want to read the rest of your paper. Opening with a compelling story, a fascinating quotation, an interesting question, or a stirring example can get your readers to see why this topic matters and serve as an invitation for them to join you for an interesting intellectual conversation.

Strategies for Writing an Effective Introduction

Start by thinking about the question (or questions) you are trying to answer. Your entire essay will be a response to this question, and your introduction is the first step toward that end. Your direct answer to the assigned question will be your thesis, and your thesis will be included in your introduction, so it is a good idea to use the question as a jumping off point. Imagine that you are assigned the following question:

Education has long been considered a major force for American social change, righting the wrongs of our society. Drawing on the Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, discuss the relationship between education and slavery in 19th-century America. Consider the following: How did white control of education reinforce slavery? How did Douglass and other enslaved African Americans view education while they endured slavery? And what role did education play in the acquisition of freedom? Most importantly, consider the degree to which education was or was not a major force for social change with regard to slavery.

You will probably refer back to your assignment extensively as you prepare your complete essay, and the prompt itself can also give you some clues about how to approach the introduction. Notice that it starts with a broad statement, that education has been considered a major force for social change, and then narrows to focus on specific questions from the book. One strategy might be to use a similar model in your own introduction—start off with a big picture sentence or two about the power of education as a force for change as a way of getting your reader interested and then focus in on the details of your argument about Douglass. Of course, a different approach could also be very successful, but looking at the way the professor set up the question can sometimes give you some ideas for how you might answer it. (See our handout on understanding assignments for additional information on the hidden clues in assignments.)

Decide how general or broad your opening should be. Keep in mind that even a "big picture" opening needs to be clearly related to your topic; an opening sentence that said "Human beings, more than any other creatures on earth, are capable of learning" would be too broad for our sample assignment about slavery and education. If you have ever used Google Maps or similar programs, that experience can provide a helpful way of thinking about how broad your opening should be. Imagine that you're researching Chapel Hill. If what you want to find out is whether Chapel Hill is at roughly the same latitude as Rome, it might make sense to hit that little "minus" sign on the online map until it has zoomed all the way out and you can see the whole globe. If

you're trying to figure out how to get from Chapel Hill to Wrightsville Beach, it might make more sense to zoom in to the level where you can see most of North Carolina (but not the rest of the world, or even the rest of the United States). And if you are looking for the intersection of Ridge Road and Manning Drive so that you can find the Writing Center's main office, you may need to zoom all the way in. The question you are asking determines how "broad" your view should be. In the sample assignment above, the questions are probably at the "state" or "city" level of generality. But the introductory sentence about human beings is mismatched—it's definitely at the "global" level. When writing, you need to place your ideas in context—but that context doesn't generally have to be as big as the whole galaxy!

Try writing your introduction last. You may think that you have to write your introduction first, but that isn't necessarily true, and it isn't always the most effective way to craft a good introduction. You may find that you don't know what you are going to argue at the beginning of the writing process, and only through the experience of writing your paper do you discover your main argument. It is perfectly fine to start out thinking that you want to argue a particular point, but wind up arguing something slightly or even dramatically different by the time you've written most of the paper. The writing process can be an important way to organize your ideas, think through complicated issues, refine your thoughts, and develop a sophisticated argument. However, an introduction written at the beginning of that discovery process will not necessarily reflect what you wind up with at the end. You will need to revise your paper to make sure that the introduction, all of the evidence, and the conclusion reflect the argument you intend. Sometimes it's easiest to just write up all of your evidence first and then write the introduction last—that way you can be sure that the introduction will match the body of the paper.

Don't be afraid to write a tentative introduction first and then change it later. Some people find that they need to write some kind of introduction in order to get the writing process started. That's fine, but if you are one of those people, be sure to return to your initial introduction later and rewrite if necessary.

Open With an Attention Grabber

Sometimes, especially if the topic of your paper is somewhat dry or technical, opening with something catchy can help. Consider these options:

1. an intriguing example—for example, Douglass writes about a mistress who initially teaches him but then ceases her instruction as she learns more about slavery.

2. a provocative quotation—for example, Douglass writes that "education and slavery were incompatible with each other."

3. a puzzling scenario—for example, Frederick Douglass says of slaves that "[N]othing has been left undone to cripple their intellects, darken their minds, debase their moral nature, obliterate all traces of their relationship to mankind; and yet how wonderfully they have

sustained the mighty load of a most frightful bondage, under which they have been groaning for centuries!" Douglass clearly asserts that slave owners went to great lengths to destroy the mental capacities of slaves, yet his own life story proves that these efforts could be unsuccessful.

4. a vivid and perhaps unexpected anecdote—for example, "Learning about slavery in the American history course at Frederick Douglass High School, students studied the work slaves did, the impact of slavery on their families, and the rules that governed their lives. We didn't discuss education, however, until one student, Mary, raised her hand and asked, 'But when did they go to school?' That modern high school students could not conceive of an American childhood devoid of formal education speaks volumes about the centrality of education to American youth today and also suggests the significance of the deprivation of education in past generations."

5. a thought-provoking question—for example, given all of the freedoms that were denied enslaved individuals in the American South, why does Frederick Douglass focus his attentions so squarely on education and literacy?

Pay special attention to your first sentence. Start off on the right foot with your readers by making sure that the first sentence actually says something useful and that it does so in an interesting and polished way.

Be straightforward and confident. Avoid statements like "In this paper, I will argue that Frederick Douglass valued education." While this sentence points toward your main argument, it isn't especially interesting. It might be more effective to say what you mean in a declarative sentence. It is much more convincing to tell us that "Frederick Douglass valued education" than to tell us that you are going to say that he did. Assert your main argument confidently. After all, you can't expect your reader to believe it if it doesn't sound like you believe it!

How to Evaluate Your Introduction Draft

Ask a friend to read it and then tell you what he or she expects the paper will discuss, what kinds of evidence the paper will use, and what the tone of the paper will be. If your friend is able to predict the rest of your paper accurately, you probably have a good introduction.

Five Kinds of Less Effective Introductions

1. The place holder introduction. When you don't have much to say on a given topic, it is easy to create this kind of introduction. Essentially, this kind of weaker introduction contains several sentences that are vague and don't really say much. They exist just to take up the "introduction space" in your paper. If you had something more effective to say, you would probably say it, but in the meantime this paragraph is just a place holder.

Example: Slavery was one of the greatest tragedies in American history. There were many different aspects of slavery. Each created different kinds of problems for enslaved people.

2. The restated question introduction. Restating the question can sometimes be an effective strategy, but it can be easy to stop at JUST restating the question instead of offering a more specific, interesting introduction to your paper. The professor or teaching assistant wrote your questions and will be reading ten to seventy essays in response to them—he or she does not need to read a whole paragraph that simply restates the question.

Example: Indeed, education has long been considered a major force for American social change, righting the wrongs of our society. The Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass discusses the relationship between education and slavery in 19th century America, showing how white control of education reinforced slavery and how Douglass and other enslaved African Americans viewed education while they endured. Moreover, the book discusses the role that education played in the acquisition of freedom. Education was a major force for social change with regard to slavery.

3. The Webster's Dictionary introduction. This introduction begins by giving the dictionary definition of one or more of the words in the assigned question. This introduction strategy is on the right track—if you write one of these, you may be trying to establish the important terms of the discussion, and this move builds a bridge to the reader by offering a common, agreed-upon definition for a key idea. You may also be looking for an authority that will lend credibility to your paper. However, anyone can look a word up in the dictionary and copy down what Webster says—it may be far more interesting for you (and your reader) if you develop your own definition of the term in the specific context of your class and assignment, or if you use a definition from one of the sources you've been reading for class. Also recognize that the dictionary is also not a particularly authoritative work—it doesn't take into account the context of your course and doesn't offer particularly detailed information. If you feel that you must seek out an authority, try to find one that is very relevant and specific. Perhaps a quotation from a source reading might prove better? Dictionary introductions are also ineffective simply because they are so overused. Many graders will see twenty or more papers that begin in this way, greatly decreasing the dramatic impact that any one of those papers will have.

Example: Webster's dictionary defines slavery as "the state of being a slave," as "the practice of owning slaves," and as "a condition of hard work and subjection."

4. The "dawn of man" introduction. This kind of introduction generally makes broad, sweeping statements about the relevance of this topic since the beginning of time. It is usually very general (similar to the place holder introduction) and fails to connect to the thesis. You may write this kind of introduction when you don't have much to say—which is precisely why it is ineffective.

Example: Since the dawn of man, slavery has been a problem in human history.

5. The book report introduction. This introduction is what you had to do for your elementary school book reports. It gives the name and author of the book you are writing about, tells what the book is about, and offers other basic facts about the book. You might resort to this sort of introduction when you are trying to fill space because it's a familiar, comfortable format. It is ineffective because it offers details that your reader already knows and that are irrelevant to the thesis.

Example: Frederick Douglass wrote his autobiography, Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, An American Slave, in the 1840s. It was published in 1986 by Penguin Books. In it, he tells the story of his life.

Conclusions

Introductions and conclusions can be the most difficult parts of papers to write. While the body is often easier to write, it needs a frame around it. An introduction and conclusion frame your thoughts and bridge your ideas for the reader.

Just as your introduction acts as a bridge that transports your readers from their own lives into the "place" of your analysis, your conclusion can provide a bridge to help your readers make the transition back to their daily lives. Such a conclusion will help them see why all your analysis and information should matter to them after they put the paper down.

Your conclusion is your chance to have the last word on the subject. The conclusion allows you to have the final say on the issues you have raised in your paper, to synthesize your thoughts, to demonstrate the importance of your ideas, and to propel your reader to a new view of the subject. It is also your opportunity to make a good final impression and to end on a positive note.

Your conclusion can go beyond the confines of the assignment. The conclusion pushes beyond the boundaries of the prompt and allows you to consider broader issues, make new connections, and elaborate on the significance of your findings.

Your conclusion should make your readers glad they read your paper. Your conclusion gives your reader something to take away that will help them see things differently or appreciate your topic in personally relevant ways. It can suggest broader implications that will not only interest your reader, but also enrich your reader's life in some way. It is your gift to the reader.

Strategies for Writing an Effective Conclusion

One or more of the following strategies may help you write an effective conclusion.

- Play the "So What" Game. If you're stuck and feel like your conclusion isn't saying anything new or interesting, ask a friend to read it with you. Whenever you make a

statement from your conclusion, ask the friend to say, “So what?” or “Why should anybody care?” Then ponder that question and answer it. Here’s how it might go:

You: *Basically, I’m just saying that education was important to Douglass.*

Friend: *So what?*

You: *Well, it was important because it was a key to him feeling like a free and equal citizen.*

Friend: *Why should anybody care?*

You: *That’s important because plantation owners tried to keep slaves from being educated so that they could maintain control. When Douglass obtained an education, he undermined that control personally.*

You can also use this strategy on your own, asking yourself “So What?” as you develop your ideas or your draft.

- Return to the theme or themes in the introduction. This strategy brings the reader full circle. For example, if you begin by describing a scenario, you can end with the same scenario as proof that your essay is helpful in creating a new understanding. You may also refer to the introductory paragraph by using key words or parallel concepts and images that you also used in the introduction.
- Synthesize, don’t summarize: Include a brief summary of the paper’s main points, but don’t simply repeat things that were in your paper. Instead, show your reader how the points you made and the support and examples you used fit together. Pull it all together.
- Include a provocative insight or quotation from the research or reading you did for your paper.
- Propose a course of action, a solution to an issue, or questions for further study. This can redirect your reader’s thought process and help her to apply your info and ideas to her own life or to see the broader implications.
- Point to broader implications. For example, if your paper examines the Greensboro sit-ins or another event in the Civil Rights Movement, you could point out its impact on the Civil Rights Movement as a whole. A paper about the style of writer Virginia Woolf could point to her influence on other writers or on later feminists.

Strategies to Avoid

- Beginning with an unnecessary, overused phrase such as “in conclusion,” “in summary,” or “in closing.” Although these phrases can work in speeches, they come across as wooden and trite in writing.

- Stating the thesis for the very first time in the conclusion.
- Introducing a new idea or subtopic in your conclusion.
- Ending with a rephrased thesis statement without any substantive changes.
- Making sentimental, emotional appeals that are out of character with the rest of an analytical paper.
- Including evidence (quotations, statistics, etc.) that should be in the body of the paper.

Four Kinds of Ineffective Conclusions

1. The “That’s My Story and I’m Sticking to It” Conclusion.

This conclusion just restates the thesis and is usually painfully short. It does not push the ideas forward. People write this kind of conclusion when they can’t think of anything else to say. Example: In conclusion, Frederick Douglass was, as we have seen, a pioneer in American education, proving that education was a major force for social change with regard to slavery.

2. The “Sherlock Holmes” Conclusion.

Sometimes writers will state the thesis for the very first time in the conclusion. You might be tempted to use this strategy if you don’t want to give everything away too early in your paper. You may think it would be more dramatic to keep the reader in the dark until the end and then “wow” him with your main idea, as in a Sherlock Holmes mystery. The reader, however, does not expect a mystery, but an analytical discussion of your topic in an academic style, with the main argument (thesis) stated up front. Example: (After a paper that lists numerous incidents from the book but never says what these incidents reveal about Douglass and his views on education): So, as the evidence above demonstrates, Douglass saw education as a way to undermine the slaveholders’ power and also an important step toward freedom.

3. The “America the Beautiful”/”I Am Woman”/”We Shall Overcome” Conclusion.

This kind of conclusion usually draws on emotion to make its appeal, but while this emotion and even sentimentality may be very heartfelt, it is usually out of character with the rest of an analytical paper. A more sophisticated commentary, rather than emotional praise, would be a more fitting tribute to the topic. Example: Because of the efforts of fine Americans like Frederick Douglass, countless others have seen the shining beacon of light that is education. His example was a torch that lit the way for others. Frederick Douglass was truly an American hero.

4. The “Grab Bag” Conclusion.

This kind of conclusion includes extra information that the writer found or thought of but couldn’t integrate into the main paper. You may find it hard to leave out details that you

discovered after hours of research and thought, but adding random facts and bits of evidence at the end of an otherwise-well-organized essay can just create confusion. Example: In addition to being an educational pioneer, Frederick Douglass provides an interesting case study for masculinity in the American South. He also offers historians an interesting glimpse into slave resistance when he confronts Covey, the overseer. His relationships with female relatives reveal the importance of family in the slave community.

Using Transitions

Transitions within paragraphs are words that connect one sentence to another so that readers can easily follow the intended meanings of sentences and relationships between sentences. The following table shows some commonly used transition words:

Commonly Used Transition Words	
To compare/contrast	after that, again, also, although, and then, but, despite, even though, finally, first/second/third/etc., however, in contrast, in the same way, likewise, nevertheless, next, on the other hand, similarly, then
To signal cause and effect	as a result, because, consequently, due to, hence, since, therefore, thus
To show sequence or time	after, as soon as, at that time, before, during, earlier, finally, immediately, in the meantime, later, meanwhile, now, presently, simultaneously, so far, soon, until, then, thereafter, when, while
To indicate place or direction	above, adjacent to, below, beside, beyond, close, nearby, next to, north/south/east/west, opposite, to the left/right
To present examples	for example, for instance, in fact, to illustrate, specifically
To suggest relationships	and, also, besides, further, furthermore, in addition, moreover, too

Essay Assignment: Mindset – A Learning Narrative

"Brainology: Transforming Students' Motivation to Learn" and "You Can Grow Your Brain" discuss the role that motivation plays in learning. They both relate to the idea of a "Fixed Mindset" and a "Growth Mindset" and how the Growth Mindset helps people succeed, even if they didn't have the most natural talent or the highest IQ scores. Angela Lee Duckworth also addressed this idea in her TEDtalk regarding education and motivation.

PROMPT:

When it comes to school, which mindset do you have? Do you believe Dweck and her colleagues that learning is really a function of attitude, grit and perseverance rather than natural talent and that mindsets can be changed? Why or why not?

In this essay, please address the following:

- Describe the growth mindset vs. the fixed mindset. Be sure to give Carol Dweck credit for her ideas.
- Explain your approach to learning new things – growth mindset or fixed mindset. Support this with personal experience **(autobiographical narrative)**. Choose one or two events that demonstrate your mindset. Write about them in a narrative style – in
- Finally, discuss whether or not you agree with their theory that learning is really a function of grit, attitude and perseverance.
-

AUDIENCE: Like most academic essays, your audience is me, your teacher! With this in mind, remember to use MLA format, and purposeful language.

FORMAT: Use MLA format – which means 12 point font, and double spaced.

PAPER LENGTH: 2-3 pages.

Exercise

Rough Draft #1 Self Reflection

Directions: Please respond to these questions **after** completing your rough draft. Please type your reflections.

1. Explain how you used your outline to help you construct your draft.
2. Pick one of the focus terms under Revising on page 27 of your textbook (audience, organization, or support). First, define the term. Then, explain the term in connection to your draft.
3. Refer to page 35 in your textbook. Describe the type(s) of paragraphs you use in your draft. You might have more than 1 – that's okay!
4. Refer to page 37 in your textbook. Identify two transitions in your draft. If you can't find any, add transitions in two places of your draft. How do these transitions help you draft?

Exercise

Essay 1: Peer Feedback and Revision Plan (Rough Draft #2)

Part I: Reading Preparation Discussion
Part I should be completed in class. First, think about your own essay and how you feel about your writing choices.

Purpose of my Essay: ____

____

Strengths	Areas for Improvement

Partner Name: _________________________________

Purpose of their Essay: ____

____

Partner's Areas for Improvement	Why?

Part II: Labeling (Due______)
Directions: This should be completed at home and is due at the next class meeting. Complete the following tasks on your peer's actual draft.

1. Underline and label the writer's attention grabber. In the margin, write one specific way you can relate to the opening idea.
2. Underline and label the writer's thesis. In your own words, write their claim in the margin next to the thesis.
3. Underline and label the sentence in each body paragraph that introduces the focus of the paragraph. Hint: you are looking for a topic sentence; however, the writer's clearest sentence might not always be the first sentence of the paragraph.

4. Underline and label one piece of evidence in each body paragraph. Your label should include the type of evidence it is (definition from article, personal story, example from article).

Part III: Commenting (Due________)

Directions: This should be completed at home and is due at the next class meeting. Please type responses to the following questions based on your reading of your peer's essay. Be specific, referencing passages from their essay.

1. Describe the organization of your partner's essay. In other words, what reasons do they use to prove their thesis?
2. Identify the most focused body paragraph of the essay. Why did you choose it? In other words, what about the writer's paragraph makes it clear and focused? Be specific.
3. Identify the least focused body paragraph of the essay. Explain how it is unfocused. Suggest one way to make it more focused.
4. What is the most effective piece of evidence used in the essay? Explain your choice.
5. Identify the clearest topic sentence. Explain your choice.
6. Provide two specific suggestions for making this draft more effective. This can be about anything except grammar.
7. Select one of the items on your partner's list of concerns (that has not already been addressed in one of the above questions). Provide a passage from their paper that relates to this concern. Identify what they can do to improve this aspect of writing. OR, identify a specific thing you think they did well with this aspect of writing.

Part IV: Revision Plan (This will be completed in class once you receive your draft back)

Directions: Please respond to the following questions based on your partner's feedback for you.

1. Identify one way you can improve your organization. Be specific.
2. Identify one strength of your draft. What is it? What does it contribute to your paper? Were you aware that you did this in your essay? How can you apply this strength to other writing assignments?
3. Did you benefit from the peer feedback process? Explain. What did you like? What would you change? Be specific.

Exercise

Essay 1: Final Draft Reflection

Directions: Use your entire writing process for this essay in order to answer the following questions. Consider all the steps you took and resources provided.

1. Did this writing assignment improve any aspect of your writing? Please explain.
2. Did you find the articles ("You Can Grow Your Brain" and "Transforming Students Motivation to Learn") helpful in understanding yourself more? Did it change the way you think about your own abilities? Please explain.
3. Identify your greatest challenge with this paper. What did you do to overcome it? Please be specific.
4. What was the most helpful in-class activity? Please explain.
5. Identify the most effective revision you made with this paper. What was it? Why did you do it? How do you think it advanced your essay?

Chapter 3: Summary and Summary-Response

Summary and Summary-Response

Proficient students understand that *summarizing*, identifying what is most important and restating the text in your own words, is an important tool for college success.

After all, if you really know a subject, you will be able to summarize it. If you cannot summarize a subject, even if you have memorized all the facts about it, you can be absolutely sure that you have not learned it. And, if you truly learn the subject, you will still be able to summarize it months or years from now.

Proficient students may monitor their understanding of a text by summarizing as they read. They understand that if they can write a one- or two-sentence summary of each paragraph after reading it, then that is a good sign that they have correctly understood it. If they can not summarize the main idea of the paragraph, they know that comprehension has broken down and they need to use fix-up strategies to repair understanding.

Summarizing consists of two important skills:

1. identifying the important material in the text, and
2. restating the text in your own words.

Since writing a summary consists of omitting minor information, it will always be shorter than the original text.

How to Write a Summary

- A summary begins with an *introductory sentence* that states the text's title, author and main thesis or subject.
- A summary contains the main *thesis* (or main point of the text), restated in your own words.
- A summary is *written in your own words*.
- A summary is *always shorter than the original text*, often about 1/3 as long as the original. It is the ultimate "fat-free" writing. An article or paper may be summarized in a few sentences or a couple of paragraphs. A book may be summarized in an article or a short paper. A very large book may be summarized in a smaller book.
- A summary should *contain all the major points* of the original text, but should *ignore most of the details*.

- If you quote anything from the original text, even an unusual word or a catchy phrase, you need to put whatever you quote in quotation marks (“”).
- A summary must contain only the ideas of the original text. *Do not insert* any of *your own opinions, interpretations, deductions or comments* into a summary.
- A summary, like any other writing, has to have a specific audience and purpose, and you must carefully write it to serve that audience and fulfill that specific purpose
- Identify in order the significant sub-claims the author uses to defend the main point.
- Write a last sentence that “wraps” up your summary; often a simple rephrasing of the main point.
- When writing a summary, remember that it should be in the form of a paragraph.

Example Summary Writing Format

In the essay *Santa Ana*, author Joan Didion’s main point is (*state main point*). According to Didion “…*passage 1*…” (para.3). Didion also writes “…*passage 2*…” (para.8). Finally, she states “…*passage 3*…” (para. 12) Write a last sentence that “wraps” up your summary; often a simple rephrasing of the main point.

How to Write a Summary by Paraphrasing Source Material

When you paraphrase material from a source, you restate the information from an entire sentence or passage in your own words, using your own original sentence structure. A paraphrased source differs from a summarized source in that you focus on restating the ideas, not condensing them.

It is important to check your paraphrase against the source material to make sure it is both accurate and original. Inexperienced writers sometimes use the thesaurus method of paraphrasing—that is, they simply rewrite the source material, replacing most of the words with synonyms. This constitutes a misuse of sources. A true paraphrase restates ideas using the writer’s own language and style.

Review the videos below about developing paraphrasing skills with writing:

https://lumen.instructure.com/courses/202941/pages/how-to-write-a-summary-by-paraphrasing-source-material?module_item_id=4600980

Using Verbs to Reflect the Author's Purpose and Ideas

The verbs you choose to include in your summary communicate the author opinion about the topic s/he has written about. Different verbs create different meanings. Here are a variety of verbs you can use in your summaries:

1. Author is **neutral:** comments, describes, explains, illustrates, notes, observes, points out, records, relates, reports, says, sees, writes, discusses
2. Author **infers** or **suggests:** analyzes, asks, assesses, concludes, considers, finds, predicts, proposes, reveals, shows, speculates, suggests, supposes
3. Author **argues**: alleges, claims, contends, defends, disagrees, holds, insists, maintains
4. Author **agrees**: admits, concedes, concurs, grants
5. Author is **uneasy**: belittles, bemoans, complains, condemns, deplores, deprecates, derides, laments, warns, criticizes

Exercise

Active Reading → Summary

Part I: Preview Before Reading

Directions: In the left column create a list pre-reading strategies that apply to “Higher Education Through Discombobulation” by Betsy Chitwood. Then, in the right hand column, apply these strategies to the text. In the right column, you should write the idea or topic you now know will be discussed based on the pre-reading strategy.

Pre-Reading Strategy	Topic

Part II: Annotate While Reading (Critical Reading)

Directions: Create a list of actions you should engage in while reading a text.

1.

2.

3.

4.

5.

6.

Part III Searching For Main Ideas

Directions: Create a list of actions you should engage in while looking for the main ideas of a text.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.

Part IV Application to Text

Directions: Now that you have an idea of what the text is going to be about based on your pre-reading, put the lists in parts II and III into action and record your thoughts in your notebook using the table below or on the text itself.

Paragraph	Main Idea	Questions	Unfamiliar Words and Definition	Evidence
Editor's Introduction				
Thesis (Introduction)				
Paragraph 2				
Paragraph 3				
Paragraph 4				
Paragraph 5				
Paragraph 6				
Conclusion				

Critical Reading and Summary Rubric

Article Title ___________________________________

Summary and Response # _____

Student Name:

Critical Reading:
_____ The author's thesis is identified (underlined or highlighted)
_____ Main ideas of the article are identified (underlined or highlighted)
_____ Confusing passages and/or words are identified (underlined or highlighted)
_____ Underlined/highlighted passages are complimented with an explanatory note.

Summary:
_____ First sentence introduces the source (**author and title**) as well as the author's claim
_____ Summary contains thoughtful transitions from one idea to another
_____ Summary is concise and to the point, capturing the author's claims only
_____ Summary contains paraphrased ideas, using original language
_____ Student uses third person, present tense
_____ Student uses academic language and proper mechanics of the English language

Transitions

The original material for this section was adapted from sources that can be found at The Writing Center, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

In this crazy, mixed-up world of ours, transitions glue our ideas and our essays together. This handout will introduce you to some useful transitional expressions and help you employ them effectively.

The Function and Importance of Transitions

In both academic writing and professional writing, your goal is to convey information clearly and concisely, if not to convert the reader to your way of thinking. Transitions help you to achieve these goals by establishing logical connections between sentences, paragraphs, and sections of your papers. In other words, transitions tell readers what to do with the information you present to them. Whether single words, quick phrases or full sentences, they function as signs for readers that tell them how to think about, organize, and react to old and new ideas as they read through what you have written.

Transitions signal relationships between ideas such as: “Another example coming up— stay alert!” or “Here’s an exception to my previous statement” or “Although this idea appears to be true, here’s the real story.” Basically, transitions provide the reader with directions for how to piece together your ideas into a logically coherent argument. Transitions are not just verbal decorations that embellish your paper by making it sound or read better. They are words with particular meanings that tell the reader to think and react in a particular way to your ideas. In providing the reader with these important cues, transitions help readers understand the logic of how your ideas fit together.

Signs That You Might Need to Work on Your Transitions

- Your instructor has written comments like “choppy,” “jumpy,” “abrupt,” “flow,” “need signposts,” or “how is this related?” on your papers.
- Your readers (instructors, friends, or classmates) tell you that they had trouble following your organization or train of thought.
- You tend to write the way you think—and your brain often jumps from one idea to another pretty quickly.
- You wrote your paper in several discrete “chunks” and then pasted them together.
- You are working on a group paper; the draft you are working on was created by pasting pieces of several people’s writing together.

Organization

Since the clarity and effectiveness of your transitions will depend greatly on how well you have organized your paper, you may want to evaluate your paper's organization before you work on transitions. In the margins of your draft, summarize in a word or short phrase what each paragraph is about or how it fits into your analysis as a whole. This exercise should help you to see the order of and connection between your ideas more clearly.

If after doing this exercise you find that you still have difficulty linking your ideas together in a coherent fashion, your problem may not be with transitions but with organization. For help in this area (and a more thorough explanation of the "reverse outlining" technique described in the previous paragraph), please see your instructor or writing center.

How Transitions Work

The organization of your written work includes two elements:

- the order in which you have chosen to present the different parts of your discussion or argument, and
- the relationships you construct between these parts. Transitions cannot substitute for good organization, but they can make your organization clearer and easier to follow. Take a look at the following example:

El Pais, a Latin American country, has a new democratic government after having been a dictatorship for many years. Assume that you want to argue that *El Pais* is not as democratic as the conventional view would have us believe. One way to effectively organize your argument would be to present the conventional view and then to provide the reader with your critical response to this view. So, in Paragraph A you would enumerate all the reasons that someone might consider *El Pais* highly democratic, while in Paragraph B you would refute these points. The transition that would establish the logical connection between these two key elements of your argument would indicate to the reader that the information in paragraph B contradicts the information in paragraph A. As a result, you might organize your argument, including the transition that links paragraph A with paragraph B, in the following manner:

Paragraph A: points that support the view that *El Pais's* new government is very democratic.

Transition: Despite the previous arguments, there are many reasons to think that *El Pais's* new government is not as democratic as typically believed.

Paragraph B: points that contradict the view that *El Pais's* new government is very democratic. In this case, the transition words "Despite the previous arguments," suggest that the reader should not believe paragraph A and instead should consider the writer's reasons for viewing *El Pais's* democracy as suspect.

As the example suggests, transitions can help reinforce the underlying logic of your paper's organization by providing the reader with essential information regarding the relationship

between your ideas. In this way, transitions act as the glue that binds the components of your argument or discussion into a unified, coherent, and persuasive whole.

Types of Transitions

Now that you have a general idea of how to go about developing effective transitions in your writing, let us briefly discuss the types of transitions your writing will use.

The types of transitions available to you are as diverse as the circumstances in which you need to use them. A transition can be a single word, a phrase, a sentence, or an entire paragraph. In each case, it functions the same way: first, the transition either directly summarizes the content of a preceding sentence, paragraph, or section or implies such a summary (by reminding the reader of what has come before). Then it helps the reader anticipate or comprehend the new information that you wish to present.

- **Transitions between sections**—Particularly in longer works, it may be necessary to include transitional paragraphs that summarize for the reader the information just covered and specify the relevance of this information to the discussion in the following section.
- **Transitions between paragraphs**—If you have done a good job of arranging paragraphs so that the content of one leads logically to the next, the transition will highlight a relationship that already exists by summarizing the previous paragraph and suggesting something of the content of the paragraph that follows. A transition between paragraphs can be a word or two (*however, for example, similarly*), a phrase, or a sentence.

*Transitions can be at the end of the first paragraph, at the beginning of the second paragraph, or in both places.

- **Transitions within paragraphs**—As with transitions between sections and paragraphs, transitions within paragraphs act as cues by helping readers to anticipate what is coming before they read it. Within paragraphs, transitions tend to be single words or short phrases.

Transitional Expressions

Effectively constructing each transition often depends upon your ability to identify words or phrases that will indicate for the reader the *kind* of logical relationships you want to convey. The table below should make it easier for you to find these words or phrases. Whenever you have trouble finding a word, phrase, or sentence to serve as an effective transition, refer to the information in the table for assistance. Look in the left column of the table for the kind of logical relationship you are trying to express. Then look in the right column of the table for examples of words or phrases that express this logical relationship.

Keep in mind that each of these words or phrases may have a slightly different meaning. Consult a dictionary or writer’s handbook if you are unsure of the exact meaning of a word or phrase.

Similarity: also, in the same way, just as … so too, likewise, similarly

Exception/Contrast: but, however, in spite of, on the one hand … on the other hand, nevertheless, nonetheless, notwithstanding, in contrast, on the contrary, still, yet

Sequence/Order: first, second, third, … next, then, finally, after, afterward, at last, before, currently, during, earlier, immediately, later, meanwhile, now, recently, simultaneously, subsequently, then

Example: for example, for instance, namely, specifically, to illustrate emphasis, indeed, in fact,

Place/Position: above, adjacent, below, beyond, here, in front, in back, nearby, there

Cause and Effect: accordingly, consequently, hence, so, therefore, thus

Additional Support or Evidence: additionally, again, also, and, as well, besides, equally important, further, furthermore, in addition, moreover, then

Conclusion/Summary: finally, in a word, in brief, briefly, in conclusion, in the end, in the final analysis, on the whole, thus, to conclude, to summarize, in sum, to sum up, in summary

Responding to a Text While Reading

Overview

Proficient students read not just to understand and question but also to respond. In fact, response is a major component of most college-level assignments: your professors expect you to interact more deeply with texts, to engage with their ideas, to agree with some ideas and disagree with others, to be able to "talk back" by formulating and explaining your own position.

When you respond to a text, you show that you have understood it, but even more importantly, you show that you have connected with it and made it your own.

Making Connections

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

The process of reading is when a person reads text and their inner voice makes connections between the words, and their life and prior knowledge. The more closely the reader connects to the text, the higher the level of comprehension. At times connecting is simple. At others, especially when the text is not in an area that the reader has background knowledge, comprehension is difficult. To be a better reader, think about how the story relates to your life.

Connecting with Text

Readers should concentrate on their inner voice and connections.

- *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.*
- If you are reading a book, and don't connect with it, ditch it and find one where you can *make connections.*

Here are the starts to connections:

1.
TEXT-TO-SELF
This is similar to my life . . .
This is different from my life . . .
Something like this happened to me when . . .
This reminds me of . . .
This relates to me . . .
When I read this I felt . . .

2.
TEXT-TO-TEXT
This reminds me of another book I've read . . .
This is similar to another thing I read . . .
This different from another book I read . . .
This character is similar/different to another character . . .
This setting is similar/different to another setting . . .
This problem is similar/different to the problem in . . .

3.
TEXT-TO-WORLD
This reminds me of the real world . . .
This book is similar to things that happen in the real world . . .
This book is different from things that happen in the real world . . .

Writing a Reading Response

A reading response asks the reader [you] to examine, explain and defend your personal reaction to a reading.

You will be asked to explore:
- identify the reading's purpose
- why you like or dislike the reading,
- explain whether you agree or disagree with the author,
- critique the text.

There is no right or wrong answer to a reading response. Nonetheless, it is important that you demonstrate an understanding of the reading and clearly explain and support your reactions.

Write as an Educated Adult

When writing a reader response, write as an educated adult addressing other adults or fellow scholars. As a beginning scholar, if you write that something has nothing to do with you or does not pass *your* "Who cares?" test, but many other people think that it is important and great,

readers will probably *not* agree with you that the *text* is dull or boring, but they may conclude instead that *you* are dull and boring, that you are too immature or uneducated to understand what important things the author wrote.

Critique with Examples

If you did not like a text, that is fine, but criticize it either from principle (it is racist, or it unreasonably puts down religion or women or working people or young people or gays or Texans or plumbers, it includes factual errors or outright lies, it is too dark and despairing, or it is falsely positive) or from form (it is poorly written, it contains too much verbal "fat," it is too emotional or too childish, has too many facts and figures or has many typos in the text, or wanders around without making a point). In each of these cases, *do not* simply criticize, but give examples. But, always beware, as a beginning scholar, of criticizing any text as "confusing" or "crazy," since readers might simply conclude that *you* are too ignorant or slow to understand and appreciate it!

Mention the Title, Author, and Main Thesis

First of all, be sure to mention the *title* of the work to which you are responding, the *author,* and the *main thesis* of the text, using *correct English* for the first paragraph of your paper.

Connect to the Text

Then, try to answer ALL of the questions below. Remember, however, that you are writing an essay, not filling out a short-answer worksheet. You do not need to work through these questions in order, one by one, in your essay. Rather, your paper as a whole should be sure to address these questions in some way.

What does the text have to do with you, personally, and with your life (past, present or future)? It is not acceptable to write that the text has NOTHING to do with you, since just about everything humans can write has to do in some way with every other human.

How much does the text agree or clash with your view of the world, and what you consider right and wrong? Use several quotes as examples of how it agrees with and supports what you think about the world, about right and wrong, and about what you think it is to be human. Use quotes and examples to discuss how the text disagrees with what you think about the world and about right and wrong.

What did you learn, and how much were your views and opinions challenged or changed by this text, if at all? Did the text communicate with you? Why or why not? Give examples of how your views might have changed or been strengthened (or perhaps, of why the text failed to convince you, the way it is). Please do not write "I agree with everything the author wrote," since everybody disagrees about something, even if it is a tiny point. Use quotes to illustrate your points of challenge, or where you were persuaded, or where it left you cold.

How well does the text address things that you, personally, care about and consider important to the world? How does it address things that are important to your family, your community, your ethnic group, to people of your economic or social class or background, or your faith tradition? If not, who does or did the text serve? Did it pass the "Who cares?" test? Use quotes to illustrate. *What can you praise about the text? What problems did you have with it?* Reading and writing "critically" does not mean the same thing as "criticizing," in everyday language (complaining or griping, fault-finding, nit-picking). Your "critique" can and should be positive and praise the text if possible,as well as pointing out problems, disagreements and shortcomings.

How well did you enjoy the text (or not) as entertainment or as a work of art? Use quotes or examples to illustrate the quality of the text as art or entertainment. Of course, be aware that some texts are not meant to be entertainment or art: a news report or textbook, for instance, may be neither entertaining or artistic, but may still be important and successful.

To sum up, what is your overall reaction to the text? Would you read something else like this, or by this author, in the future or not? Why or why not? To whom would you recommend this text?

Essay 2: Reading and Responding to "The Seven False Beliefs: Address the Psychosocial Underpreparedness of the Community College Student"

Purpose

You will be using a variety of skills we have addressed so far this semester in order to effectively develop a reading response to Dr. Michael V. Miranda's article, "The Seven False Beliefs: Address the Psychosocial Underpreparedness of the Community College Student."

Assignment

You should first **annotate** the text in a way that will help you write the summary of this article, as well as the response. Then, develop a **summary** for Miranda's article. Finally, develop a **reader response** to this text.

Summary

Your summary should contain the thesis, as well as main supporting ideas of the text. This objective summary should be written using your own words, maintaining the author's assertions, but communicating them in your own language.

Response

Your reader response should address your overall feeling about this article. Then, choose **three** of the following supporting ideas to include as you explore the claim you make about the text. For each supporting idea, you should include a **direct quotation** to illustrate your discussion. You should also develop a **conclusion paragraph** that re-states the purpose of this essay.

- What does the text have to do with you, personally, and with your life (past, present or future)?
- How much does the text agree or clash with your view of the world, and what you consider right and wrong?
- What did you learn, and how much were your views and opinions challenged or changed by this text, if at all?
- How well does the text address things that you, personally, care about and consider important to the world?
- What can you praise about the text? What problems did you have with it?
- How well did you enjoy the text (or not) as entertainment or as a work of art?
- To sum up, what is your overall reaction to the text?

Length

Your essay should be at least three full pages, typed, and double spaced. Please use Times New Roman, 12 point font, 1-inch margins. Follow MLA guidelines.

Summary and Response Essay Rubric

Student Name:

Critical Reading:
_____ The author's thesis is identified (underlined or highlighted)
_____ Main ideas of the article are identified (underlined or highlighted)
_____ Confusing passages and/or words are identified (underlined or highlighted)
_____ Underlined/highlighted passages are complimented with an explanatory note.

Summary:
_____ First sentence introduces the source (**author and title**) as well as the author's claim
_____ Summary contains thoughtful transitions from one idea to another
_____ Summary is concise and to the point, capturing the author's claims only
_____ Summary contains paraphrased ideas, using original language
_____ Student uses third person, present tense
_____ Student uses academic language and proper mechanics of the English language

Response:
_____ First sentence introduces the source (**author, title, and purpose**) as well as your overall reaction to the text.
_____ Response explores the text by using at least **three** of the connecting devices.

- What does the text have to do with you, personally, and with your life (past, present or future)?
- How much does the text agree or clash with your view of the world, and what you consider right and wrong?
- What did you learn, and how much were your views and opinions challenged or changed by this text, if at all?
- How well does the text address things that you, personally, care about and consider important to the world?
- What can you praise about the text? What problems did you have with it?
- How well did you enjoy the text (or not) as entertainment or as a work of art?
- To sum up, what is your overall reaction to the text?

_____ Response refers to the actual text itself, incorporating at least one direct quotation for each supporting idea
_____ Response is easy to follow through purposeful paragraph divisions and clear topic sentences
_____ Response comes to a close with a conclusion paragraph that re-states the main ideas of the essay
_____ Student uses appropriate voice and verb tense
_____ Student uses academic language and proper mechanics of the English language

Your score: Comments:

- ✓ -
- ✓
- ✓ +

Chapter 4: Word Choice

Word Choice

Whenever you write, you should carefully choose your words. Make sure your words say what you mean by controlling wordiness, using appropriate language, choosing precise wording, and using a dictionary or thesaurus effectively.

Improving Vocabulary

Vocabulary is an important part of reading comprehension. The more we read, the more vocabulary words we will recognize. In fact, the best way to develop a rich vocabulary is to read widely and frequently.

Proficient readers also use strategies for dealing with unfamiliar words. They continue to build their vocabularies through effective use of:

- the dictionary
- context clues, and
- common prefixes, suffixes, and roots.

Exercise

For this activity, you will choose apply vocabulary strategies to 10 words from "Higher Education Through Discombobulation" by Betsy Chitwood.

1. Select 10 vocabulary words from the reading.
2. Apply the vocabulary strategies to the 10 words.
3. Create chart for each word using the model below.

Vocabulary Word	What You Think it Means	Context Clues Used in Developing Own Definition	Prefix/Suffix/Root Word and its definition	Dictionary Definition
Discombobulation	Lost	"It's really just an interesting way of saying you're confused" (218)	Prefix: Dis (means apart, away) Suffix: ion (means act of, result, state of)	confusion or disconcertion; feelings of upset; frustration

Controlling Wordiness and Writing Concisely

It is easy to let your sentences become cluttered with words that do not add value to what you are trying to say. You can manage cluttered sentences by eliminating repetitive ideas, removing repeated words, and rewording to eliminate unneeded words.

Eliminating Repetitive Ideas

Unless you are providing definitions on purpose, stating one idea in two ways within a single sentence is redundant and not necessary. Read each example and think about how you could revise the sentence to remove repetitive phrasing that adds wordiness. Then study the suggested revision below each example.

Examples

Original: Use a **very heavy skillet made of cast iron** to bake an extra juicy meatloaf.

Revision: Use a cast iron skillet to bake a very juicy meatloaf.

Original: Joe thought **to himself**, “I think I’ll make caramelized grilled salmon tonight.”

Revision: Joe thought, “I think I’ll make caramelized grilled salmon tonight.”

Removing Repeated Words

As a general rule, you should try not to repeat a word within a sentence. Sometimes you simply need to choose a different word. But often you can actually remove repeated words. Read this example and think about how you could revise the sentence to remove a repeated word that adds wordiness. Then check out the revision below the sentence.

Example

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

Revision: The student who won the cooking contest is very talented and ambitious.

Rewording to Eliminate Unneeded Words

If a sentence has words that are not necessary to carry the meaning, those words are unneeded and can be removed to reduce wordiness. Read each example and think about how you could

revise the sentence to remove phrasing that adds wordiness. Then check out the suggested revisions to each sentence.

Examples

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

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

Exercise

Rewrite the following sentences by eliminating unneeded words.

- I was late because of the fact that I could not leave the house until such time as my mother was ready to go.
- I used a pair of hot pads to remove the hot dishes from the oven.
- The bus arrived at 7:40 a.m., I got on the bus at 7:41 a.m., and I was getting off the bus by 7:49 a.m.
- The surface of the clean glass sparkled.

Using Appropriate Language

As a writer, you do not want inappropriate word choice to get in the way of your message. For this reason, you need to strive to use language that is accurate and appropriate for the writing situation. Learn for yourself which words you tend to confuse with each other. Omit jargon (technical words and phrases common to a specific profession or discipline) and slang (invented words and phrases specific to a certain group of people), unless your audience and purpose call for such language. Avoid using outdated words and phrases, such as "dial the number." Be straightforward in your writing rather than using euphemisms (a gentler, but sometimes inaccurate, way of saying something). Be clear about the level of formality needed for each different piece of writing and adhere to that level.

Focusing on Easily Confused Words

Words in homophone sets are often mistaken for each other. Table 17.1 "Commonly Confused Words" presents some examples of commonly confused words other than homophones. You will

notice that some of the words in the table have similar sounds that lead to their confusion. Other words in the table are confused due to similar meanings. Keep your personal list handy as you discover pairings of words that give you trouble.

Table 17.1 Commonly Confused Words

affect	effect		good	well
all ready	already		lay	Lie
allusion	illusion		leave	Let
among	between		ordinance	ordnance
are	our		precede	proceed
award	reward		quiet	quite
breath	breathe		quote	quotation
to	too		sit	Set
conscience	conscious		statue	statute
desert	dessert		that	which
emigrate	immigrate		through	thorough
especially	specially		who	whom
explicit	implicit		there	their

Writing without Jargon or Slang

Jargon and slang both have their places. Using jargon is fine as long as you can safely assume your readers also know the jargon. For example, if you are a lawyer, and you are writing to others in the legal profession, using legal jargon is perfectly fine. On the other hand, if you are writing for people outside the legal profession, using legal jargon would most likely be confusing, and you should avoid it. Of course, lawyers must use legal jargon in papers they prepare for customers. However, those papers are designed to navigate within the legal system.

You are, of course, free to use slang within your personal life, but unless you happen to be writing a sociolinguistic study of slang itself, it really has no place in academic writing. Even if you are writing somewhat casual responses in an online discussion for a class, you should avoid using slang or other forms of abbreviated communication common to IM (instant messaging) and texting.

Choosing to Be Straightforward

Some writers choose to control meaning with flowery or pretentious language, euphemisms, and double-talk. All these choices obscure direct communication and therefore have no place in academic writing. Study the following three examples that clarify each of these misdirection techniques.

Technique	**Example**	**Misdirection Involved**	**Straightforward Alternative**
Flowery or pretentious language	Your delightful invitation arrived completely out of the blue, and I would absolutely love to attend such a significant and important event, but we already have a commitment.	The speaker seems to be trying very hard to relay serious regrets for having to refuse an invitation. But the overkill makes it sound insincere.	We are really sorry, but we have a prior commitment. I hope you have a great event.
Euphemisms	My father is follicly challenged.	The speaker wants to talk about his or her father's lack of hair without having to use the word "bald."	My father is bald.
Double-talk	I was unavoidably detained from arriving to the evening meeting on time because I became preoccupied with one of my colleagues after the close of the work day.	The speaker was busy with a colleague after work and is trying to explain being tardy for an evening meeting.	I'm sorry to be late to the meeting. Work ran later than usual.

<u>Presenting an Appropriate Level of Formality</u>

Look at the following three sentences. They all three carry roughly the same meaning. Which one is the best way to write the sentence?

1. The doctor said, "A full eight hours of work is going to be too much for this patient to handle for at least the next two weeks."
2. The doctor said I couldn't work full days for the next two weeks.
3. my md said 8 hrs of wrk R 2M2H for the next 2 wks.

If you said, “It depends,” you are right! Each version is appropriate in certain situations. Every writing situation requires you to make a judgment regarding the level of formality you want to use. Base your decision on a combination of the subject matter, the audience, and your purpose for writing. For example, if you are sending a text message to a friend about going bowling, the formality shown in example three is fine. If, on the other hand, you are sending a text message to that same friend about the death of a mutual friend, you would logically move up the formality of your tone at least to the level of example two.

Exercise

1. Choose two pairs of commonly confused words from Table 17.1 "Commonly Confused Words" that are sometimes problems for you. Write a definition for each word and use each word in a sentence.
2. List five examples of jargon from a field associated with any of the readings completed for this course. Then list two situations in which you could use the jargon and two situations in which you should not use the jargon.
3. Work with a small group. Make a list of at least ten slang words or phrases. For each word or phrase, indicate where, as a college student, you could properly use the slang. Share your final project with the class.

Make a list of five situations where you should use very formal writing and five situations where more casual or even very informal writing would be acceptable.

Choosing Precise Wording

By using precise wording, you can most accurately relay your thoughts. Some strategies that can help you put your thoughts into words include focusing on denotations and connotations, balancing specific and concrete words with occasionally figurative language, and being on guard against clichés and misused words.

Focusing on Both Denotations and Connotations

Consider that the words “laid-back” and “lackadaisical” both mean “unhurried and slow-moving.” If someone said you were a “laid-back” student, you would likely be just fine with that comment, but if someone said you were a “lackadaisical” student, you might not like the connotation. Nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs all have both denotations and connotations.

The denotation is the definition of a word. The connotation is the emotional sense of a word. For example, look at these three words:

- excited
- agitated
- flustered

The three words all mean to be stirred emotionally. In fact, you might see one of the words as a definition of another one of them. And you would definitely see the three words in a common list in a thesaurus. So the denotations for the three words are about the same. But the connotations are quite different. The word “excited” often has a positive, fun underlying meaning; “agitated” carries a sense of being upset; and “flustered” suggests a person is somewhat out of control. When you are choosing a word to use, you should first think of a word based on its denotation. Then you should consider if the connotation fits your intent.

Choosing Specific and Concrete Words

You will always give clearer information if you write with specific words rather than general words. Look at the following example and think about how you could reword it using specific terms. Then check out the following revision to see one possible option.

Examples

Original: The **animals** got out and ruined the **garden produce**.

Revision: The *horses* got out and ruined the *tomatoes and cucumbers*.

Another way to make your writing clearer and more interesting is to use concrete words rather than abstract words. Abstract words do not have physical properties. But concrete words evoke senses of taste, smell, hearing, sight, and touch. For example, you could say, “My shoe feels odd.” This statement does not give a sense of why your shoe feels odd since odd is an abstract word that doesn’t suggest any physical characteristics. Or you could say, “My shoe feels wet.” This statement gives you a sense of how your shoe feels to the touch. It also gives a sense of how your shoe might look as well as how it might smell. Look at the following example and think about how you could reword it using concrete words. Then check out the following revision to see one possible option.

Examples

Original: The horses **got** out and **ruined** the tomatoes and cucumbers.

Revision: The horses *stampeded* out and *squished and squirted* the tomatoes and cucumbers.

Study this table for some additional examples of words that provide clarity to writing.

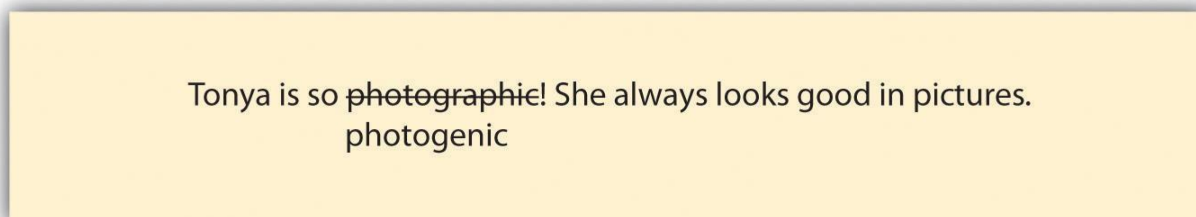
General Words	Specific Words
children	Tess and Abby
animals	Dogs

General Words	Specific Words
food	cheeseburger and a salad
Abstract Words	**Concrete Words**
noise	clanging and squealing
success	a job I like and enough money to live comfortably
civility	treating others with respect

Guarding against Misusing Words

If you are uncertain about the meaning of a word, look the word up before you use it. Also, if your spellchecker identifies a misspelled word, don't automatically accept the suggested replacement word. Make an informed decision about each word you use.

Figure 17.1



Equipment and memories can be photographic, but to look good in pictures is to be photogenic. To catch an error of this nature, you clearly have to realize the word in question is a problem. The truth is, your best chance at knowing how a wide range of words should be used is to read widely and frequently and to pay attention to words as you read.

Chapter Five: Evaluating Sources

Evaluating Sources

Often in your college career, you will be asked to find sources for a research paper or presentation. The internet has helped with this process tremendously – providing a wealth of information at our fingertips. However, anyone can publish whatever they like on the web – so how can we tell a reliable source from an unreliable one? This chapter discusses some critical thinking tips to help us sort through the maze of information available to us.

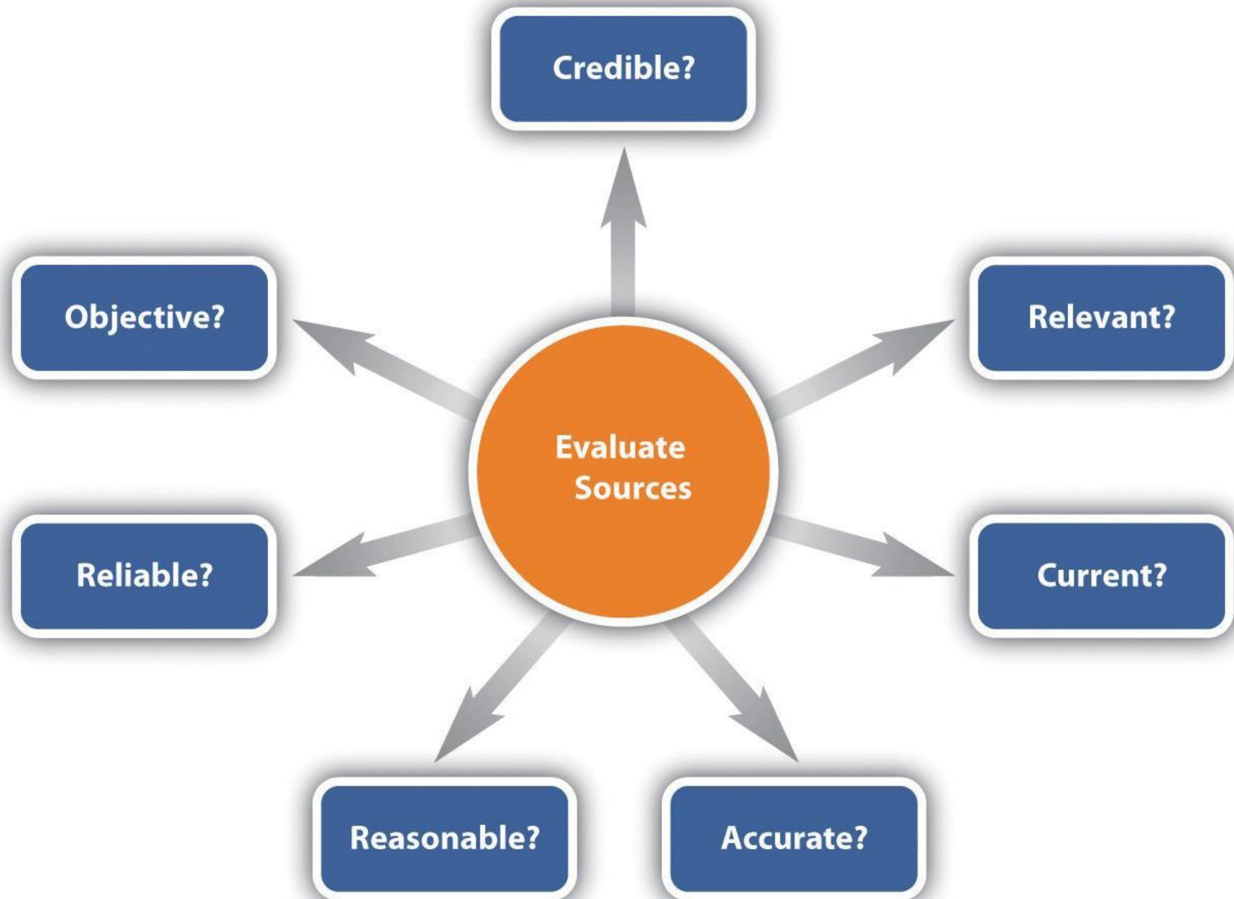
The requirements of your project will determine what types of sources are needed and appropriate and require different questions to ask, sources to pursue, evidence and support to use.

Below is a sample chart of questions, sources, evidence and support for a paper about social security.

Genre	**Informative Essays**	**Interpretive Essays**	**Persuasive Essays**	**Problem-Solving Essays**
Questions to ask	What are the present facts about Social Security and its solvency?	What has Social Security meant to American history, culture, politics, and government?	Should Social Security be saved or phased out?	Assuming it's worth saving, how can we preserve Social Security in a way that doesn't put us in more debt?
Types of sources	Government budget figures, projections, and reports	Historical records from the 1930s forward	Editorials and position papers from policy experts and think tanks	Articles and book-length works on fiscal policy and government entitlements
Evidence and support	Demographics, actuarial tables, and economic statistics	Political speeches and advertisements, congressional and presidential records	Arguments from Social Security proponents and opponents	Policy recommendations and proposals

How to Evaluate a Text

Figure 7.2



Is the Source Relevant?

A source is **relevant** if it can contribute to your paper in a meaningful way, which might include any of the following:

- Supplies support for core argument(s)
- Adds a sense of authority to your argument(s)
- Contributes background information
- Provides other viewpoints
- Offers definitions and explanations that your audience will need for clarification

When determining if a source is **current** enough to use, a general rule of thumb is that a source must be no more than ten years old. In some situations, very few sources exist that were published within the last ten years, so older sources can be used as long as you explain why the

use of the older sources is acceptable and meaningful. Or perhaps you may be using older sources to establish a historical record of thoughts and statements on your issue in question.

Before you use a source, you need to satisfy yourself that the information is **accurate**. In print sources, you can use the author (if known) and the publisher to help you decide. If you think the author and publisher are legitimate sources, then you are probably safe in assuming that their work is accurate. In the case of online information, in addition to considering the author and publisher, you can look at how long ago the site was updated, if evidence is provided to back up statements, and if the information appears to be thorough. For either print or online sources, you can check accuracy by finding other sources that support the facts in question.

Is the source Reasonable and Reliable?

You can deem a source to be **reasonable** if it makes overall sense as you read through it. In other words, use your personal judgment to determine if you think the information the source provides sounds plausible.

Reliable sources do not show **bias** or conflict of interest. For example, don't choose a toy company's site for information about toys that are best for children. If you are unsure about the reliability of a source, check to see if it includes a list of references, and then track down a sampling of those references. Also, check the publisher. Reliable publishers rarely involve themselves with unreliable information.

Reading to Recognize Bias

Bias is when an author has a negative view towards a subject, feels favoritism toward the subject, or allows their emotions about the topic to overtake their ability to take a balanced view of topic. If a source seems to only address one side of the issue than it is often **bias**. Determining bias in an article can be difficult. Here are some reading guidelines to help you determine bias:

A source is probably bias if:

- The author uses a lot of **loaded language** in the text. Loaded language is wording that causes a strong emotional reaction (either positive or negative).
- The author supports their opinion largely with personal experiences and observations rather than facts, examples, quotes from experts or other forms of support.
- The author uses stereotypes. If the author labels entire groups, then there is probably bias present.
- Notice vague language or generalizations – if the author isn't using specific language, this could be an indicator of bias.

Is the Source Objective?

A source is **objective** if it provides both sides of an argument or more than one viewpoint. Although you can use sources that do not provide more than one viewpoint, you need to balance them with sources that provide other viewpoints.

.edu	Educational
.com	Commercial, for-profit, business
.gov	Government
.mil	Military
.net	Network
.org	Not-for-profit organization

Is the Source Credible?

A **credible** source is one that has solid backing by a reputable person or organization with the authority and expertise to present the information. When you haven't heard of an author, you can often judge whether an author is credible by reading his or her biography. If no biography is available, you can research the author yourself. You can also judge the credibility of an online source by looking at address extension. As a rule, you need to be aware that .com sites are commercial, for-profit sites that might offer a biased viewpoint, and .org sites are likely to have an agenda. Take precautions not to be fooled by an address extension that you think would belong to a credible source. Always think and read critically so you aren't fooled.

How Do I Know if My Sources are C.R.A.P.?

The CLC library recommends using the C.R.A.P. method for evaluating sources. It is an acronym that helps you remember to address all the issues discussed above. Here is what C.R.A.P. stands for:

C- Currency

R – Relevancy/Reliability

A – Accuracy

P- Purpose

The following is a list of critical thinking questions associated with the CRAP test to help you with your evaluation:

Currency: Is the information recent enough for your topic? In some cases, it's important to use the most up-to-date sources (in medical research for instance). In other cases it's not as important, or you may be required to use old sources (for example, historical documents, or older works of literature).

- Has it been published in the last 10 years (or within what ever range you instructor says)
- If you have a historical research topic, was it published around the date of the original event?

Reliable/Relevance: Where does the information come from, and does the information apply to your topic?

- Is it a primary or secondary source?
- Are methods or references provided?
- Who published the information?
- Was it peer-reviewed?
- Does all of the information apply to your topic, or only a part of it?
- Is the information general or detailed?
- Is the information balanced or biased?

Authority: Who authored this information?

- Was it a single person or several people?
- Was it a corporation or organization?
- Are their credentials provided?
- What is their reputation or expertise?

Purpose/Point-of-View: What was the intent of the author, and how is the author connected to the information?

- Who is the intended audience?
- Is the information intended to inform, persuade, sell, entertain, …?
- Is this a first-hand account of an event or research?
- Does the author have a vested interest in the topic?

Exercises:

1. Choose two related articles on a subject assigned to you by your instructor. One article should be what you consider a good source, and one that isn't. Write a **brief summary** of each article and a one paragraph CRAP analysis, discussing *currency, reliability, authority and purpose of your article.* Use the attached CRAP rubric to rate your article and help guide your response.

2. Analyze an article you have read for Fact and opinion. After reading the article, have them **underline facts** and **put squares** around opinions. Then discuss the quality of the facts, how they apply to the writer's argument and how the author's opinions may show bias.

Rhetorical Analysis

Rhetorical analysis is a tool for deeper critical reading. When you analyze a text rhetorically, you consider the overall situation and context of the writing and how the needs and constraints of the writing situation may have guided the author's choices. Rhetorical analysis helps us look at the text itself but also outside the text at other aspects of the writing situation—context, author, audience, genre—that influenced the way this particular text was written.

What is Rhetorical Analysis?

We have heard that "you can't judge a book by its cover," but, in fact, we do it all the time. Daily we find ourselves in situations where we are forced to make snap judgments. Each day we meet different people, encounter unfamiliar situations, and see media that asks us to do, think, buy, and act in all sorts of ways.

In fact, our saturation in media and its images is one of the reasons why learning to do rhetorical analysis is so important. The more we know about how to analyze situations and draw informed conclusions, the better we can become about making savvy judgments about the people, situations, and media we encounter.

Media and Rhetoric

Media is one of the most important places where this kind of analysis needs to happen. *Rhetoric*—the way we use language and images to persuade—is what makes media work. Think of all the media you see and hear every day: Twitter, television shows, web pages, billboards, text messages, podcasts, and more! Media is constantly asking you to buy something, act in some way, believe something to be true, or interact with others in a specific manner. Understanding rhetorical messages is essential to help us become informed consumers, but it also helps evaluate the ethics of messages, how they affect us personally, and how they affect society.

Take, for example, a commercial for men's deodorant that tells you that you'll be irresistible to women if you use their product. This campaign doesn't just ask you to buy the product, though. It also asks you to trust the company's credibility, or ethos, and to believe the messages they send about how men and women interact, about sexuality, and about what constitutes a healthy body. You have to decide whether or not you will choose to buy the product and how you will choose to respond to the messages that the commercial sends.

Because media rhetoric surrounds us, it is important to understand how rhetoric works. If we refuse to stop and think about how and why it persuades us, we can become mindless consumers who buy into arguments about what makes us value ourselves and what makes us happy.

Rhetoric as Social Influence

Our worlds are full of these kinds of social influences. As we interact with other people and with media, we are continually creating and interpreting rhetoric. In the same way that you decide how to process, analyze or ignore these messages, you create them. You probably think about what your clothing will communicate as you go to a job interview or get ready for a date. You are also using rhetoric when you try to persuade your parents to send you money or your friends to see the movie that interests you. When you post to your blog or tweet you are using rhetoric.

Most of our actions are persuasive in nature. What we choose to wear (tennis shoes vs. flip flops), where we shop (Whole Foods Market vs. Wal-Mart), what we eat (organic vs. fast food), or even the way we send information (snail mail vs. text message) can work to persuade others.

Chances are you have grown up learning to interpret and analyze these types of rhetoric. They become so commonplace that we don't realize how often and how quickly we are able to perform this kind of rhetorical analysis. When your teacher walked in on the first day of class,

you probably didn't think to yourself, "I think I'll do some rhetorical analysis on her clothing and draw some conclusions about what kind of personality she might have and whether I think I'll like her." And, yet, you probably were able to come up with some conclusions based on the evidence you had.

However, when this same teacher hands you an advertisement, photograph or article and asks you to write a rhetorical analysis of it, you might have been baffled or felt a little overwhelmed. The good news is that many of the analytical processes that you already use to interpret the rhetoric around you are the same ones that you'll use for these assignments.

Exercise

1. Watch the following______advertising pitch for "______" and think about the way the advertisers use images and language to persuade…this is rhetoric!
2. What is it about the advertising pitch that is supposed to connect with the public and get them to buy the product?
3. Is the advertising pitch by____effective at persuading the public? Why or why not?

Considering Your Audience

Another part of the rhetorical context is *audience*, those who are the (intended or unintended) recipients of the rhetorical message. The audience should be able to help address the problem. You might be very frustrated with your campus's requirement that all first-year students purchase a meal plan for on-campus dining. You might even send an email to a good friend back home voicing that frustration. However, if you want to address the issue of the meal plans, the most appropriate audience would be the person/office on campus that oversees meal plans. Your friend back home cannot solve the problem (though she may be able to offer sympathy or give you some good suggestions), but the person who can change the meal plan requirements is probably on campus. Writers make all sorts of choices based on their audience. Audience can determine the type of language used, the formality of the discourse, the medium or delivery of the rhetoric, and even the types of reasons used the make the argument. Understanding the audience helps you begin to see and understand the rhetorical moves to make.

Logos, Pathos, Ethos

What you really want to understand is the argument—what the writer wants you to believe or do and how he or she goes about that persuasion. Effective argumentation has been talked about for centuries. In the fourth century BCE, Aristotle was teaching the men of Athens how to persuade different kinds of audiences in different kinds of rhetorical situations. Aristotle articulated three "artistic appeals" that a writer could draw on to make a case—logos, pathos, and ethos.

Logos is commonly defined as argument from reason, and it usually appeals to an audience's intellectual side. As audiences we want to know the "facts of the matter," and logos helps present these—statistics, data, and logical statements.

Few of us are persuaded only with our mind, though. Even if we intellectually agree with something, it is difficult to get us to act unless we are also persuaded in our heart. This kind of appeal to emotion is called *pathos*. Pathetic appeals (as rhetoric that draws on pathos is called) used alone without logos and ethos can come across as emotionally manipulative or overly sentimental, but are very powerful when used in conjunction with the other two appeals. Pathos can also be a very effective appeal if the writer has to persuade the audience in a very short amount of time, which is why it is used heavily in print advertisements, billboards, or television commercials.

The appeal that makes things seem real and approachable contributes to the ethos. *Ethos* refers to the credibility of the *writer*—which can be a person or an organization. A writer can develop credibility in many ways. The tone of the writing and whether that tone is appropriate for the context helps build a writer's ethos, as does the accuracy of the information or the visual presentation of the rhetoric.

Asking Questions

Use these questions to guide you along as you begin to analyze the arguments of others.

What is the rhetorical situation?

- What occasion gives rise to the need or opportunity for persuasion?
- What is the historical occasion that would give rise to the composition of this text?

Who is the author/speaker?

- How does he or she establish ethos (personal credibility)?

- Does he/she come across as knowledgeable?
- Does he/she come across as fair?
- Does the speaker's reputation convey a certain authority?

What is his/her intention in speaking?

- To attack or defend?
- To exhort or dissuade from certain action?
- To praise or blame?
- To teach, to delight, or to persuade?

Who makes up the audience?

- Who is the intended audience?
- What values does the audience hold that the author or speaker appeals to?
- Who have been or might be secondary audiences?

What is the content of the message?

- Can you summarize the main idea?
- What are the principal lines of reasoning or kinds of arguments used?
- How does the author or speaker appeal to reason?
- How does the author or speaker appeal to emotion?

What is the form in which it is conveyed?

- What is the structure of the communication; how is it arranged?
- What figures of speech (schemes and tropes) are used?
- What kind of style and tone is used and for what purpose?

How do form and content correspond?

- Does the form complement the content?
- What effect could the form have, and does this aid or hinder the author's intention?

Exercise

Annotated Bibliography

Purpose:

A big step in becoming a college reader is to learn to read and evaluate information on a particular topic that may support or challenge you feelings and beliefs. The purpose of this assignment is to apply the skills of main idea and summary, support, evaluating a text and to read critically about a social topic of interest to you.

Assignment: For this assignment, you will use the College of Lake County library databases or articles provided to you by your instructor. Choose a social issues that is of interest to you, then do the following:

1. Choose **four** articles about the topic. Two should represent the **pro side** of your issues. The other two should have **opposing** viewpoints.
2. For EACH article you will provide **citation, a brief summary,** and **a critical analysis.**

In the following pages, there is a **sample annotated bibliography** and information regarding how to write a critical analysis.

Exercise

Source Presentation and Annotate Bibliography: Information and Requirements

Purpose: Before you engage in the writing process of this essay, it is critical that you have some of your research done. The source presentation and annotated bibliography will help you familiarize yourself with one source and help you determine the role it may play in your essay.

Source Presentation Requirements:

a) Explain your topic
    a. Problem
    b. Who it affects
    c. How it affects them
    d. Why you chose this topic

b) Read thesis statement, clearly articulating a specific social issue.

c) Give background on your source, establishing credibility for it (author, title, publication date, publisher, author credentials).

d) Summarize the source, providing an objective discussion of the author's main points.

e) Discuss ways in which you can use different parts of this source. Be specific here, referencing statistics, examples, quotations, etc… Connect to specific places in your paper.

Annotated Bibliography Requirements:

a) Provide a full MLA citation for the source

b) Provide an objective summary of the source

c) Identify one specific quote, statistic, example, or anecdote you plan to use in your essay. Explain how you see this passage fitting into your essay and why. Be specific here.

d) This should be typed

Writing a Critical Analysis as Part of Your Annotated Bibliography
(Prepared by Patricia Eney)

The purpose for writing a critical analysis is to evaluate somebody's work (a book, an essay, a movie, a painting…) in order to increase the reader's understanding of it. While a summary is a small repetition of the main points of a passage, a critical analysis expresses the writer's opinion of the text. Analysis means to break down and study the parts. Writing a critical analysis requires two steps: critical reading and critical writing.

Critical Reading:

1. Identify the author's thesis and purpose.
2. Analyze the structure of the passage by identifying all the main ideas.
3. Consult a dictionary or encyclopedia to understand material that is unfamiliar to you.
4. Write your **summary** of the work before writing the critical analysis. Follow the summary format we have been using.
5. For the **critical analysis**, you will be answering the following questions:
    - What is the source of the material?
    - What are the author's qualifications?
    - Are there more facts or opinions given?
    - What appeals did the author use?
    - What is the author's purpose (to entertain, persuade, inform or raise an issue)
    - Is there any bias present in the passage?
    - Who is the author's intended audience?
    - What is the intended meaning of the material (thesis/central idea)

Critical Writing:

1. Start your critical analysis by giving the title, author, and purpose of the passage **in the first sentence**.
2. Choose several of the areas that you analyzed during your critical reading that are noteworthy and discuss them in several sentences.
3. Finish your critical analysis with a total assessment of the article. What is your overall view of the article? Is it well-written?
4. What should **NOT** be in a critical analysis:
    - I liked this article because…
    - I didn't like this article because…
5. Be sure that you are only **analyzing the writing** in this section, and not summarizing.

Text frame for writing a Critical Analysis: Use the following framework when writing your critical analysis portion of your annotated bibliography.

In the article ___(insert text title______________________ written by ________________________ he discusses _______(Insert central idea/thesis)___________________________________. This article is primarily a __________________ and the author's purpose is to ________________________. This source is **relevant** because* _______________________. The author's purpose is to ______________________. The author supports their central idea largely with ________(facts, statistics, expert opinion, personal opinion, personal observation) . The evidence relies mostly on _________**generalizations/specific support** _____________There **was/was not** any bias presented in the article because the author **did/didn't** acknowledge both sides of the argument. Overall the essay was a good source because **____________________________.

*Use information found on page 66.

** For this section, discuss what research need this article fills. Some examples are: gives background information, defines important terms about my topic, provides an argument supporting my position, provides an argument that opposes my position.

(Text frame developed by Kelly Black)

Sample Annotated Bibliography

Citation:

Whelan, Elizabeth M. "The Perils of Prohibition." *Newsweek*, 29 May 1994. *The Writer's Response: A Reading-Based Approach to Writing,* Fourth Edition, Stephen McDonald and William Saloman, editors, Thompson/Wadsworth, 2008, pp. 249-252.

Summary:

In the article "The Perils of Prohibition" a selection from the textbook "The Writers Response" Mary Whelen states that the drinking age should be lowered to allow parents the opportunity to educate their child about how to drink alcohol in a controlled environment. She claims the "21" law contributes to binge drinking because parents are not allowed to teach their teens about alcohol, contributing to the "forbidden fruit" allure of alcohol. She states that Europeans don't have such problems, in part, because their drinking laws are less restrictive. Furthermore, she states that the drinking laws inhibit the freedom of underage students because it keeps them from being able to attend music concerts, clubs and comedians in bars, forcing some of them to find entertainment hanging out in the streets. She states that in trade for lowering the drinking age, we should have much harsher consequences for substance abusers and drunk drivers of all ages.

Critical Analysis:

"The Perils of Prohibition", a selection from a textbook "The Writer's Response" was written by Mary Whelen, president and founder of the American Council on Science, and who holds degrees from the Yale School of Medicine and the Harvard School of Public Health. Since the article is in a textbook, it has been peer edited. The author uses a conversational tone to discuss her reasons for wanting the drinking age lowered. She largely uses her personal (in this case highly informed) opinion and observation to make her arguments. She also uses several real life examples of the potentially terrible consequences of binge drinking. The author does a nice job of raising points to consider regarding the drinking age, however she did not address the question of what to do if you don't have a responsible parent to tell you about alcohol.

Chapter 6: Introduction to Argumentative Research

Introduction to Argumentative Research

What is Argument?

Argument defends a certain point of view through writing or speech. Usually called a "claim" or a "thesis," this point of view is concerned with an issue that doesn't have a clear right or wrong answer. Argument might tackle issues like abortion, capital punishment, stem cell research, or gun control. However, what distinguishes an argument from "report" writing is that the argument must take a stance; if you're merely summarizing "both sides" of an issue or pointing out the "pros and cons," you're not really writing an argument.

Academic arguments usually "articulate an opinion." This opinion is always carefully defended with good reasoning and supported by plenty of research. Part of learning to write effective arguments is finding reliable sources (or other documents) that lend credibility to your position. It's not enough to say "capital punishment is wrong because that's the way I feel."

Writing an Argument

Academic arguments usually "articulate an opinion." This opinion is always carefully defended with good reasoning and supported by plenty of research. Indeed, part of learning to write effective arguments is finding reliable sources (or other documents) that lend credibility to your position.

You can adequately support your claim by finding:

- facts
- statistics
- quotations from recognized authorities, and
- examples

You won't always win, and that's fine. The goal of an argument is simply to:

- make a claim
- support your claim with the most credible reasoning and evidence you can muster
- hope that the reader will at least understand your position
- hope that your claim is taken seriously

If you defend your argument's position with good reasoning and evidence, you should earn a high grade, even if your instructor personally disagrees with the views you are defending.

How to Write an Argument

Introduction

The first paragraph of your argument is used to *introduce your topic* and the issues surrounding it. This needs to be in clear, easily understandable language. Your readers need to know what you're writing about before they can decide if they believe you or not.

Once you have introduced your general subject, it's time to *state your claim*. Your claim will serve as the thesis for your essay. Make sure that you use clear and precise language. Your reader needs to understand exactly where you stand on the issue. The clarity of your claim affects your readers' understanding of your views

You can also mention the points or arguments in support of your claim, which you will be further discussing in the body. The guide is a useful tool for you as well as the readers. It is useful for you, because this way you will be more organized. In addition, your audience will have a clear cut idea as to what will be discussed in the body.

- Convince readers that the topic is worthy of their attention.
- Provide background information that sets the stage for the argument.
- Provide details that show you as a credible source.
- End with a thesis statement that takes a position on the issue or problem you have established to be arguable.

Body

Once your position is stated you should establish your credibility. There are two sides to every argument. This means not everyone will agree with your viewpoint. So try to form a common ground with the audience. Think about who may be undecided or opposed to your viewpoint. Take the audience's age, education, values, gender, culture, ethnicity, and all other variables into consideration as you introduce your topic. These variables will affect your word choice, and your audience may be more likely to listen to your argument with an open mind if you do.

Back up your thesis with logical and persuasive arguments. During your pre-writing phase, outline the main points you might use to support your claim, and decide which are the strongest and most logical. Eliminate those which are based on emotion rather than fact. Your corroborating evidence should be well-researched, such as statistics, examples, and expert opinions. You can also reference personal experience. It's a good idea to have a mixture. However, you should avoid leaning too heavily on personal experience, as you want to present an argument that appears objective as you are using it to persuade your reader.

There are a couple different methods of developing your argument. Two variations of the basic argument structure are the Position Method and the Proposal Method.

The Position Method is used to try to convince your audience that you are in the right, and the other view of your argument is wrong.

The Proposal Method of argument 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.

When writing an argument, expect that you will have opposition. Skeptical readers will have their own beliefs and points of view. When conducting your research, make sure to review the opposing side of the argument that you are presenting. You need to be prepared to counter those ideas. Remember, in order for people to give up their position, they must see how your position is more reasonable than their own.

When you address the opposing point of view in your essay and demonstrate how your own claim is stronger, you neutralize their argument. By failing to address a non-coinciding view, you leave a reason for your reader to disagree with you, and therefore weaken your persuasive power. 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 present your side or the argument. This will show how your information is more reasonable than their own.

Presentation of position

- Give the reasons why the reader should share your opinion.
- Provide support for the reasons.
- Show why the reasons matter to the audience.

Presentation and rebuttal of alternative positions

- Show that you are aware of opposing views.
- Systematically present the advantages and disadvantages of the opposing views.
- Show that you have been thorough and fair but clearly have made the correct choice with the stand you have taken.

Conclusion

You have introduced your topic, stated your claim, supported that claim with logical and reasonable evidence, and refuted your opposition's viewpoint. The hard work is done. Now it's time to wrap things up. 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. Conclude = to come together or to end (not just restate what has already been said in your paper). One word of caution: avoid introducing any new information in your conclusion. If you find that there's another point that you wanted to include, revise your essay. Include this new information into the body of your essay. The conclusion should only review what the rest of your essay has offered.

- Summarize your argument.
- Make a direct request for audience support.
- Reiterate your credentials.

<u>Analytical and Problem-Solving Argumentation</u>

Arguments of any kind are likely to either take a position about an issue or present a solution to a problem. Don't be surprised, though, if you end up doing both. If your goal is to analyze a text or a body of data and justify your interpretation with evidence, you are writing an analytical argument. Examples include the following:

- Evaluative reviews (of restaurants, films, political candidates, etc.)
- Interpretations of texts (a short story, poem, painting, piece of music, etc.)
- Analyses of the causes and effects of events (9/11, the Civil War, unemployment, etc.)

Problem-solving argumentation is not only the most complicated but also the most important type of all. It involves several thresholds of proof. First, you have to convince readers that a problem exists. Second, you have to give a convincing description of the problem. Third, because problems often have more than one solution, you have to convince readers that your solution is the most feasible and effective. Think about the different opinions people might hold about the severity, causes, and possible solutions to these sample problems:

- Global warming
- Nonrenewable energy consumption
- The federal budget deficit
- Homelessness
- Rates of personal saving

Argumentation often requires a combination of analytical and problem-solving approaches. Whether the assignment requires you to analyze, solve a problem, or both, your goal is to present your facts or solution confidently, clearly, and completely. Despite the common root word, when writing an argument, you need to guard against taking a too argumentative tone. You need to support your statements with evidence but do so without being unduly abrasive. Good argumentation allows us to disagree without being disagreeable.

Drafting

Once you have created a map or outline or gathered your ideas in another way, you might think that the hardest part of the writing project is over, so now you can just follow your plan. However, the drafting process is actually much more complicated than that. You need to pay attention and think while you are writing and reading about your topic, so you notice meaningful changes you can make in your plan. You should continue to generate questions throughout the drafting and revising process. Even though you have a chosen topic, you need to formulate, support, and test your thesis (or main idea) and be prepared to modify it significantly in the face of new evidence or a change in your attitude toward the topic. You will also need to strive for an interesting, varied, appropriate, and mechanically sound approach to the paragraphs and sentences that will make up your essay.

Thesis

Like any other essay you have written for school, your researched argument should also have a thesis or central idea. In an argument paper, the thesis is sometimes referred to as the **position statement.** As the name suggests, the position statement should contain your stance on the topic. It can also do other things, such as raise an issue, or suggest a solution that you will discuss in depth in your paper.

Exercise

Each of the following six thesis-testing questions is followed by two sample theses. In each case, choose the thesis for which the answer to the question is "yes." Explain why the option that wasn't chosen does not receive a "yes" answer.

1. Is your proposed thesis interesting?

a) Textbooks are unpleasant to read.

b) Students who have a steady love interest in college tend to receive higher grades.

2. Is your proposed thesis arguable?

a) America's foreign policy in the Balkans from 1991 to the present has had a stabilizing influence in the region.

b) The world would be a better place if we would just give peace a chance.

3. Is your proposed thesis specific?

a) American toddlers who live with small pet dogs are more comfortable playing by themselves without the attention of a playmate or parent.

b) Girls who marry young have lifelong self-esteem problems.

4. Is your proposed thesis manageable?

a) Native Americans in North America want to maintain old customs.

b) Music can actually provide a helpful studying background for some students.

5. Is your proposed thesis researchable?

a) Milk chocolate doesn't taste as good as it did when I was a kid.

b) Costa Rica's declining cacao crop over the last twenty years has been caused by several factors: climate change, natural disasters, and a changing workforce.

6. Is your proposed thesis significant?

a) Reality television and social networking sites have contributed to changes in how eighteen- to twenty-nine-year-olds view their own privacy.

b) Television provides an inexpensive and meaningful form of entertainment.

Supporting a Position Statement

Supporting your position statement is the overall goal of your whole paper. It means presenting information that will convince your readers that your position makes sense. You need to take care to choose the best supporting details for your thesis. The use of **examples, facts, opinions, statistics,** and **personal observations and experiences** (as discussed in chapter two) can also be used in a position paper. However, in a position paper, your personal opinion, observations or

experiences are not as persuasive to the reader as other types of support and should be used sparingly.

Learning from Your Writing

As you write, you get additional ideas that change the direction you intended to take with some of your original ideas. Stop and rethink your direction and make adjustments so that your paper works well. If you pause every once in a while throughout the writing process, you are likely to find that your thoughts can lead to more good ideas. In other words, maintain constant critical inquiry about your content, your formatting, and your relationship to your main topic. Some common reflections that occur during a self-evaluation are:

- You could discover that you need to do more research to clarify your ideas, support them, or both.
- You might find that you do not have the information you need to transition smoothly from one topic to the next. Take the time to flesh out and articulate the transitions between points and ideas.
- You might find that your writing doesn't sound as professional as you would like it to sound. Slowly work through your paper replacing some of your more casual wordings with more formal wordings.
- You could realize that the topic on which you are currently focused should have been aligned with a previous idea. If this happens, stop and move things around. Continually pay attention to the organization so that, in the end, your paper flows well.

As you work through the following self-evaluation, make notes on your draft for when you go back and revise.

Learning from Your Reading

WHAT TO ANNOTATE IN SOURCES

It would probably not surprise you if your professor told you to read your research sources carefully and critically and with an open mind. It simply sounds like a logical, good idea. But how do you know if and when you are reading carefully and critically? Do you really know how to read with an open mind?

These are important questions to consider even when you can easily find what appears to be objective, unbiased, unfiltered information about your topic. Let's return to the ideas about reading closely and carefully. Some sources for a writing assignment can be less than thrilling, so your mind might wander a bit or you might speed-read without really focusing. Reading without your full attention or speeding through the text without taking it in not only is a waste of your time but also can lead to critical errors. To use your time wisely, you should try some techniques for getting the most out of your reading. Anything that gets you physically involved, mentally involved, or both will probably help, such as the following ideas:

- Use a designated symbol at points in the text to which you want to return.
- Take notes.
    - What is the author's thesis?
    - What are the author's supporting ideas?
    - What personal stories, facts, expert opinions, statistics, or examples does the author use to support the main ideas?
    - What unfamiliar words do you come across? What do they mean? Can you guess based on the context? You should also record a dictionary definition on the text.
    - Can you connect any of the author's ideas to other sources you have researched and read?
    - Does anything seem fishy? Note when an author's logic seems biased.
- Ask questions while you read and then look for the answers.

Exercise

1. Choose a text you are reading for this course. Make sure the text seems relevant to the assignment you are working on currently. Print the text so you can mark it up.

2. Annotate the text – on the text – using the questions under the "Taking Notes" section.

3. Write a paragraph that identifies the author's thesis, as well as the strongest and weakest piece of support used in the text. Make sure you directly quote the strongest and weakest examples of support. In addition, explain why you chose each.

Along with reading other sources carefully, critically, and with an open mind, you should also apply these techniques to your peers. By reading their work carefully, you will see things that can help them grow.

Use the following peer evaluation to help further the ideas of a classmate

Structuring Specialized Paragraphs

Many of the same common patterns of organizing your writing and thinking are available at the paragraph level to help you make your case to support your thesis. Using these common patterns helps readers understand your points more easily.

Pattern	Explanation	Example
Cause and effect	Cause-and-effect paragraphs point out how one thing is caused by another and are used to 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. It won't be long until you anticipate going to the farmers' market as a way to enhance the quality of your meals.
Comparison and contrast	Comparison and contrast is simply telling how two things are alike or different. You can choose to compare and contrast by selecting a trait, explaining how each thing relates, and then moving on to another trait (alternating organization, as here). Or for more complex comparisons and contrasts, you can describe all the features of one thing in one or more paragraphs and then all the features of the other thing in one or more paragraphs (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 the vine in their own time. The grocery store tomatoes are often close to flavorless. Unless you have no choice, you really should check out a farmers' market the next time you're shopping for fresh produce.

Pattern	Explanation	Example
Definition	Definition paragraphs are used to clarify key word or concepts.	If you see a "pluot" at the farmers' market, give it a try. It might seem odd to see a fruit you have never heard of before, but pluots are relatively new in the fruit world. 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.
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.	Our farmers' market is in danger of closing because a building is going to be constructed in the empty lot where it has been held for the past ten years. 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. Unfortunately, the city manager nixed that idea since he believed that too many people would complain. Barry Moore suggested that the market could be held in the state park that is just a few miles out of town. Again, a government worker struck down the idea. This time, the problem was that for-profit events are not allowed in state parks. 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.

Using Transitions

Transitions within paragraphs are words that connect one sentence to another so that readers can easily follow the intended meanings of sentences and relationships between sentences. The following table shows some commonly used transition words:

Commonly Used Transition Words	
To compare/contrast	after that, again, also, although, and then, but, despite, even though, finally, first/second/third/etc., however, in contrast, in the same way, likewise, nevertheless, next, on the other hand, similarly, then
To signal cause and effect	as a result, because, consequently, due to, hence, since, therefore, thus
To show sequence or time	after, as soon as, at that time, before, during, earlier, finally, immediately, in the meantime, later, meanwhile, now, presently, simultaneously, so far, soon, until, then, thereafter, when, while
To indicate place or direction	above, adjacent to, below, beside, beyond, close, nearby, next to, north/south/east/west, opposite, to the left/right
To present examples	for example, for instance, in fact, to illustrate, specifically
To suggest relationships	and, also, besides, further, furthermore, in addition, moreover, too

Researching

Organizing Research Plans

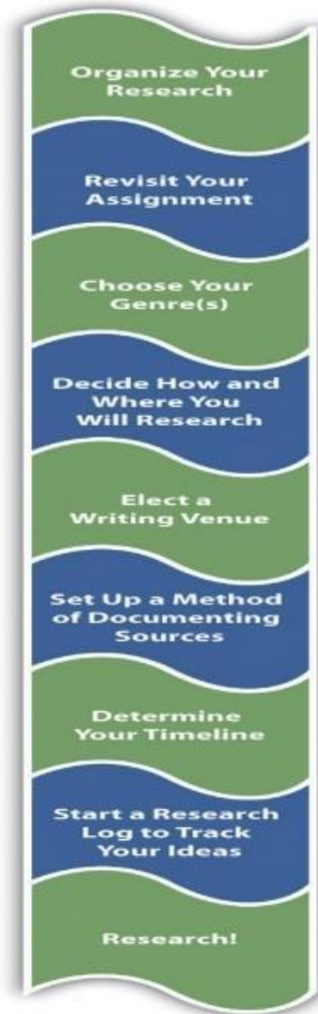
Now that you've learned about choosing and narrowing a topic to arrive at a thesis, you can plot how you will accomplish your rhetorical purposes and writing goals. But sometimes just coming up with a thesis requires research—and it should. Opinions are cheap; theses are not. Remember how important it is to be flexible; plans can change, and you need to be prepared for unexpected twists and turns during the research process. Making decisions about the issues in this chapter will give you a solid beginning toward conducting research that is meaningful to you and to your readers.

Revisiting Your Assignment

As you prepare to start researching, you should review your assignment to make sure it is clear in your mind so you can follow it closely. Some assignments dictate every aspect of a paper, while

others allow some flexibility. Make sure you understand the requirements and verify that your interpretations of optional components are acceptable.

Figure 7.1



Starting a Research Log to Track Your Ideas

A research log is a great tool for keeping track of ideas that come to you while you are working. For example, you might think of another direction you want to pursue or find another source you want to follow up on. Since it is so easy to forget a fleeting but useful thought, keeping an ongoing log can be very helpful. The style or format of such a log will vary according to your personality. If you're the type of person who likes to have a strict timeline, the log could be a chronologically arranged to-do list or even a series of alarms and reminders programmed into your cell phone. If, on the other hand, you're a bit more conceptual or abstract in your thinking, keeping an up-to-date statement of purpose chart might be the way to go.

Exercise

1.Describe your research plans for this sample assignment due in 3 weeks:

In ten to fourteen pages, compare the leisure activities that would have been typical of your ancestors prior to coming to the United States to your current-day leisure activities. Upload each version of your work to the class site for peer editing and review. The final version of the project is due to File Exchange in three weeks.
Include essay genre and length, how and where you will research, your writing venue, a method of documenting sources, and a day-by-day timeline.

2. Using the current assignment you are working with for this class, identify the following based on an assignment sheet, rubric, and any class discussion.
a) In your own words, what is the purpose of this assignment?
b) What is the length requirement?
c) Discuss the types of sources you are required to use, as well as how you are required to use them.
d) Does the instructor provide a timeline of due dates for you? If so, what are they? If not, map out the necessary steps you will take to complete the assignment. Consider topic development, research, and drafting.
e) Identify one question you have about this assignment.

Finding Print, Online, and Field Sources

Your status as a student grants you access to your college library, and it is in your best interest to use it. Whether you are using your library online or in person, you will most likely need some guidance so that you know the research options available and how to access them. College libraries still have print holdings that are worth checking out, but the landscape is quickly going digital. In recent years, libraries have been digitizing their print holdings and spending an increasing percentage of their budgets on acquiring better and richer academic databases with vast holdings you can use for most of your research needs.

Within the array of online options available to you, the academic databases to which your library subscribes are generally more authoritative because they have been edited and in many cases peer reviewed before being approved for publication. These sources often appeared in print before being collected in the database.

Along with the search engines, databases, and directories, the Internet also offers a variety of additional tools and services that are very useful to you as a researcher. An effective research project will likely combine source material from both academic databases and more popularly available online sites.

In addition to print and online sources, you might also wish to find some field sources, such as interviewing an expert, sorting through relevant documents, making observations, or attending an event that relates to your topic. For example, if you are researching the effects of inclusion on third grade students with special needs, you could add meaningful information to your paper by speaking with a local educator who has reviewed achievement scores before and after they have received inclusion services.

Exercise
Use the provided screen shot to decipher the following source information. As you conduct your research, you will find that each database provides a "snapshot" of sources for you so that you can start to get an idea of the source content.

1. Title
2. Type of source
3. Author(s) names
4. Length of source
5. Publication date of source
6. Where source was published
7. Main idea of the source
8. Identify a potential argument/thesis that this source might support

Choosing Search Terms

Whether you are searching research databases or conducting general online searches, the search terms and phrases you use will determine what information you find. Following some basic search term guidelines can make the process go smoothly.

When searching for articles within a database, start by using keywords that relate to your topic.
Example: alternative energy

To expand your search, use synonyms or components of the initial search terms.
Synonym Example: renewable energy
Components Example: algae energy, wind energy, biofuel

Other Techniques:

Use multiple words.	Use multiple words to more narrowly define your search.	renewable energy instead of energy
Use quotation marks.	Place quotation marks around two or more words that you want to search for only in combination, never individually.	"renewable energy"
Use "AND" to connect words.	Use "AND" between words when you want to retrieve only articles that include **both** words.	algae AND energy

Use “OR” to choose one or the other.	Use “OR” to find information relating to one of two options but not both. This option works well when you have two terms that mean the same thing and you want to find articles regardless of which term has been chosen for use.	ethanol OR ethyl alcohol
Use “NOT” to eliminate likely options.	Use “NOT” to eliminate one category of ideas you know a search term will likely generate.	algae NOT food
Use “*” or “?” to include alternate word endings.	Use “*” or “?” to include a variety of word endings. This process is often called using a “wildcard.”	alternate* energy
		alternate? energy
Use parentheses to combine multiple searches.	Use parentheses to combine multiple related terms into one single search using the different options presented in this table.	(renewable OR algae OR biofuel OR solar) AND energy

When you find a helpful article or Internet site, look for additional search terms and sources that you can follow up on. If you don’t have time to follow up on them all when you find them, include them in your research log for later follow-up.

Exercise

1. Write a search term that would work to find sites about athlete graduation rates.
2. Brainstorm a list of search terms to use when researching the topic “television violence.” Include all the techniques from this section at least once.
3. Now develop a list of 2 synonyms/search term for the search terms in number two

Conducting Research

When you are researching for an essay, your attitude and stamina are key to your success. If you let either of these issues get out of hand, you can seriously weaken your project. Before you begin what is essentially a month-long relationship with a topic, you should choose something that interests you, something about which you have an opinion. Even when it is on a topic you care deeply about, researching is often tedious and demands stamina. Assume from the beginning that the project will be time consuming and sometimes exhausting, so make sure to allot the needed time and energy to complete it.

If you feel strongly about a topic, you might find it a challenge to keep your attitude in check and to read your sources with an open mind. It is critical not to let your personal opinions drive the information you choose to include. Try to create a well-rounded paper. If all the sources you find appear to agree with your viewpoints, actively search out a different viewpoint to strengthen your paper. Or consider changing your path entirely because if there really isn’t a range of sources out there, you’re probably not working with an arguable topic.

Along with keeping an open mind (attitude) and keeping to a schedule (stamina), you should, of course, read critically. In other words, you should evaluate the arguments and assumptions authors make.

You also need to pose productive questions throughout the process. It's not that you shouldn't write about abortion or capital punishment if these issues mean something to you. It's just that you don't want to go down the same path that's been followed by millions of students who have come before you. So how do you ask fresh questions about classic topics? Often by rewinding to the causes of the effects people typically argue about or simply by pledging to report the facts of the matter in depth.

Old Question about Classic Topic	**New Questions about Classic Topic**
Is abortion acceptable under any circumstances?	• What forms of sexual education have been shown to be effective with teens most at risk of unplanned pregnancies? • What are some of the social and cultural causes of unplanned teen pregnancies?
Is capital punishment acceptable under any circumstances?	• What are states doing to ensure fair and thorough trials for capital crimes? • What are the results in the capital crime rate in states that have imposed moratoriums on capital punishment? • What is the relative average cost to conduct a capital prosecution and execution versus life imprisonment without parole?
Is censorship acceptable under any circumstances?	• What is the recent history of legislative and judicial rulings on First Amendment issues? • What are the commercial motivations of advertisers, music, television, and film producers to push the boundaries of decency?

Taking Notes

Some students view taking notes as a mindless procedure they have to go through to write a paper. Such an attitude is detrimental since good notes are a core factor that helps determine if you will write a good research project. In fact, next to building a solid research plan, the note taking process is perhaps the most critical part of your prewriting process.

Using Three Types of Note Taking

When you are completing a research paper, you will use three types of note taking: summarizing, paraphrasing, and quoting. Since, at the note taking stage, you do not know for sure how you will

use the information you find, you will not know for sure which kind of notes to take for which sources. Use the following general guidelines to decide:

- Summarize lengthy information that will add to your paper without including the smaller details.
- Paraphrase information and details that will serve as significant support for your core points but that isn't so eloquently stated that you want to use the exact words. Also, paraphrase texts with vital details that are simply too lengthy to quote.
- Use quotations to emphasize important information that will be very impressive or poignant and that will serve its purpose best if the original words are used. Keep in mind that no more than about 10 percent of your paper should be quoted text. Your paper should be in your words with a few quotations as opposed to a collection of quotations connected with your words.

Taking Care Not to Plagiarize

Three keys to referencing others' ideas ethically are to know the difference between common knowledge and proprietary ideas, to be aware of how to properly summarize and paraphrase, and to understand the correct methods for citing sources. In addition, you need to make sure that material is available for use at any level.

Differentiating between Common Knowledge and Proprietary Ideas

Common knowledge is that bank of information that most people know. Such information 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 you know, are aware of the information. For example, you can write that "Cheyenne is the capital of Wyoming" without needing a reference. On the other hand, if you were to note that there is a high rate of divorce in Cheyenne, you would need to cite that detail. Data about the divorce rate in Cheyenne are proprietary ideas.

Properly Summarizing and Paraphrasing

When you summarize, you should write in your own words and the result should be substantially shorter than the original text. In addition, the sentence structure should be your original format. In other words, you should not take a sentence and replace core words with synonyms.

You should also use your words when you paraphrase. Paraphrasing should also involve your own sentence structure. Paraphrasing might, however, be as long or even longer than the original text. When you paraphrase, you should include, in your words, all the ideas from the original text in the same order as in the original text. You should not insert any of your ideas.

Both summaries and paraphrases should maintain the original author's intent and slant. Taking details out of context to suit your purposes is not ethical since it does not honor the original author's ideas.

Study the examples in the following table for clarification between summarizing, paraphrasing, quoting, and plagiarizing.

Original text	Some dramatic differences were obvious between online and face-to-face classrooms. For example, 73 percent of the students responded that they felt like they knew their face-to-face classmates, but only 35 percent of the subjects felt they knew their online classmates. In regards to having personal discussion with classmates, 83 percent of the subjects had such discussions in face-to-face classes, but only 32 percent in online classes. Only 52 percent of subjects said they remembered people from their online classes, whereas 94 percent remembered people from their face-to-face classes. Similarly, liking to do group projects differs from 52 percent (face-to-face) to 22 percent (online) and viewing classes as friendly, connected groups differs from 73 percent (face-to-face) to 52 percent (online). These results show that students generally feel less connected in online classes.
Summarized text	Students report a more personal connection to students in face-to-face classes than in online classes.
Paraphrased text	Study results show a clear difference between online and face-to-face classrooms. About twice as many students indicated they knew their classmates in face-to-face classes than in online classes. Students in face-to-face classes were about two-and-a-half times more likely to have discussions with classmates than were students in online classes. Students in face-to-face classes were about twice as likely to remember classmates as were students in online classes. Students in face-to-face classes viewed group projects as positive about two-and-a-half times more often than did students in online classes. Students in face-to-face classes saw class as a friendly place 73 percent of the time compared to 52 percent for online classes. Summing up these results, it is clear that students feel more connected in face-to-face classes than in online classes.
Quoted text	The study showed that personal discussions are much more likely to take place in face-to-face classes than in online classes since "83 percent of the subjects had such discussions in face-to-face classes, but only 32 percent in online classes."
Plagiarized text	Some major differences were clear between Internet and in-person classrooms. For example, 73 percent of the study participants felt they were acquainted with their in-person classmates, but only 35 percent of the participants indicated they knew their distance classmates.

Correctly Citing Sources

Citing sources is critical since you do not want to be guilty of stealing ideas from others, and using others' intellectual property without giving them credit is, indeed, a form of stealing. A bonus that comes with citing sources is that aligning others' ideas with your ideas adds credibility to your ideas and helps establish your ethos. Also, when you address more than one viewpoint, you strengthen your viewpoint.

In order to know exactly how you should cite sources, you need to know the reference style you will be using. The most popular formats are American Psychological Association (APA), Modern Language Association (MLA), Chicago, and Council of Science Editors (CSE).

Regardless of which citation style you use, you should follow the following general guidelines:

- Enclose all direct quotations in quotation marks and cite the source within the text, including page number, author, and year (if your style requires all these parts) so it is very clear where you acquired the information.
- When you summarize or paraphrase text, do not use quotations, but note the author and year (or other required information depending on the citation style) either as part of the sentence or in parentheses following the sentence to clearly note that the ideas belong to someone else.
- At the end of your paper, include a complete list of references, each properly cited using the required citation style.

Managing Information

Pause for a few moments before beginning to amass your information into a first draft. Return to your statement(s) of purpose. Have any of the elements (voice, audience, message, tone, attitude, reception) changed as a result of your research? If so, write up an intermediate statement of purpose, and use it as a guide as you draft and as the basis for a writer's memo you may be asked to submit with your draft.

Once you think you have an ample supply of materials, read through your subtopic files and consider the order of the different pieces. Consider the points you want to make in relation to the information you have found and begin typing comments between your notes to assure you have a solid plan in place when you start to make your outline.

Create an outline that begins with your thesis (or message). Include the subtopics as key elements. Under each subtopic, list your supporting points you have researched as well as the ideas you plan to add. When you are finished, evaluate your outline by asking questions such as the following:

- Do I want to tweak my planned thesis based on the information I have found?
- Do all of my planned subtopics still seem reasonable?
- Did I find an unexpected subtopic that I want to add?
- In what order do I want to present my subtopics?
- Are my supporting points in the best possible order?
- Do I have enough support for each of my main subtopics? Will the support I have convince readers of my points?
- Do I have ample materials for the required length of the paper? If not, what angle do I want to enhance?
- Have I gathered too much information for a paper of this length? And if so, what should I get rid of?

- Did I include information in my notes that really doesn't belong and needs to be eliminated? (If so, cut it out and place it in a discard file rather than deleting it. That way, it is still available if you change your mind once you start drafting.)
- Are my planned quotations still good choices?

Research Documentation Guidelines

Choosing a Documentation Format

As a rule, your assignments requiring research will specify a documentation format. If you are free to use the style of your choice, you can choose any format you want as long as you are consistent, but you should know that certain disciplines tend to use specific documentation styles:

- business and social sciences: American Psychological Association (APA)
- natural and applied sciences: Council of Science Editors (CSE)
- humanities: Modern Language Association (MLA) or the Chicago Manual of Style (CMS)

These three systems of documentation have been refined over many generations so that academics can rely on certain standards of attribution when they cite each other's work and when their work is cited. When you enter into an academic conversation in a given discipline, it's imperative that you play by its rules. It's true that popular, nonacademic forms of attribution exist. Making a link to another website in a blog or a Twitter post works quite well, but in an academic context, such a form of attribution is not sufficient. Of course it should go without saying that stealing someone else's words or borrowing them without attribution, whether you do it casually on the web or in an academic context, is simply wrong.

Integrating Sources

Your goal within a research paper is to integrate other sources smoothly into your paper to support the points you are making. As long as you give proper credit, you can ethically reference anyone else's work. You should not, however, create a paper that is made up of one reference after another without any of your input. You should also avoid using half-page or whole-page quotations. Make sure to write enough of your material so that your sources are integrated into your work rather than making up the bulk of your paper.

Think of yourself as a kind of museum docent or tour guide when you are integrating sources into your work. You'll usually want to take some time to set up your use of a source by placing it in a proper context. That's why in most cases, before you even launch into quotation, paraphrase, or summary, you will have probably already used what's called a "signal phrase" that identifies the author of the source, and often the specific publication (whether web or print) from which it is taken. After your use of the source, you'll need to follow up with analysis and commentary on how you think it fits into the larger context of your argument.

Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing

When you quote another writer's exact words, you will have to identify the page number within the source where you found the quotation or the paragraph number if the source is taken from an

online format or database that does not indicate the original print pagination. Note that only APA allows the use of “p.” or “pp.”

Table 22.1 Citing Quotations

	APA	MLA	CMS
Explanation	**Short Quotations:** Place within quotation marks and follow with page number in parentheses (p. #). Include the author’s name and date either in a signal phrase before the quotation or at the end (name, year, p. #).	**Short Quotations:** Place within quotation marks and follow with page number in parentheses (#). Include the author’s name either in a signal phrase before the quotation or at the end (name #)	**Short Quotations:** Place within quotation marks and follow with page number in parentheses (#). Include the author’s name and date either in a signal phrase before the quotation or at the end (name year, #)
	Long Quotations (forty words or more): Place in an inset block of text without quotations. Include the author’s name and date either in a signal phrase before the quotation or at the end (name, year, p. #).	**Long Quotations (more than four lines):** Place in an inset block of text without quotations. Include the author’s name either in a signal phrase before the quotation or at the end (name #).	**Long Quotations (one hundred words or eight lines):** Place in an inset block of text and do not use quotations. Include the author’s name and date either in a signal phrase before the quotation or at the end: (name year, #).
Example #1	According to Fullan (2001), “Educational change depends on what teachers do and think—it’s as simple and complex as that” (p. 107).	According to Fullan, “Educational change depends on what teachers do and think—it’s as simple and complex as that” (107).	According to Fullan (2001), “Educational change depends on what teachers do and think—it’s as simple and complex as that” (107).
Example #2	“Educational change depends on what teachers do and think—it’s as simple and complex as that” (Fullan, 2001, p. 107).	“Educational change depends on what teachers do and think—it’s as simple and complex as that” (Fullan 107).	“Educational change depends on what teachers do and think—it’s as simple and complex as that” (Fullan 2001, 107).

Paraphrased and summarized text is cited within text in the same way that quoted material is cited except that quotations are not used. In APA style, you do not need to include page numbers in this case, but MLA and CMS, on the other hand, do still require page numbers, when they are available.

Table 22.2 Citing Paraphrased or Summarized Text

	APA	MLA	CMS
Explanation	In a signal phrase before the paraphrase or summary, include the author's last name immediately followed by the date in parentheses (year) OR, if no signal phrase is used, include the author's last name at the end of the paraphrase or summary followed by a comma and the year (name, year). No quotation marks or page numbers are needed.	In a signal phrase before the paraphrase or summary, include the author's last name and, at the end of the summary or paraphrase, include the page number in parentheses (#). If no signal phrase is used, include the author's last name at the end of the paraphrase or summary followed by the page number (name #). No quotation marks or dates are needed.	In a signal phrase before the paraphrase or summary, include the author's last name immediately followed by the date in parentheses (year) and the page number at the end of the sentence (#). OR, if no signal phrase is used, include the author's last name at the end of the paraphrase or summary followed by a comma, the year, a comma, and the page number (name, year, #). No quotation marks are needed.
Example #1	As Rosenfeld (2008) states, teachers have to both understand and be comfortable with technology before they will be able to take technology into their classrooms.	As Rosenfeld (2008) states, teachers have to both understand and be comfortable with technology before they will be able to take technology into their classrooms (159).	As Rosenfeld (2008) states, teachers have to both understand and be comfortable with technology before they will be able to take technology into their classrooms (159).
Example #2	Teachers have to both understand and be comfortable with technology before they will be able to take technology into their classrooms (Rosenfeld, 2008).	Teachers have to both understand and be comfortable with technology before they will be able to take technology into their classrooms (Rosenfeld 159).	Teachers have to both understand and be comfortable with technology before they will be able to take technology into their classrooms (Rosenfeld, 2008, 159).

Formatting In-Text References

When you use others' ideas, you have a variety of options for integrating these sources into your text. The main requirement is that you make it clear within your in-text reference that the information is not yours and that you clearly indicate where you got the idea. The following box shows some alternate phrases for signaling that the ideas you are using belong to another writer. Using a variety of wording makes writing more interesting.

Phrases That Signal an Idea Belongs to Another Writer

- According to Starr…
- Acknowledging that…
- Starr states…
- As Starr notes…
- In 2010, Starr reported…
- In the words of Starr…
- It is obvious, according to Starr, that…
- Starr argues that…
- Starr disagrees when she says…
- Starr emphasizes the importance of…
- Starr suggests…
- Starr observed in 2010 that…
- Technology specialist, Linda Starr, claims that….
- …indicates Starr.
- …writes Starr.

MLA Works Cited

Formatting Sources at the End of Your Paper

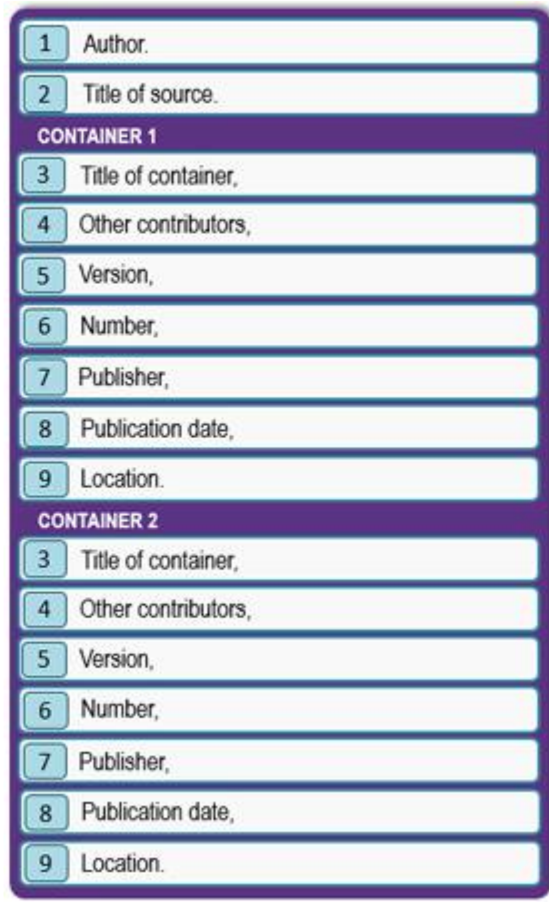
1 Author.
2 Title of source.
CONTAINER 1
3 Title of container,
4 Other contributors,
5 Version,
6 Number,
7 Publisher,
8 Publication date,
9 Location.

With the 2016 update, MLA changed and simplified the way your Works Cited entries should be formatted. Instead of offering a specific way to format each and every source time, the new MLA offers a streamlined approach using something called "containers."

These containers, pictured here, provide you with the required elements, order, and punctuation for each of your Works Cited entries.

As you work to format your Works Cited entries, you will notice that some sources require only

one container, depicted at the right. These are sources that you access directly from their original publication, such as books, an online magazine article, and general websites. You should follow the order of items listed in the container, following the simplified punctuation rules you see in the container as well. You will place a period after the author and the title of the source. Then, you should place commas after each item until the end of the entry.



Two containers are required for sources that you access through places like library databases. An example of MLA's "two container" structure is depicted at the left. Here, you will notice there is a place for the first container, with the original publication information. Below the first container, the second container provides publication information for where you retrieved that information. For example, a journal article you access through your library's databases will have its original publication information (container 1) and access information from the online database (container 2).

On the following pages, you can access interpretations of MLA format for Works Cited entries for a wide variety

Article from a Database

If you are accessing a journal article from a database, you will need two containers to present the original publication information as well as the access information from the database.

NOTE: MLA now requires full URLs for online material. You should look for a stable link to the article within the database. However, if your article includes a DOI (digital object identifier), that information should be provided instead of the URL.

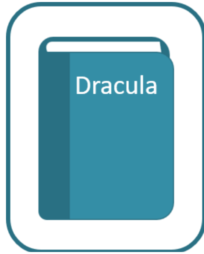
Goldman, Anne. "Questions of Transport: Reading Primo Levi Reading Dante." *The Georgia Review*, vol. 64, no. 1, 2010, pp. 69-88. *JSTOR*, www.jstor.org/stable/41403188.

Online Magazine Articles

If you are accessing a magazine article directly from the web, you will most likely need just one container to present publication information.

Bilger, Burkhard. "The Height Gap." *The New Yorker*, 5 Apr. 2004, www.newyorker.com/magazine/2004/04/05/the-height-gap.

Print Books



If you are accessing a print book, then you will need just one container for publication information.

Two Authors

Sennett, Richard, and Jonathan Cobb. *The Hidden Injuries of Class*. Vintage Books, 1973.

More Than Two Authors

For more than two authors: list only the first author followed by the phrase "et al." (Latin abbreviation for "and others"; no period after "et") in place of the other authors' names.

Smith, John, et al. *Writing and Erasing: New Theories for Pencils*. Utah State UP, 2001.

No Author

If you are accessing a print book, then you will need just one container for publication information. When you have a book with no author, you should begin with the title of the book.

Encyclopedia of Cats. Feline Press, 1991.

Online Newspaper

If you are accessing a newspaper article directly from the web, you will most likely need just one container to present publication information. Reviews and letters to the editor should be presented in a similar manner.

St. Fleur, Nicholas. "City Bees Stick to a Flower Diet Rather Than Slurp Up Soda." *The New York Times*, 19 May 2016, www.nytimes.com/2016/05/21/science/urban-bees-diet-flowers-soda.html.

Web Page

Websites that contain articles, postings, and almost anything else have been simplified in the 8th edition of the *MLA Handbook*. Just one container is needed for most websites.

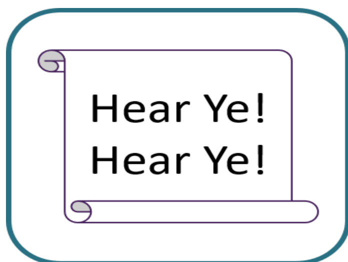
Hollmichel, Stephanie. "The Reading Brain: Differences between Digital and Print." *So Many Books*, 25 Apr. 2013, somanybooksblog.com/2013/04/25/the-reading-brain-differences-between-digital-and-print/.

Interviews

Elements: Interviewee's name. Personal interview/Telephone interview. Date of interview.

Bush, George. Personal interview. 3 May 2004

Government Publications



If a person is not listed as the author of a government document, the government organization should be listed as the corporate author. The number of containers needed to document government publications will depend upon how you accessed the publication. For example, if you accessed the publication directly from the web, just one container is needed. If you accessed the publication via a database, two containers are needed.

United States Department of Health and Human Services. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. "Specifications for Medical Examinations of Underground Coal Miners." *The National Institute for Occupational Safety and Health*, 9 Jan. 2012, www.cdc.gov/niosh/docket/archive/docket225.html.

Images & Other Multimedia

Online Video

In the 8th edition of the *MLA Handbook*, videos accessed via web will most likely need just one container.

"*Buffy the Vampire Slayer*: Unaired Pilot 1996." *Youtube*, uploaded by Brian Stowe, 28 Jan. 2012, www.youtube.com/watch?v=WR3J-v7QXXw.

Image – Photograph or Artwork

In the 8th edition of the *MLA Handbook*, images from the web will most likely need just one container. Images from other types of sources should follow guidelines for those particular sources.

Wootten, Bayard. *Woman Resting*. 1937. Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library, *North Carolina Collection Photographic Archives*, 12 Feb. 2013, http://library.unc.edu/wilson/.

Television or Radio Program

In the 8th edition of the *MLA Handbook*, television or radio programs may need two containers. In addition to the original airing information, you may need a second container to show how you accessed the program.

"Under the Gun." *Pretty Little Liars*, season 4, episode 6, ABC Family, 16 July 2013. *Hulu*, www.hulu.com/watch/511318.

Locating Reference Information

Having trouble locating reference information?

As you'll learn in this section of Citation & Documentation, part of writing within a particular documentation style, such as APA or MLA, is building a References or a Works Cited list with full publication information. But what happens when you're looking at your sources and just are not sure where to find all the necessary information like publication dates, volume numbers for journal articles, edition numbers, and the like?

The following images include helpful notes about locating publication information you'll need to build your References or Works Cited lists. Select the thumbnail image below to view a larger image with the notes.

Website

nursing.advanceweb.com/News/National-News/False-Promises-Portend-High-Nurse-Attrition-Rates-Research-Shows.aspx

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NATIONAL NEWS

False Promises Portend High Nurse Attrition Rates, Research Shows

article title

Posted on: June 14, 2011

date

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The results of a new research report examining the needs and perceptions of registered nurses finds the majority of RNs, regardless of tenure point, are at risk for attrition.

A total of more than 494 RNs participated in the online research, with 73 new RNs, 143 experienced RNs, and 278 tenured RNs.

The three tenure points examined by the study are defined as:

- New RNs (defined as those licensed within the past 5 years)
- Experienced RNs (defined as those licensed more than 5 years ago and hired by their current employer within the past 5 years)
- Tenured RNs (defined as those licensed more than 5 years ago and working for their current employer for more than 5 years)

The study was conducted jointly by recruitment strategies firm Bernard Hodes Group and Katon Direct, a database marketing company.

"One of the more surprising results found in this study is the fact that a majority of those RNs considering employment elsewhere had communicated work-related concerns to someone in authority. However, for many, no action was taken," says Judith Russell, BSN, RN, vice president, Bernard Hodes Group.

"Healthcare employers need to focus on listening to their employees, and understanding what drives their employment satisfaction and ultimately their engagement with the organization," she adds.

Many of the RNs surveyed also believe they did not receive an accurate description of the work environment prior to being hired.

EVENTS   EDUCATION   ONLINE CE   COLUMNS

Jacob K. Javits Convention Center
New York, NY | 03/14/2013

Crowne Plaza Hotel Hartford-Cromwell
Networking & ... | 03/27/2013

Pines Manor
Networking & ... | 04/23/2013

Melville Marriott Long Island
Melville, NY | 05/07/2013

Northeastern Regional Virtual Job Fair
Washington, DC ... | 06/05/2013

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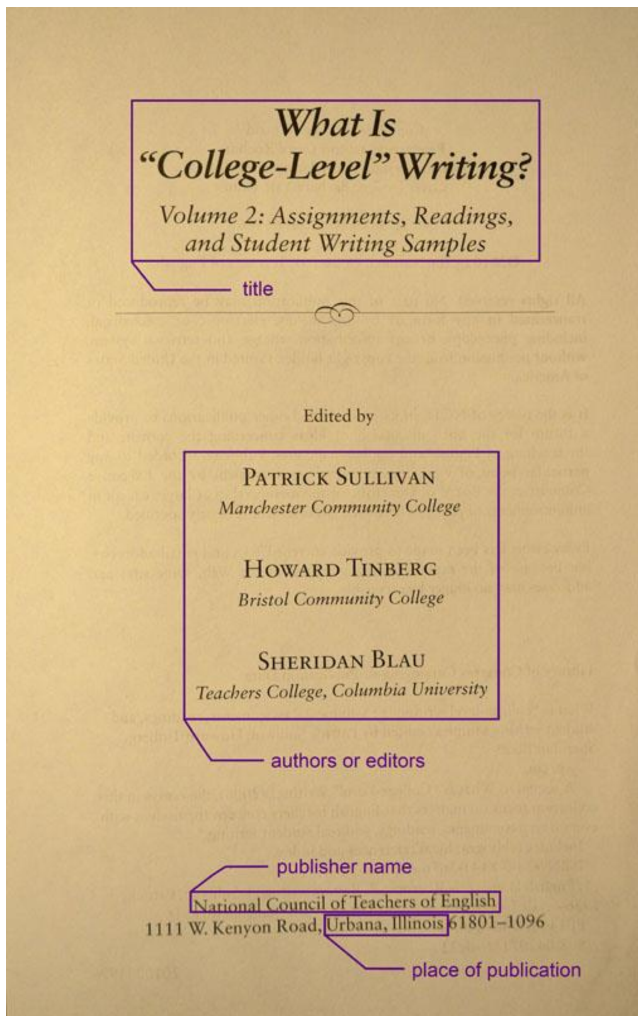
JOHNS HOPKINS MEDICINE HOME CARE GROUP

advance HEALTHCARE SHOP
For Gear, Gadgets & Gifts

Print Book (title/author/publisher)



What Is
"College-Level" Writing?

Volume 2: Assignments, Readings, and Student Writing Samples

Edited by

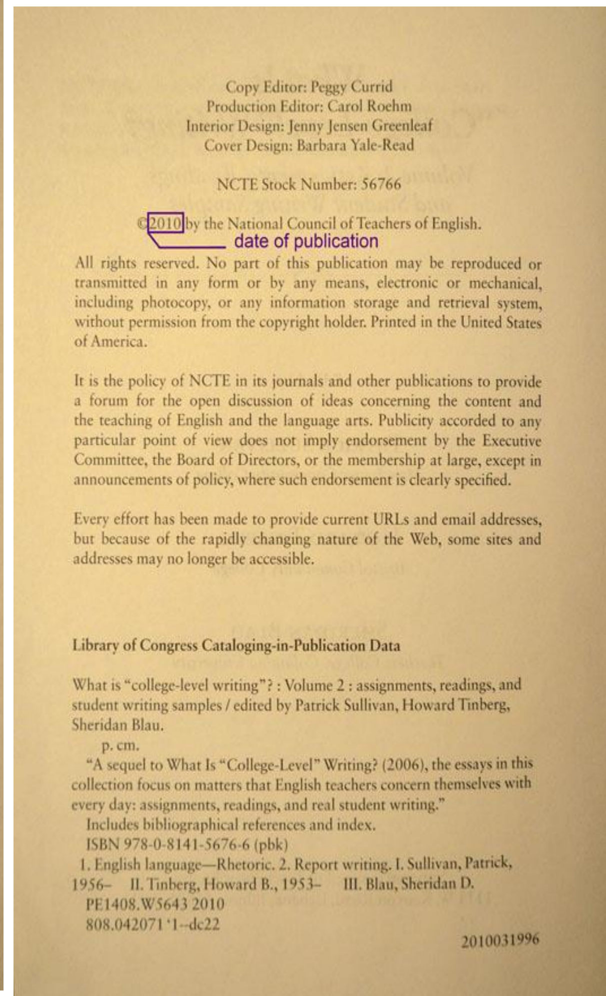
PATRICK SULLIVAN
Manchester Community College

HOWARD TINBERG
Bristol Community College

SHERIDAN BLAU
Teachers College, Columbia University

National Council of Teachers of English
1111 W. Kenyon Road, Urbana, Illinois 61801–1096

Print Book (date of publication)



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Every effort has been made to provide current URLs and email addresses, but because of the rapidly changing nature of the Web, some sites and addresses may no longer be accessible.

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What is "college-level writing"? : Volume 2 : assignments, readings, and student writing samples / edited by Patrick Sullivan, Howard Tinberg, Sheridan Blau.
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"A sequel to What Is "College-Level" Writing? (2006), the essays in this collection focus on matters that English teachers concern themselves with every day: assignments, readings, and real student writing."
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808.042071'1–dc22

2010031996

Journal Article from a Database

Mobilizing Science to Revitalize **Early Childhood** Policy. — article title

author

Authors: Shonkoff, Jack P.[1] jackshonkoff@harvard.edu

Source: Issues in Science & Technology; Fall 2009, Vol. 26 Issue 1, p79-85, 7p

year of publication — page numbers — volume number — issue number — journal title

Document Type: Article

Subject Terms: *EDUCATIONAL mobility
*EARLY childhood education
*CHILD development
*SCIENTIFIC knowledge
*EDUCATIONAL programs
*CHILDREN -- Health
*CHILD care
*STRESS (Psychology)
*ADAPTABILITY (Psychology)

Geographic Terms: UNITED States

Abstract: The article focuses on the science mobilization for **early childhood** policy revitalization in the **U.S.** It defines the core concepts that are essential for **early childhood** and **early** brain **development** and the fundamental directives for **early childhood** policy. It indicates the importance of young children's positive stress to a healthy **development** in the context of supportive and stable relationships in which adaptation is facilitated positively. The creative mobilization of scientific knowledge is stated to offer an opportunity to close **childhood** policy gap for high-quality **early** care and education programs.

Author Affiliations: [1]Julius B. Richmond FAMRI Professor of Child Health and **Development** and founding director of the Center on the Developing Child, Harvard University

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Composition Forum 26 Fall 2012 — volume number — year of publication

Mapping the Questions: The State of Writing-Related Transfer Research — article title

Jessie Moore — author

Abstract: The following article maps the questions, methods, contexts, and theories presented in published scholarship on writing-related transfer. While not exhaustive, this review attempts to capture representative samples with a focus on recent publications. The article then highlights a multi-institutional research initiative that aims to flesh out the field's "map" and suggests additional areas for exploration.

Early maps of the American West were notoriously incomplete; while charting the rivers and pathways that had been explored, cartographers could only make (often incorrect) inferences about the (often vast) spaces in-between. Rivers that appeared to branch in one spot and rejoin each other in another might actually be completely different bodies of water; similarly, mountain cuts that seemed from a distance like viable paths through mountain ranges might reveal other barriers from different perspectives. As more people explored and claimed new uses for the land, maps gained more detail: territorial boundaries, tributaries to previously mapped rivers, viable routes through mountain ranges, section boundaries, railroad lines, and other markers of the three-dimensional details the maps attempted to represent. With new land survey methods, these maps became more comprehensive and better predictors of what subsequent explorers would find.

Like early maps of the American West, mapping the research on writing transfer reveals both pockets of detail and gaps in disciplinary knowledge. Even the pockets of detail often come with the limitations inherent in mapping; they typically reveal one moment in one "season" of a writing program, or the path of only a few students in their writing lives, or an assessment of a unique situation that might not be replicable at other institutions. Yet the growing amount of research exploring writing-related transfer does begin to offer a lay-of-the-land to understand where the discipline's understanding of transfer is and where it might go.

What has rhetoric and composition asked about transfer, and what new questions might guide the field's exploration of writing-related transfer? In the following pages, I map the questions, methods, contexts, and theories presented in published scholarship on writing-related transfer. While not exhaustive, this review attempts to capture representative

Final Research Paper

Purpose:

The purpose of this assignment is to give you the opportunity to identify a specific problem or issue in your community (local or national) and develop research supported examples and evidence explaining how this issue is negatively affecting the community. Your goal is to convince your reader that this specific issue is a problem that deserves immediate attention.

Assignment:

As you think about all the factors that affect your life, you may find yourself questioning certain policies, actions, and expectations. For this assignment, you will identify a specific problem in your community or world. You should provide plentiful background information, outlining the specific negative effects that result from the problem. In addition, to demonstrate that you are a well-rounded and informed researcher, you should also include a counter-argument. Mention of the counter-argument can also strengthen your argument as you refute it with more support of your stance.

Assignment Requirements:

1. You should include at least **three** different sources from **the library databases. You should not use websites as a source.**
2. You should include at least **one** source obtained through **field research**.
3. Proper MLA in-text citations are required.
4. Clearly identify, define, and explain the specific issue or problem of focus. Provide ample background on the issue, drawing from your research.
5. Persuade your reader that this problem *is,* in fact, a problem.
6. Identify a counter-argument.
7. Refute the counter-argument with support and researched ideas.

Bibliography:

1. Please use MLA format.

*You will be graded on the quality of the source as well as the ways you include information from your sources.

2. A copy of the bibliography should be attached to the end of your final paper.

Length:

Your essay should be **4-5 pages**, typed, and double spaced. Please use Times New Roman, 12 point font, 1-inch margins. Follow MLA guidelines.

Grading:

Your grade will be based on the content of your argument, inclusion of sources, and the bibliography. See the attached rubric for more specific details.

Due Dates:

Topic Proposal	10/29, 30
Annotated Bibliography	11/10, 11
Outline	11/12, 13
Rough Draft 1 (1 typed and computer copy)	11/19, 20
Rough Draft 2 (1 typed copy)	11/24, 25
Rough Draft 3 (1 typed copy)	12/3, 4
Final Draft with final portfolio	12/10, 11

Resources:

MLA Format: Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL): http://owl.english.purdue.edu/

Exercise

Final Research Paper: Topic Brainstorming

Part I: Narrowing my Topic

A.Think about (and respond to) the following questions:

1. What is your issue of focus?
2. Who does it affect? Please be specific. Identify all affected parties, but put an asterix (*) by those who are most affected.
3. How are these communities affected?
4. Why is this issue important to you?

B.Put your topic in the middle. Then, think of different contexts or ways this topic can be discussed.:

Part II: Defining Social Issue

Directions: In order to define this term, break it down, defining the individual terms. Then, apply the definition to your topic.

	Social	Issue
Definition		
Application		

Research Question:

Part III: Previewing a Source

Directions: Based on your experience with active reading, let's develop a list of previewing strategies that you can apply to your research process.

<u>Purpose of previewing:</u>

<u>Strategies:</u>

Part IV: Using the Database

Directions: Go to CLC's home page (www.clcillinois.edu), scroll down to the bottom and click on the Library icon. Then, click on Databases: Find Articles. Use **Opposing Viewpoints** (at the bottom of the "Quick Links" list) and complete the following steps.

1. Use the terms of focus to conduct a search. Record your search terms here.

   ____

2. Select 3 titles at random. Try to preview at least one source from the different types of sources (academic journals, news, magazines, reference, websites, images, etc…). Based on the title and your pre-reading skills, write down topics and ideas you think will be present.

Title, author, publication date	Subject terms	Section Titles	Introduction and Conclusion
1.			
2.			
3.			

3. Put stars next to the titles that contain issues you are interested in writing your essay on.
4. Now, conduct a more narrow search for your focus. Consider ideas from your preliminary search, as well as items like who is affected and how they are affected.
    a. Narrowed focus: ____
    b. Type this new focus into the search bar.
    c. Use pre-reading skills, identifying 1 source that matches your focus most closely.
    d. You can find the full citation at the bottom of the page. Write out the entire citation here.

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    e. Explain why you selected this source. In other words, record the pre-viewing strategy used, the information it gave you, and the connection you see to your selected focus. Use strategies like subject key words, section titles, topic sentences, introduction and conclusion paragraphs/sections.

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Part V: Tweaking Your Thesis

Directions: For homework, type up the following information:

1. Reflect on your research process so far. Where did you start? Where are you now? How did you get here? Please be specific to the activity you did in class, as well as any other steps you took.

2. Thesis that communicates your clear stance

Exercise

Rough Draft #1 Self-Evaluation: Relevant Evidence

1. Now look at how you frame your research-based evidence. Use the same 2 places from above to assess. Answer the following questions in order to assess how well your research supports your thesis.

   a) What is the main idea of the paragraph this research is in? Where is it introduced? Underline the key words of your topic sentence.

   b) What is the main idea of the included research? Underline the key words of the research.

   c) The answers to a and b should be the same. If they are not, make a note to guide your revision. Consider altering your research or altering your topic sentence/focus.

   d) Do you have sentences that follow the in-text citation that explain how the research supports the main idea of the paragraph? Underline the key words from your explanation that link the research to your body paragraph topic.

Exercise

Rough Draft #2: Self Evaluation: Introducing Research

Directions: Answer the following questions on a separate sheet of paper.

1. Look at how you incorporate your research in **two body paragraphs**. Answer the following questions in order to assess the effectiveness of the way you **introduce** your research in each instance. In other words, you will answer these questions twice.

a) Identify the type of research included: direct quote, summary, paraphrase

b) Attribution phrase: what source information do you include here to convince your reader that the researcher/source is trustworthy?

c) Verb usage: what verb do you attach to the source in order to capture the spirit of their information? How does this choice help the reader understand the research better?

d) In-text citation: check to make sure you have the author and page number (or necessary information based on your attribution phrase)

Exercise

Rough Draft Peer Evaluation

Directions: Address each of the following questions through a discussion format to better acquaint yourself with your peer's thesis, goals and concerns.

Author (your name) ___________________________

Reviser (partner's name) _______________________

Part I: Self-Reflection

Directions: Create a list of areas you do not feel very confident in. Use the rubric, as well as class activities to help you think about different elements of writing.

Part II: Partner Chat

Directions: With your partner, share your areas of concern, as well as the thesis for your essay. You should take notes while your partner is talking.

Partner Concerns:

Partner Thesis:

Part III: Feedback Focus

Directions: With your partner and your joint list of concerns, select 3 elements of writing to focus your peer feedback on. These 3 elements will serve as the focus for **both** of your feedback. Once you decide on the three elements of focus, develop a list of criteria that will help you structure your feedback. You can think of this column as listing all of the characteristics that should be present to make this element of writing effective.

Element of Writing	Criteria

Part IV: Feedback Development and Format

Directions: There are three parts to the feedback you provide your partner.

1. Read your partner's draft without writing anything.
2. Now that you've read the entire draft, label each of the 3 elements of writing you decided on each time you see it in the draft. For example, if you selected "topic sentences" as one of your elements of writing, label **each** topic sentence in the draft.

Type one paragraph for each element of writing. Your paragraph should address things like where you see your partner demonstrating the element of writing, what works, and what improvements can be made. General statements like "this is good" or "this needs work" are not acceptable. Make sure you are specific, noting **particular passages** as well as **why** you think it is effective or not.