• Evaluating Sources .......................................................................................................................... 102
• Taking Notes ...................................................................................................................................... 105
• Managing Information ........................................................................................................................ 108
• Making Ethical and Effective Choices .............................................................................................. 109
• The Seven Steps of the Research Process .......................................................................................... 112
• Integrating Sources ............................................................................................................................ 114
• Think, Then Write: Writing Preparation ............................................................................................ 115
• Using Sources Creatively ..................................................................................................................... 118
• Using Sources Blending Source Material with Your Own Work .......................................................... 119
• Synthesizing Your Research Findings ................................................................................................. 120
• Research Writing as Conversation ...................................................................................................... 121

Unit 6: How We Document ................................................................................................................... 124
• Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Avoiding Plagiarism .............................................................................. 124
• Read: Acknowledging Sources and Avoiding Plagiarism .................................................................. 129
• Basic Guidelines For Citing Resources .............................................................................................. 132
• Intellectual Property ............................................................................................................................ 133
• Assessment: MLA & APA Game Response ......................................................................................... 134
• APA Documentation Overview ........................................................................................................ 135
• APA Style Documentation ................................................................................................................ 136
• APA Citation Style, 6th edition: General Style Guidelines .................................................................. 137
• Citing and Referencing Techniques .................................................................................................... 139
• APA Style Reference Lists ................................................................................................................ 147
• APA Style In-Text Citations ............................................................................................................... 150
• Citing Paraphrases and Summaries (APA) ......................................................................................... 151
• MLA Format ........................................................................................................................................ 152
• Formatting the Works Cited Page (MLA) ............................................................................................ 154
• When & How To Use MLA In-Text Citation ....................................................................................... 154
• How to Cite YouTube .......................................................................................................................... 155
• APA in-text citations ............................................................................................................................ 158
• Choosing a Documentation Format .................................................................................................... 160
• Quoting, Paraphrasing, and Summarizing .......................................................................................... 161
• Quotation Marks ................................................................................................................................. 162
• Quotations .......................................................................................................................................... 165
• Assessment: Practice Quoting ............................................................................................................ 172
• When to Quote & When to Paraphrase ............................................................................................... 173
• Discussion: Practice Paraphrasing ....................................................................................................... 174
• Assessment: Signalling/Paraphrasing/Quoting .................................................................................. 175
• Formatting In-Text References .......................................................................................................... 176
• Using Other Formats ........................................................................................................................... 179
• Developing a List of Sources .............................................................................................................. 180
• How to Write a Summary .................................................................................................................... 183
• Summarizing an Article ....................................................................................................................... 184

Unit 7: Mastering Informative Writing .................................................................................................. 187
• Textual Research ................................................................................................................................. 187
• Questions to Evaluate the Authority of the Researcher's Methods ..................................................... 188
• Creating an Annotated Bibliography .................................................................................................. 189

Unit 8: Mastering Argumentative and Persuasive Writing .................................................................... 192
• Overview ............................................................................................................................................ 192
• Writing an Argument ............................................................................................................................ 192
• Argument Writing Prompts ................................................................................................................. 194
• Assignment: Argument Writing ............................................................................................................ 194
• Rogerian Argument ............................................................................................................................... 196
• Toulmin's Argument Model .................................................................................................................. 197
• Toulmin’s Schema ................................................................................................................................. 200
• Persuasion ................................................................................................................................................ 203
• Discussion: Argument/Counterargument .......................................................................................... 208
• Fallacies .................................................................................................................................................... 209
• Video: Recognizing Fallacies in Logic ............................................................................................... 217
UNIT 1: WHAT WRITING IS

INTRODUCTION TO UNIT 1

Welcome to composition! You’re here to practice your writing skills and develop an understanding of writing at the college level. College-level writing may be quite different from your own writing experiences. Perhaps your writing background consists mainly in texting, or posting notes on Facebook. Maybe you have your own blog or some other social media environment in which you share your thoughts and ideas. This is the common writing experience of most people today. It works fine for your friends and family, but for college writing you have to turn your mind to a bit different focus.

In this class, you’ll be learning how to write more formally than those types of writing. You’ll learn about the “rhetorical situation,” which sounds a bit scary but isn’t. All it means is figuring out who you’re writing to and why and how to get your message across effectively to the people you’re writing to.

For example, if you want to be a nurse you need to be able to write reports to fellow nurses that use the language of nursing. You’ll listen to the technical terms the doctors and other medical staff use and then you’ll have to explain that to your patients and their family members. Your colleagues are not the same as your patients. The “rhetorical situation” is different, and you need to be aware of the differences in order to communicate clearly.

If you take your car in for repairs, the mechanic will use terms that may not be familiar to you. There’s usually an intermediary between you and the mechanic known as the “service writer.” This person knows the mechanic’s terminology and explains it to you so you understand it (like nurses explain the doctor’s terms to the patient). Get the picture? When you’re writing for college-level courses you need to learn, use, and understand the terminology of the courses in order to show that material away and use it effectively. That takes practice. This class provides an opportunity for you to practice writing at various levels so you can strengthen your writing skills and use them throughout your college life and in your profession.

It’s been said that “practice makes better.” Get ready to practice writing in order to become a better writer. Consistent practice helps develop habits – working out at a gym helps you develop muscles and stamina and improves your overall physical health. You don’t hear athletes complain that exercise hurts or that they just “can’t do it,” do you? No! They sometimes use the expression “no pain/no gain,” and while writing isn’t exactly painful, it is something that you need to practice in order to improve.

Do you have trouble with grammar, spelling, punctuation, or sentence structure? Often people claim they either can’t write or don’t like to write because they lack confidence in the mechanics of writing. Again, think of the athlete. Just as the athlete uses weights to develop muscles, if you look at examples of good writing, and if you make a habit of reading clear writing every day, you’ll recognize good mechanics. Imitate those good mechanics in your own writing. Here’s another common phrase: “Imitation is the sincerest form of flattery.” Practice writing clearly, using the examples of others. And if you want rules, we’ve also provided a handbook at the end of this text to help you understand some of the basic rules of mechanics.

Consider the material you’ll cover in this course as a series of exercises to help you strengthen your own writing skills. Be consistent in practicing these new skills every day. Ask questions and examine the many ways there are of writing clearly and effectively. Think about your assignments and throw your ideas down on paper. Look at them, revise them, develop them, and see them grow into strong examples that you can actually be pleased with. Pump some mental iron and make yourself proud!
READING CRITICALLY

American author John Steinbeck wrote in his last work *The Winter of Our Discontent*:

A story has as many versions as it has readers. Everyone takes what he wants or can from it and thus changes it to his measure. Some pick out parts and reject the rest, some strain the story through their mesh of prejudice, some paint it with their own delight.

When you read critically, you read not only to understand the meaning of the text, but also to question and analyze the text. You want to know not just what the text says, but also how and why it says what it says. Asking questions is one key strategy to help you read more critically. As you read a text critically, you are also reading skeptically.

A critical reader aims to answer two basic questions:

1. What is the author doing?
2. How well is the author doing it?

What is the author doing?

To answer “what is the author doing?” begin by carefully examining the following:

- What are the author’s claims (a claim is what the author says is true)?
- What is the evidence (evidence is what the author offers to support what they say is true)?
- What are the assumptions (assumptions are what the author says is true or will happen without giving any support)?

It may be helpful to try to see the argument from different angles:

- How else could the author have written this piece?
- What other kinds of evidence could have been used?
- What difference would that other evidence make?
- How has the author constructed his or her argument?

How well is the author doing it?

To answer “how well is the author doing it?” consider the following questions:

- How effective is the introduction? Why might the author have started the piece with this paragraph?
- Are the main ideas supported by solid evidence?
- Is the author biased or neutral? How do you know?
- Does the conclusion effectively tie the argument together? Could you draw a different conclusion from this evidence?
- What kind of language is used? How would you describe the author’s style?
- How is the piece organized?

Asking Questions

Asking questions of a text helps proficient readers:
WHAT IS AN ESSAY?

If you were asked to describe an essay in one word, what would that one word be?

Okay, well, in one word, an essay is an idea.

No idea; no essay.

But more than that, the best essays have original and insightful ideas.

Okay, so the first thing we need to begin an essay is an insightful idea that we wish to share with the reader.

But original and insightful ideas do not just pop up every day. Where does one find original and insightful ideas?

Let’s start here: an idea is an insight gained from either a) our personal experiences, or b) in scholarship, from synthesizing the ideas of others to create a new idea.

In this class (except for the last essay) we write personal essays; therefore, we will focus mostly on a) personal experience as a source for our ideas.

Life teaches us lessons. We learn from our life experiences. This is how we grow as human beings. So before you start on your essays, reflect on your life experiences by employing one or more of the brainstorming strategies described in this course. Your brainstorming and prewriting assignments are important assignments because remember: no idea; no essay. Brainstorming can help you discover an idea for your essay. So, ask...
yourself: What lessons have I learned? What insights have I gained that I can write about and share with my reader? Your reader can learn from you.

**Why do we write?**

We write to improve our world; it’s that simple. We write personal essays to address the most problematic and fundamental question of all: What does it mean to be a human being? By sharing the insights and lessons we have learned from our life experiences we can add to our community’s collective wisdom.

We respect the writings of experts. And, guess what; you are an expert! You are the best expert of all on one subject—your own life experiences. So when we write personal essays, we research our own life experiences and describe those experiences with rich and compelling language to convince our reader that our idea is valid.

For example:

For your *Narrative* essay: do more than simply relate a series of events. Let the events make a point about the central idea you are trying to teach us.

For your *Example* essay: do more than tell us about your experience. *Show* us your experience. *Describe* your examples in descriptive details so that your reader actually experiences for themselves the central idea you wish to teach them.

For the *Comparison Contrast* essay: do more than simply tell us about the differences and similarities of two things. *Evaluate* those differences and similarities and draw an idea about them, so that you can offer your reader some basic insight into the comparison.

Okay, one last comment. Often students say to me: “I am so young; I do not have any meaningful insights in to life.” Okay, well, you may not be able to solve the pressing issues of the day, but think of it this way. What if a younger brother or sister came to you and in an anxious voice said; “I’ve got to do X. I’ve never had to do X. You’ve had some experience with X. Can you give me some advice?” You may have some wisdom and insights from your own life experience with X to share with that person. Don’t worry about solving the BIG issues in this class. You can serve the world as well by simply addressing, and bringing to life in words, the problems and life situations that you know best, no matter how mundane. Please notice that with rare exception the essays you will read in this class do not cite outside sources. They are all written from the author’s actual life experiences. So think of your audience as someone who can learn from your life experiences and write to them and for them.
DEFINING THE WRITING PROCESS

On the surface, nothing could be simpler than writing: You sit down, you pick up a pen or open a document on your computer, and you write words. But anyone who has procrastinated or struggled with writer’s block knows that the writing process is more arduous, if not somewhat mysterious and unpredictable.

People often think of writing in terms of its end product—the email, the report, the memo, essay, or research paper, all of which result from the time and effort spent in the act of writing. In this course, however, you will be introduced to writing as the recursive process of planning, drafting, and revising.

Writing is Recursive

You will focus as much on the process of writing as you will on its end product (the writing you normally submit for feedback or a grade). Recursive means circling back; and, more often than not, the writing process will have you running in circles. You might be in the middle of your draft when you realize you need to do more brainstorming, so you return to the planning stage. Even when you have finished a draft, you may find changes you want to make to an introduction. In truth, every writer must develop his or her own process for getting the writing done, but there are some basic strategies and techniques you can adapt to make your work a little easier, more fulfilling and effective.

Developing Your Writing Process

The final product of a piece of writing is undeniably important, but the emphasis of this course is on developing a writing process that works for you. Some of you may already know what strategies and techniques assist you in your writing. You may already be familiar with prewriting techniques, such as freewriting, clustering, and listing. You may already have a regular writing practice. But the rest of you may need to discover what works through trial and error. Developing individual strategies and techniques that promote painless and compelling writing can take some time. So, be patient.

MAKING CONNECTIONS

Can you connect with the 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

Licensing & Attributions

CC licensed content, Shared previously
Provided by: Lumen Learning. License: CC BY-Attribution
Image: Computer and notebook. Located at: https://unsplash.com/photos/i3JuaK2Dz88. License: CC0: No Rights Reserved
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 you 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 start to connections.

**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 . . .

**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 an other setting . . .
This problem is similar/different to the problem in . . .

**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 . . .
SAMPLE ASSIGNMENT: DEVELOP A WORKING THESIS

In this activity you will develop the working thesis for your research topic. Refer to “Developing a Research Paper” if you need assistance.

Directions:

1. Develop your research topic as follows:
   • Identify potential topics
   • Narrow your topic
   • Explore your topic in writing
   • Conduct preliminary research

2. Construct a working thesis as follows:
   • Identify the main research question
   • Develop your working thesis statement
   • Be sure the thesis is an argument you will work to prove with your research in your paper.

3. Copy and paste your working thesis in the text box submission.

SALES MESSAGE

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:
   • Discuss a basic sales message and identify its central purpose
   • Detail the main parts of a sales message and understand strategies for success

A sales message is the central persuasive message that intrigues, informs, persuades, calls to action, and closes the sale. Not every sales message will make a direct sale, but the goal remains. Whether your sales message is embedded in a letter, represented in a proposal, or broadcast across radio or television, the purpose stays the same.

Sales messages are often discussed in terms of reason versus emotion. Every message has elements of ethos, or credibility; pathos, or passion and enthusiasm; and logos, or logic and reason. If your sales message focuses exclusively on reason with cold, hard facts and nothing but the facts, you may appeal to some audience, but certainly not the majority. Buyers make purchase decisions on emotion as well as reason, and even if they have researched all the relevant facts about competing products, the decision may still come down to impulse, emotion, and desire. If your sales message focuses exclusively on emotion, with little or no substance, it may not be taken...
seriously. Finally, if your sales message does not appear to have credibility, the message will be dismissed. In the case of the sales message, you need to meet the audience’s needs that vary greatly.

In general, appeals to emotion pique curiosity and get our attention, but some attention to reason and facts should also be included. That doesn’t mean we need to spell out the technical manual on the product on the opening sale message, but basic information about design or features, in specific, concrete ways can help an audience make sense of your message and the product or service. Avoid using too many abstract terms or references, as not everyone will understand these. You want your sales message to do the work, not the audience.

Format for a Common Sales Message

A sales message has the five main parts of any persuasive message.

Table 13.6 Five Main Parts of a Persuasive Message

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Attention Statement</th>
<th>Use humor, novelty, surprise, or the unusual to get attention.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Introduction</td>
<td>Build interest by appealing to common needs and wants, and include a purpose statement to set up expectations.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Body</td>
<td>Establish credibility, discuss attractive features, and compare with competitors, addressing concerns or potential questions before they are even considered.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conclusion</td>
<td>Sum it up and offer solution steps or calls to action, motivating the audience to take the next step. The smaller the step, the more likely the audience will comply. Set up your audience for an effective closing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Residual Message</td>
<td>Make the sale, make them remember you, and make sure your final words relate to the most important information, like a contact phone number.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Getting Attention

Your sales message will compete with hundreds of other messages and you want it to stand out (Price, 2005). One effective way to do that is to make sure your attention statement(s) and introduction clearly state how the reader or listener will benefit.

- Will the product or service save time or money?
- Will it make them look good?
- Will it entertain them?
- Will it satisfy them?

Regardless of the product or service, the audience is going to consider first what is in it for them. A benefit is what the buyer gains with the purchase and is central to your sales message. They may gain social status, popularity, sex appeal, or even reduce or eliminate something they don’t want. Your sales message should clearly communicate the benefits of your product or service (Winston & Granat, 1997).

Sales Message Strategies for Success

Your product or service may sell itself, but if you require a sales message, you may want to consider these strategies for success:

1. **Start with your greatest benefit.** Use it in the headline, subject line, caption, or attention statement. Audiences tend to remember the information from the beginning and end of a message, but have less recall about the middle points. Make your first step count by highlighting the best feature first.
2. **Take baby steps.** One thing at a time. Promote, inform, and persuade on one product or service at a time. You want to hear "yes" and make the associated sale, and if you confuse the audience with too much information, too many options, steps to consider, or related products or service, you are more likely to hear "no" as a defensive response as the buyer tries not to make a mistake. Avoid confusion and keep it simple.

3. **Know your audience.** The more background research you can do on your buyer, the better you can anticipate their specific wants and needs and individualize your sales message to meet them.

4. **Lead with emotion, follow with reason.** Gain the audience’s attention with drama, humor, or novelty and follow with specific facts that establish your credibility, provide more information about the product or service, and lead to your call to action to make the sale.

These four steps can help improve your sales message, and your sales. Invest your time in planning and preparation, and consider the audience’s needs as you prepare your sales message.

Figure 13.14 Sample E-mail Sales Message

To: (Potential Customer)  
From: Your friendly auto service provider  
Subject: Time for an oil change? Save $10  

Dear (potential customer’s name spelled correctly):

We noticed it has been over three months since your last oil change with us. This is a friendly reminder that when you take care of your car, it takes care of you. We’d like to offer you $10 off your next oil and filter change this month. Please e-mail, call, or stop by, and we’ll help you keep your car in excellent health.

Sincerely,
Molly Mechanic, General Manager
Auto Doctors, 555 S. Main Street, City, ST 12345
555-123-4567

**Key Takeaway**

A sales message combines emotion and reason, and reinforces credibility, to create interest in a product or service that leads to a sale.

**Exercises**

1. Create your own e-mail sales message in a hundred words or less. Share it with the class.
2. Identify one sales message you consider to be effective. Share it with classmates and discuss why you perceive it to be effective.
3. Please consider one purchase you made recently. What motivated you to buy and why did you choose to complete the purchase? Share the results with your classmates.

4. Are you more motivated by emotion or reason? Ask ten friends that question and post your results.

A PLANNING CHECKLIST FOR BUSINESS MESSAGES

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

• Understand who, what, where, when, why, and how as features of writing purpose.
• Describe the planning process and essential elements of a business document.

John Thill and Courtland Bovee (2004), two leading authors in the field of business communication, have created a checklist for planning business messages. The following twelve-item checklist, adapted here, serves as a useful reminder of the importance of preparation in the writing process:

1. Determine your general purpose: are you trying to inform, persuade, entertain, facilitate interaction, or motivate a reader?
2. Determine your specific purpose (the desired outcome).
3. Make sure your purpose is realistic.
4. Make sure your timing is appropriate.
5. Make sure your sources are credible.
6. Make sure the message reflects positively on your business.
7. Determine audience size.
9. Determine audience knowledge and awareness of topic.
10. Anticipate probable responses.
11. Select the correct channel.
12. Make sure the information provided is accurate, ethical, and pertinent.

Throughout this chapter we will examine these various steps in greater detail.

Determining Your Purpose

Preparation for the writing process involves purpose, research and investigation, reading and analyzing, and adaptation. In the first section we consider how to determine the purpose of a document, and how that awareness guides the writer to effective product.

While you may be free to create documents that represent yourself or your organization, your employer will often have direct input into their purpose. All acts of communication have general and specific purposes, and the degree to which you can identify these purposes will influence how effective your writing is. General purposes involve the overall goal of the communication interaction: to inform, persuade, entertain, facilitate interaction, or motivate a reader. The general purpose influences the presentation and expectation for feedback. In an
informative message—the most common type of writing in business—you will need to cover several predictable elements:

- Who
- What
- When
- Where
- How
- Why (optional)

Some elements may receive more attention than others, and they do not necessarily have to be addressed in the order you see here. Depending on the nature of your project, as a writer you will have a degree of input over how you organize them.

Note that the last item, Why, is designated as optional. This is because business writing sometimes needs to report facts and data objectively, without making any interpretation or pointing to any cause-effect relationship. In other business situations, of course, identifying why something happened or why a certain decision is advantageous will be the essence of the communication.

In addition to its general purpose (e.g., to inform, persuade, entertain, or motivate), every piece of writing also has at least one specific purpose, which is the intended outcome; the result that will happen once your written communication has been read.

For example, imagine that you are an employee in a small city’s housing authority and have been asked to draft a letter to city residents about radon. Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that has been classified by the United States Environmental Protection Agency as a health hazard. In the course of a routine test, radon was detected in minimal levels in an apartment building operated by the housing authority. It presents a relatively low level of risk, but because the incident was reported in the local newspaper, the mayor has asked the housing authority director to be proactive in informing all the city residents of the situation.

The general purpose of your letter is to inform, and the specific purpose is to have a written record of informing all city residents about how much radon was found, when, and where; where they can get more information on radon; and the date, time, and place of the meeting. Residents may read the information and attend or they may not even read the letter. But once the letter has been written, signed, and distributed, your general and specific purposes have been accomplished.

Now imagine that you begin to plan your letter by applying the above list of elements. Recall that the letter informs residents on three counts: (1) the radon finding, (2) where to get information about radon, and (3) the upcoming meeting. For each of these pieces of information, the elements may look like the following:

1. Radon Finding
   - Who: The manager of the apartment building (give name)
   - What: Discovered a radon concentration of 4.1 picocuries per liter (pCi/L) and reported it to the housing authority director, who informed the city health inspector, environmental compliance office, and mayor
   - When: During the week of December 15
   - Where: In the basement of the apartment building located at (give address)
   - How: In the course of performing a routine annual test with a commercially available do-it-yourself radon test kit

2. Information about radon
   - Who: According to the city health inspector and environmental compliance officer
   - What: Radon is a naturally occurring radioactive gas that results from the breakdown of uranium in soil; a radon test level above 4.0 pCi/L may be cause for concern
   - When: Radon levels fluctuate from time to time, so further testing will be done; in past years, test results were below 4.0 pCi/L
   - Where: More information is available from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency or the state radon office
   - How: By phone, mail, or on the Internet (provide full contact information for both sources)
   - Why: To become better informed and avoid misunderstandings about radon, its health risks, and the meaning of radon test results
3. City meeting about radon

- **Who:** All city residents are welcome
- **What:** Attend an informational meeting where the mayor, director of the housing authority, city health inspector, and city environmental compliance officer will speak and answer questions
- **When:** Monday, January 7, at 7 p.m.
- **Where:** City hall community room
- **Why:** To become better informed and avoid misunderstandings about radon, its health risks, and the meaning of radon test results

Once you have laid out these elements of your informative letter, you have an outline from which it will be easy to write the actual letter.

Your effort serves as a written record of correspondence informing them that radon was detected, which may be one of the specific or primary purposes. A secondary purpose may be to increase attendance at the town hall meeting, but you will need feedback from that event to determine the effectiveness of your effort.

Now imagine that instead of being a housing authority employee, you are a city resident who receives that informative letter, and you happen to operate a business as a certified radon mitigation contractor. You may decide to build on this information and develop a persuasive message. You may draft a letter to the homeowners and landlords in the neighborhood near the building in question. To make your message persuasive, you may focus on the perception that radiation is inherently dangerous and that no amount of radon has been declared safe. You may cite external authorities that indicate radon is a contributing factor to several health ailments, and even appeal to emotions with phrases like “protect your children” and “peace of mind.” Your letter will probably encourage readers to check with the state radon office to verify that you are a certified contractor, describe the services you provide, and indicate that friendly payment terms can be arranged.

### Credibility, Timing, and Audience

At this point in the discussion, we need to visit the concept of credibility. Credibility, or the perception of integrity of the message based on an association with the source, is central to any communication act. If the audience perceives the letter as having presented the information in an impartial and objective way, perceives the health inspector’s and environmental compliance officer’s expertise in the field as relevant to the topic, and generally regards the housing authority in a positive light, they will be likely to accept your information as accurate. If, however, the audience does not associate trust and reliability with your message in particular and the city government in general, you may anticipate a lively discussion at the city hall meeting.

In the same way, if the reading audience perceives the radon mitigation contractor’s letter as a poor sales pitch without their best interest or safety in mind, they may not respond positively to its message and be unlikely to contact him about any possible radon problems in their homes. If, however, the sales letter squarely addresses the needs of the audience and effectively persuades them, the contractor may look forward to a busy season.

Returning to the original housing authority scenario, did you consider how your letter might be received, or the fear it may have generated in the audience? In real life you don’t get a second chance, but in our academic setting, we can go back and take more time on our assignment, using the twelve-item checklist we presented earlier. Imagine that you are the mayor or the housing authority director. Before you assign an employee to send a letter to inform residents about the radon finding, take a moment to consider how realistic your purpose is. As a city official, you may want the letter to serve as a record that residents were informed of the radon finding, but will that be the only outcome? Will people be even more concerned in response to the letter than they were when the item was published in the newspaper? Would a persuasive letter serve the city’s purposes better than an informative one?

Another consideration is the timing. On the one hand, it may be important to get the letter sent as quickly as possible, as the newspaper report may have already aroused concerns that the letter will help calm. On the other hand, given that the radon was discovered in mid-December, many people are probably caught up in holiday celebrations. If the letter is mailed during the week of Christmas, it may not get the attention it deserves. After January 1, everyone will be paying more attention to their mail as they anticipate the arrival of tax-related documents or even the dreaded credit card statement. If the mayor has scheduled the city hall meeting for
January 7, people may be unhappy if they only learn about the meeting at the last minute. Also consider your staff; if many of them will be gone over the holidays, there may not be enough staff in place to respond to phone calls that will likely come in response to the letter, even though the letter advises residents to contact the state radon office and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Next, how credible are the sources cited in the letter? If you as a housing authority employee have been asked to draft it, to whom should it go once you have it written? The city health inspector and environmental compliance officer are mentioned as sources; will they each read and approve the letter before it is sent? Is there someone at the county, state, or even the federal level who can, or should, check the information before it is sent?

The next item on the checklist is to make sure the message reflects positively on your business. In our hypothetical case, the “business” is city government. The letter should acknowledge that city officials and employees are servants of the taxpayers. “We are here to serve you” should be expressed, if not in so many words, in the tone of the letter.

The next three items on the checklist are associated with the audience profile: audience size, composition, knowledge, and awareness of the topic. Since your letter is being sent to all city residents, you likely have a database from which you can easily tell how many readers constitute your audience. What about audience composition? What else do you know about the city’s residents? What percentage of households includes children? What is the education level of most of the residents? Are there many residents whose first language is not English; if so, should your letter be translated into any other languages? What is the range of income levels in the city? How well informed are city residents about radon? Has radon been an issue in any other buildings in the city in recent years? The answers to these questions will help determine how detailed the information in your letter should be.

Finally, anticipate probable responses. Although the letter is intended to inform, could it be misinterpreted as an attempt to “cover up” an unacceptable condition in city housing? If the local newspaper were to reprint the letter, would the mayor be upset? Is there someone in public relations who will be doing media interviews at the same time the letter goes out? Will the release of information be coordinated, and if so by whom?

One additional point that deserves mention is the notion of decision makers. Even if your overall goal is to inform or persuade, the basic mission is to simply communicate. Establishing a connection is a fundamental aspect of the communication audience, and if you can correctly target key decision makers you increase your odds for making the connection with those you intend to inform or persuade. Who will open the mail, or e-mail? Who will act upon it? The better you can answer those questions, the more precise you can be in your writing efforts.

In some ways this is similar to asking your professor to write a letter of recommendation for you, but to address it to “to whom it may concern.” If you can provide a primary contact name for the letter of recommendation it will increase its probable impact on the evaluation process. If your goal is to get a scholarship or a job offer, you want to take the necessary steps to increase your positive impact on the audience.

Communication Channels

Purpose is closely associated with channel. We need to consider the purpose when choosing a channel. From source to receiver, message to channel, feedback to context, environment, and interference, all eight components play a role in the dynamic process. While writing often focuses on an understanding of the receiver (as we’ve discussed) and defining the purpose of the message, the channel—or the “how” in the communication process—deserves special mention.

So far, we have discussed a simple and traditional channel of written communication: the hardcopy letter mailed in a standard business envelope and sent by postal mail. But in today’s business environment, this channel is becoming increasingly rare as electronic channels become more widely available and accepted.

When is it appropriate to send an instant message (IM) or text message versus a conventional e-mail or fax? What is the difference between a letter and a memo? Between a report and a proposal? Writing itself is the communication medium, but each of these specific channels has its own strengths, weaknesses, and understood expectations that are summarized in Table 10.1 “Written Communication Channels”.

Table 10.1 Written Communication Channels
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Channel</th>
<th>Strengths</th>
<th>Weaknesses</th>
<th>Expectations</th>
<th>When to Choose</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>IM or Text Message</td>
<td>• Very fast</td>
<td>• Informal</td>
<td>• Quick response</td>
<td>• Informal use among peers at similar levels within an organization</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Good for rapid exchanges of small amounts of information</td>
<td>• Not suitable for large amounts of information</td>
<td></td>
<td>• You need a fast, inexpensive connection with a colleague over a small issue and limited amount of information</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Inexpensive</td>
<td>• Abbreviations lead to misunderstandings</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E-mail</td>
<td>• Fast</td>
<td>• May hit “send” prematurely</td>
<td>Normally a response is expected within 24 hours, although norms vary by situation and organizational culture</td>
<td>• You need to communicate but time is not the most important consideration</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Good for relatively fast exchanges of information</td>
<td>• May be overlooked or deleted without being read</td>
<td></td>
<td>• You need to send attachments (provided their file size is not too big)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• “Subject” line allows compilation of many messages on one subject or project</td>
<td>• “Reply to all” error</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Easy to distribute to multiple recipients</td>
<td>• “Forward” error</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Inexpensive</td>
<td>• Large attachments may cause the e-mail to be caught in recipient’s spam filter</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Fax</td>
<td>• Fast</td>
<td>• Receiving issues (e.g., the receiving machine may be out of paper or toner)</td>
<td>Normally, a long (multiple page) fax is not expected</td>
<td>• You want to send a document whose format must remain intact as presented, such as a medical prescription or a signed work order</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>• Provides documentation</td>
<td>• Long distance telephone charges apply</td>
<td></td>
<td>• Allows use of letterhead to represent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>• Transitional telephone-based technology losing popularity to online information exchange</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
By choosing the correct channel for a message, you can save yourself many headaches and increase the likelihood that your writing will be read, understood, and acted upon in the manner you intended.

Our discussion of communication channels would not be complete without mentioning the issues of privacy and security in electronic communications. The American Management Association (2007) estimates that about two thirds of employers monitor their employees’ electronic communications or Internet use. When you call and leave a voice message for a friend or colleague at work, do you know where your message is stored? There was a time when the message may have been stored on an analog cassette in an answering machine, or even on a small pink handwritten note which a secretary deposited in your friend’s in-box. Today the “where” is irrelevant, as the in-box is digital and can be accessed from almost anywhere on the planet. That also means the message you left, with the representation of your voice, can be forwarded via e-mail as an attachment to anyone. Any time you send an IM, text, or e-mail or leave a voice message, your message is stored on more than one server, and it can be intercepted or forwarded to persons other than the intended receiver. Are you ready for your message to be broadcast to the world? Do your words represent you and your business in a positive light?
Newsweek columnist Jennifer Ordoñez raises this question when she writes, “For desk jockeys everywhere, it has become as routine as a tour of the office-supply closet: the consent form attesting that you understand and accept that any e-mails you write, Internet sites you visit or business you conduct on your employer’s computer network are subject to inspection” (2008). As you use MySpace, update your Facebook page, get LinkedIn, Twitter, text, and IM, you leave an electronic trail of “bread crumbs” that merge personal and professional spheres, opening up significant issues of privacy. In our discussion we address research for specific business document production, and all the electronic research conducted is subject to review. While the case law is evolving as the technology we use to interface expands, it is wise to consider that anything you write or record can and will be stored for later retrieval by people for whom your message was not initially intended.

In terms of writing preparation, you should review any electronic communication before you send it. Spelling and grammatical errors will negatively impact your credibility. With written documents we often take time and care to get it right the first time, but the speed of IM, text, or e-mail often deletes this important review cycle of written works. Just because the document you prepare in IM is only one sentence long doesn’t mean it can’t be misunderstood or expose you to liability. Take time when preparing your written messages, regardless of their intended presentation, and review your work before you click “send.”

Key Takeaway

Choose the most effective channel for your document and consider the possible ramifications of what you have written before you send it.

Exercises

1. Write a one-page letter to a new customer introducing a new product or service. Compare your result to the letters your classmates wrote. What do the letters have in common? How do they differ from one another?

2. Write a memo that addresses a new norm or protocol, such as the need to register with a new company that will be handling all the organization’s business-related travel, with specific expectations including what information is needed, when, and to whom.

3. Make a list of the written communication that you read, skim, or produce in a one day. Please share your results with the class.

Making inferences is a comprehension strategy used by proficient readers to “read between the lines,” make connections, and draw conclusions about the text’s meaning and purpose.

You already make inferences all of the time. For example, imagine you go over to a friend’s house and they point at the sofa and say, “Don’t sit there, Cindy came over with her baby again.” What could you logically conclude?

First, you know there must be a reason not to sit where your friend is pointing. Next, the reason not to sit there is related to the fact that Cindy just visited with her baby. You don’t know what exactly happened, but you can make an inference and don’t need to ask any more questions to know that you do not want to sit there.
Practice Making Inferences

Imagine you witness the following unrelated situations—what can you infer about each one?

1. You see a woman pushing a baby stroller down the street.
2. You are at a corner and see two parked cars at an intersection, and the driver in back starts honking his horn.
3. You are walking down the street, and suddenly a dog comes running out of an opened door with its tail between its legs.

For the first, you probably came up with something simple, such as there was a baby in the stroller.

For the second, you might have inferred that the first car should have started moving, or was waiting too long at the corner and holding up the second car.

For the third, you could reasonably guess that the dog had done something wrong and was afraid to get punished.

You do not know for 100% certainty that these inferences are true. If you checked 100 strollers, 99 times you would find a baby, but maybe one time you would find something else, like groceries.

Making Inferences as You Read

To make inferences from reading, take two or more details from the reading and see if you can draw a conclusion. Remember, making an inference is not just making a wild guess. You need to make a judgment that can be supported, just as you could reasonably infer there is a baby in a stroller, but not reasonably infer that there are groceries, even though both would technically be a “guess.”

When you are asked an inference question, go back over the reading and look for hints within the text, such as words that are directly related to the question you may be asked (such as for a multiple choice test) or words that indicate opinion.

Here is an example:

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

Which of the following can you infer from the passage?

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

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

You will notice right away that there is nothing about car safety in the passage at all, so you can eliminate choice 1.

Choice 2 is implied: if the car cost $3,500 more than other cars, then Toyota would be making a lot of money by selling the car. But is it the most reasonable conclusion? To be sure, you need to go through all of the answers—don’t just stop when you find one that looks okay.
You may think that choice 3 is true. After all, people want to make hybrid cars because they believe that emissions are contributing to environmental damage, but this is not mentioned in the paragraph. Even if you think it is true, the answer has to be supported by the text to be the correct answer to the problem.

Choice 4 could be inferred from the text. If a person had a large family, was short on money, or needed a car that could accelerate quickly, then a hybrid might not be the best choice for them.

Now compare choice d with the other possible answer, choice 2. Now you are thinking choice 2 might not be as good an answer because you don’t know how much it costs Toyota to make the cars, and you don’t know how many they sell, so you can’t reasonably infer that they are making a lot of money!

Choice 4 has to be the correct answer.

Inferences: Reading Between the Lines

Check out this video “Inference” by blumeanie07 that discusses a useful strategy to help you when making inferences while reading.

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/HWK2_Ookrok

NETIQUETTE

What is Netiquette?

Netiquette refers to using common courtesy in online communication. All members of the class are expected to follow netiquette in all course communications. Use these guidelines:

• Use capital letters sparingly. THEY LOOK LIKE SHOUTING.
• Forward emails only with a writer’s permission.
• Be considerate of others’ feelings and use language carefully.
• Cite all quotations, references, and sources (otherwise, it is Plagiarism – see the following page for more information).
• Use humor carefully. It is hard to “read” tone; sometimes humor can be misread as criticism or personal attack. Feel free to use emoticons like ? for a smiley face to let others know you are being humorous.
• Use complete sentences and standard English grammar to compose posts. Write in proper paragraphs. Review work before submitting it.
• Text speak, such as “ur” for “your” or “ru” for “are you” etc., is only acceptable when texting.

Netiquette

Review this video to learn more about Netiquette:

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/HX19Qq-CRF4
Social Media Etiquette

View this video to learn more about Social Media Etiquette:
http://youtu.be/dNnLMkg9R3c

Further Netiquette Reading

These sites offer more information about Netiquette:

- Excerpt from Virginia Shea’s *The Core Rules of Netiquette*
- Gene Wicker, Jr.’s *E-Mail Etiquette*

Licensing & Attributions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CC licensed content, Original</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CC licensed content, Original</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>CC licensed content, Original</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
Imagine reading one long block of text, with each idea blurring into the next. Even if you are reading a thrilling novel or an interesting news article, you will likely lose interest in what the author has to say very quickly. During the writing process, it is helpful to position yourself as a reader. Ask yourself whether you can focus easily on each point you make. One technique that effective writers use is to begin a fresh paragraph for each new idea they introduce. Paragraphs separate ideas into logical, manageable chunks. One paragraph focuses on only one main idea and presents coherent sentences to support that one point. Because all the sentences in one paragraph support the same point, a paragraph may stand on its own. To create longer assignments and to discuss more than one point, writers group together paragraphs. Three elements shape the content of each paragraph:

1. **Purpose.** The reason the writer composes the paragraph.
2. **Tone.** The attitude the writer conveys about the paragraph’s subject.
3. **Audience.** The individual or group whom the writer intends to address.

Figure 6.1 Purpose, Audience, Tone, and Content Triangle
The assignment’s purpose, audience, and tone dictate what the paragraph covers and how it will support one main point. This section covers how purpose, audience, and tone affect reading and writing paragraphs.

**Identifying Common Academic Purposes**

The purpose for a piece of writing identifies the reason you write a particular document. Basically, the purpose of a piece of writing answers the question “Why?” For example, why write a play? To entertain a packed theater. Why write instructions to the babysitter? To inform him or her of your schedule and rules. Why write a letter to your congressman? To persuade him to address your community’s needs. In academic settings, the reasons for writing fulfill four main purposes: to summarize, to analyze, to synthesize, and to evaluate. You will encounter these four purposes not only as you read for your classes but also as you read for work or pleasure. Because reading and writing work together, your writing skills will improve as you read. To learn more about reading in the writing process, see Chapter 8 “The Writing Process: How Do I Begin?”. Eventually, your instructors will ask you to complete assignments specifically designed to meet one of the four purposes. As you will see, the purpose for writing will guide you through each part of the paper, helping you make decisions about content and style. For now, identifying these purposes by reading paragraphs will prepare you to write individual paragraphs and to build longer assignments.

**Summary Paragraphs**

A summary shrinks a large amount of information into only the essentials. You probably summarize events, books, and movies daily. Think about the last blockbuster movie you saw or the last novel you read. Chances are, at some point in a casual conversation with a friend, coworker, or classmate, you compressed all the action in a two-hour film or in a two-hundred-page book into a brief description of the major plot movements. While in conversation, you probably described the major highlights, or the main points in just a few sentences, using your own vocabulary and manner of speaking. Similarly, a summary paragraph condenses a long piece of writing into a smaller paragraph by extracting only the vital information. A summary uses only the writer’s own words. Like the summary’s purpose in daily conversation, the purpose of an academic summary paragraph is to maintain all the essential information from a longer document. Although shorter than the original piece of writing, a summary should still communicate all the key points and key support. In other words, summary paragraphs should be succinct and to the point.

According to the Monitoring the Future Study, almost two-thirds of 10th-grade students reported having tried alcohol at least once in their lifetime, and two-fifths reported having been drunk at least once (Johnson et al. 2006x). Among 12th-grade students, these rates had risen to over three-quarters who reported having tried alcohol at least once in the past 30 days; 17.6 percent and 30.2 percent, respectively, reported having been drunk in the past 30 days; 21.0 percent and 28.1 percent, respectively, reported having had five or more drinks in a row in the past 2 weeks (sometimes called binge drinking); and 1.3 percent and 3.1 percent, respectively, reported daily alcohol use (Johnson et al. 2006a). Alcohol consumption continues to escalate after high school. In fact, eighteen- to twenty-four-year-olds have the highest levels of alcohol consumption and alcohol dependence of any age group. In the first 2 years after high school, lifetime prevalence of alcohol use (based on 2005 follow-up surveys from the Monitoring the Future Study) was 81.8 percent, 30-day use prevalence was 59 percent, and binge-drinking prevalence was 36.3 percent (Johnson et al. 2006b). Of note, college students on average drink more than their noncollege peers, even though they drink less during high school than those who did not go to college (Johnson et al. 2006a,b; Schulenberg and Maggs 2002). For example, in 2005, the rate of binge drinking for college students (1 to 4 years beyond high school) was 40.1 percent, whereas the rate for their noncollege age mates was 35.1 percent.

Alcohol use and problem drinking in late adolescence vary by sociodemographic characteristics. For example, the prevalence of alcohol use is higher for boys than for girls, higher for White and Hispanic adolescents than for African-American adolescents, and higher for those living in the north and north central United States than for those living in the South and West. Some of these relationships change with early adulthood, however. For example, although alcohol use in high school tends to be higher in areas with low population density (i.e., rural areas) than in more densely populated areas, this relationship reverses during early adulthood (Johnson et al. 2006a,b). Lower economic status (i.e., lower educational level of parents) is associated with more alcohol use during the early high school years; by the end of high school, and during the transition to adulthood, this...
relationship changes, and youth from higher socioeconomic backgrounds consume greater amounts of alcohol.

A summary of the report should present all the main points and supporting details in brief. Read the following summary of the report written by a student:

Brown et al. inform us that by tenth grade, nearly two-thirds of students have tried alcohol at least once, and by twelfth grade this figure increases to over three-quarters of students. After high school, alcohol consumption increases further, and college-aged students have the highest levels of alcohol consumption and dependence of any age group. Alcohol use varies according to factors such as gender, race, geographic location, and socioeconomic status. Some of these trends may reverse in early adulthood. For example, adolescents of lower socioeconomic status are more likely to consume alcohol during high school years, whereas youth from higher socioeconomic status are more likely to consume alcohol in the years after high school.

Notice how the summary retains the key points made by the writers of the original report but omits most of the statistical data. Summaries need not contain all the specific facts and figures in the original document; they provide only an overview of the essential information.

Analysis Paragraphs

An analysis separates complex materials in their different parts and studies how the parts relate to one another. The analysis of simple table salt, for example, would require a deconstruction of its parts—the elements sodium (Na) and chloride (Cl). Then, scientists would study how the two elements interact to create the compound NaCl, or sodium chloride, which is also called simple table salt. Analysis is not limited to the sciences, of course. An analysis paragraph in academic writing fulfills the same purpose. Instead of deconstructing compounds, academic analysis paragraphs typically deconstruct documents. An analysis takes apart a primary source (an essay, a book, an article, etc.) point by point. It communicates the main points of the document by examining individual points and identifying how the points relate to one another. Take a look at a student's analysis of the journal report.

At the beginning of their report, Brown et al. use specific data regarding the use of alcohol by high school students and college-aged students, which is supported by several studies. Later in the report, they consider how various socioeconomic factors influence problem drinking in adolescence. The latter part of the report is far less specific and does not provide statistics or examples. The lack of specific information in the second part of the report raises several important questions. Why are teenagers in rural high schools more likely to drink than teenagers in urban areas? Where do they obtain alcohol? How do parental attitudes influence this trend? A follow-up study could compare several high schools in rural and urban areas to consider these issues and potentially find ways to reduce teenage alcohol consumption.

Notice how the analysis does not simply repeat information from the original report, but considers how the points within the report relate to one another. By doing this, the student uncovers a discrepancy between the points that are backed up by statistics and those that require additional information. Analyzing a document involves a close examination of each of the individual parts and how they work together.

Synthesis Paragraphs

A synthesis combines two or more items to create an entirely new item. Consider the electronic musical instrument aptly named the synthesizer. It looks like a simple keyboard but displays a dashboard of switches, buttons, and levers. With the flip of a few switches, a musician may combine the distinct sounds of a piano, a flute, or a guitar—or any other combination of instruments—to create a new sound. The purpose of the synthesizer is to blend together the notes from individual instruments to form new, unique notes. The purpose of an academic synthesis is to blend individual documents into a new document. An academic synthesis paragraph
considers the main points from one or more pieces of writing and links the main points together to create a new point, one not replicated in either document. Take a look at a student’s synthesis of several sources about underage drinking.

In their 2009 report, Brown et al. consider the rates of alcohol consumption among high school and college-aged students and various sociodemographic factors that affect these rates. However, this report is limited to assessing the rates of underage drinking, rather than considering methods of decreasing these rates. Several other studies, as well as original research among college students, provide insight into how these rates might be reduced.

One study, by Spoth, Greenberg, and Turrisi (2009) considers the impact of various types of interventions as a method for reducing alcohol consumption among minors. They conclude that although family-focused interventions for adolescents aged ten to fifteen have shown promise, there is a serious lack of interventions available for college-aged students who do not attend college. These students are among the highest risk level for alcohol abuse, a fact supported by Brown, et al.

I did my own research and interviewed eight college students, four men and four women. I asked them when they first tried alcohol and what factors encouraged them to drink. All four men had tried alcohol by the age of thirteen. Three of the women had also tried alcohol by thirteen and the fourth had tried alcohol by fifteen. All eight students said that peer pressure, boredom, and the thrill of trying something illegal were motivating factors. These results support the research of Brown et al. However, they also raise an interesting point. If boredom is a motivating factor for underage drinking, maybe additional after school programs or other community measures could be introduced to dissuade teenagers from underage drinking. Based on my sources, further research is needed to show true preventative measures for teenage alcohol consumption.

Notice how the synthesis paragraphs consider each source and use information from each to create a new thesis. A good synthesis does not repeat information; the writer uses a variety of sources to create a new idea.

**Evaluation Paragraphs**

An evaluation judges the value of something and determines its worth. Evaluations in everyday experiences are often not only dictated by set standards but also influenced by opinion and prior knowledge. For example, at work, a supervisor may complete an employee evaluation by judging his subordinate’s performance based on the company’s goals. If the company focuses on improving communication, the supervisor will rate the employee’s customer service according to a standard scale. However, the evaluation still depends on the supervisor’s opinion and prior experience with the employee. The purpose of the evaluation is to determine how well the employee performs at his or her job. An academic evaluation communicates your opinion, and its justifications, about a document or a topic of discussion. Evaluations are influenced by your reading of the document, your prior knowledge, and your prior experience with the topic or issue. Because an evaluation incorporates your point of view and reasons for your point of view, it typically requires more critical thinking and a combination of summary, analysis, and synthesis skills. Thus evaluation paragraphs often follow summary, analysis, and synthesis paragraphs. Read a student’s evaluation paragraph.

Throughout their report, Brown et al. provide valuable statistics that highlight the frequency of alcohol use among high school and college students. They use several reputable sources to support their points. However, the report focuses solely on the frequency of alcohol use and how it varies according to certain sociodemographic factors. Other sources, such as Spoth, Greenberg, and Turrisi’s study (2009) and the survey I conducted among college students, examine the results for alcohol use among young people and offer suggestions as to how to reduce the rates. Nonetheless, I think that Brown et al. offer a useful set of statistics from which to base further research into alcohol use among high school and college students.

Notice how the paragraph incorporates the student’s personal judgment within the evaluation. Evaluating a document requires prior knowledge that is often based on additional research.
Tip

When reviewing directions for assignments, look for the verbs summarize, analyze, synthesize, or evaluate. Instructors often use these words to clearly indicate the assignment’s purpose. These words will cue you on how to complete the assignment because you will know its exact purpose.

Exercise 1

Read the following paragraphs about four films and then identify the purpose of each paragraph.

1. This film could easily have been cut down to less than two hours. By the final scene, I noticed that most of my fellow moviegoers were snoozing in their seats and were barely paying attention to what was happening on screen. Although the director sticks diligently to the book, he tries too hard to cram in all the action, which is just too ambitious for such a detail-oriented story. If you want my advice, read the book and give the movie a miss.

2. During the opening scene, we learn that the character Laura is adopted and that she has spent the past three years desperately trying to track down her real parents. Having exhausted all the usual options—adoption agencies, online searches, family trees, and so on—she is on the verge of giving up when she meets a stranger on a bus. The chance encounter leads to a complicated chain of events that ultimately result in Laura getting her lifelong wish. But is it really what she wants? Throughout the rest of the film, Laura discovers that sometimes the past is best left where it belongs.

3. To create the feeling of being gripped in a vice, the director, May Lee, uses a variety of elements to gradually increase the tension. The creepy, haunting melody that subtly enhances the earlier scenes becomes ever more insistent, rising to a disturbing crescendo toward the end of the movie. The desperation of the actors, combined with the claustrophobic atmosphere and tight camera angles create a realistic firestorm, from which there is little hope of escape. Walking out of the theater at the end feels like staggering out of a Roman dungeon.

4. The scene in which Campbell and his fellow prisoners assist the guards in shutting down the riot immediately strikes the viewer as unrealistic. Based on the recent reports on prison riots in both Detroit and California, it seems highly unlikely that a posse of hardened criminals will intentionally help their captors at the risk of inciting future revenge from other inmates. Instead, both news reports and psychological studies indicate that prisoners who do not actively participate in a riot will go back to their cells and avoid conflict altogether. Examples of this lack of attention to detail occur throughout the film, making it almost unbearable to watch.

Collaboration: Share with a classmate and compare your answers.

Writing at Work

Thinking about the purpose of writing a report in the workplace can help focus and structure the document. A summary should provide colleagues with a factual overview of your findings without going into too much specific detail. In contrast, an evaluation should include your personal opinion, along with supporting evidence, research, or examples to back it up. Listen for words such as summarize, analyze, synthesize, or evaluate when your boss asks you to complete a report to help determine a purpose for writing.

Exercise 2

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

Imagine you must give a presentation to a group of executives in an office. Weeks before the big day, you spend time creating and rehearsing the presentation. You must make important, careful decisions not only about the content but also about your delivery. Will the presentation require technology to project figures and charts? Should the presentation define important words, or will the executives already know the terms? Should you wear your suit and dress shirt? The answers to these questions will help you develop an appropriate relationship with your audience, making them more receptive to your message. Now imagine you must explain the same business concepts from your presentation to a group of high school students. Those important questions you previously answered may now require different answers. The figures and charts may be too sophisticated, and the terms will certainly require definitions. You may even reconsider your outfit and sport a more casual look. Because the audience has shifted, your presentation and delivery will shift as well to create a new relationship with the new audience. In these two situations, the audience—the individuals who will watch and listen to the presentation—plays a role in the development of presentation. As you prepare the presentation, you visualize the audience to anticipate their expectations and reactions. What you imagine affects the information you choose to present and how you will present it. Then, during the presentation, you meet the audience in person and discover immediately how well you perform. Although the audience for writing assignments—your readers—may not appear in person, they play an equally vital role. Even in everyday writing activities, you identify your readers’ characteristics, interests, and expectations before making decisions about what you write. In fact, thinking about audience has become so common that you may not even detect the audience-driven decisions. For example, you update your status on a social networking site with the awareness of who will digitally follow the post. If you want to brag about a good grade, you may write the post to please family members. If you want to describe a funny moment, you may write with your friends’ senses of humor in mind. Even at work, you send e-mails with an awareness of an unintended receiver who could intercept the message. In other words, being aware of “invisible” readers is a skill you most likely already possess and one you rely on every day. Consider the following paragraphs. Which one would the author send to her parents? Which one would she send to her best friend?

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

Example B
OMG! You won’t believe this! My advisor forced me to do my community service hours at this hospital all weekend! We learned CPR but we did it on dummies, not even real peeps. And some kid sneezed on me and got me sick! I was so bored and sniffing all weekend; I hope I don’t have to go back next week. I def do NOT want to miss the basketball tournament!

Most likely, you matched each paragraph to its intended audience with little hesitation. Because each paragraph reveals the author’s relationship with her intended readers, you can identify the audience fairly quickly. When writing your own paragraphs, you must engage with your audience to build an appropriate relationship given your subject. Imagining your readers during each stage of the writing process will help you make decisions about your writing. Ultimately, the people you visualize will affect what and how you write.

Tip

While giving a speech, you may articulate an inspiring or critical message, but if you left your hair a mess and laced up mismatched shoes, your audience would not take you seriously. They may be too distracted by your appearance to listen to your words. Similarly, grammar and sentence structure serve as the appearance of a
Because focusing on audience will enhance your writing, your process, and your finished product, you must consider the specific traits of your audience members. Use your imagination to anticipate the readers’ demographics, education, prior knowledge, and expectations.

• **Demographics.** These measure important data about a group of people, such as their age range, their ethnicity, their religious beliefs, or their gender. Certain topics and assignments will require these kinds of considerations about your audience. For other topics and assignments, these measurements may not influence your writing in the end. Regardless, it is important to consider demographics when you begin to think about your purpose for writing.

• **Education.** Education considers the audience’s level of schooling. If audience members have earned a doctorate degree, for example, you may need to elevate your style and use more formal language. Or, if audience members are still in college, you could write in a more relaxed style. An audience member’s major or emphasis may also dictate your writing.

• **Prior knowledge.** This refers to what the audience already knows about your topic. If your readers have studied certain topics, they may already know some terms and concepts related to the topic. You may decide whether to define terms and explain concepts based on your audience’s prior knowledge. Although you cannot peer inside the brains of your readers to discover their knowledge, you can make reasonable assumptions. For instance, a nursing major would presumably know more about health-related topics than a business major would.

• **Expectations.** These indicate what readers will look for while reading your assignment. Readers may expect consistencies in the assignment’s appearance, such as correct grammar and traditional formatting like double-spaced lines and legible font. Readers may also have content-based expectations given the assignment’s purpose and organization. In an essay titled “The Economics of Enlightenment: The Effects of Rising Tuition,” for example, audience members may expect to read about the economic repercussions of college tuition costs.

### Exercise 3

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

1. Your classmates
   - Demographics
   - Education
   - Prior knowledge
   - Expectations
2. Your instructor
   - Demographics
   - Education
   - Prior knowledge
   - Expectations
3. The head of your academic department
   - Demographics
   - Education
   - Prior knowledge
   - Expectations
4. Now think about your next writing assignment. Identify the purpose (you may use the same purpose listed in Note 6.12 “Exercise 2”), and then identify the audience. Create a list of characteristics under each category.
   - My assignment:
   - My purpose:
   - My audience:
     - Demographics
Selecting an Appropriate Tone

Tone identifies a speaker's attitude toward a subject or another person. You may pick up a person’s tone of voice fairly easily in conversation. A friend who tells you about her weekend may speak excitedly about a fun skiing trip. An instructor who means business may speak in a low, slow voice to emphasize her serious mood. Or, a coworker who needs to let off some steam after a long meeting may crack a sarcastic joke. Just as speakers transmit emotion through voice, writers can transmit through writing a range of attitudes, from excited and humorous to somber and critical. These emotions create connections among the audience, the author, and the subject, ultimately building a relationship between the audience and the text. To stimulate these connections, writers intimate their attitudes and feelings with useful devices, such as sentence structure, word choice, punctuation, and formal or informal language. Keep in mind that the writer's attitude should always appropriately match the audience and the purpose. Read the following paragraph and consider the writer’s tone. How would you describe the writer's attitude toward wildlife conservation?

Many species of plants and animals are disappearing right before our eyes. If we don’t act fast, it might be too late to save them. Human activities, including pollution, deforestation, hunting, and overpopulation, are devastating the natural environment. Without our help, many species will not survive long enough for our children to see them in the wild. Take the tiger, for example. Today, tigers occupy just 7 percent of their historical range, and many local populations are already extinct. Hunted for their beautiful pelt and other body parts, the tiger population has plummeted from one hundred thousand in 1920 to just a few thousand. Contact your local wildlife conservation society today to find out how you can stop this terrible destruction.

Choosing Appropriate, Interesting Content

Content refers to all the written substance in a document. After selecting an audience and a purpose, you must choose what information will make it to the page. Content may consist of examples, statistics, facts, anecdotes, testimonies, and observations, but no matter the type, the information must be appropriate and interesting for the audience and purpose. An essay written for third graders that summarizes the legislative process, for example, would have to contain succinct and simple content. Content is also shaped by tone. When the tone matches the content, the audience will be more engaged, and you will build a stronger relationship with your readers. Consider that audience of third graders. You would choose simple content that the audience will easily understand, and you would express that content through an enthusiastic tone. The same considerations apply to all audiences and purposes.
Exercise 5

Match the content in the box to the appropriate audience and purpose. On your own sheet of paper, write the correct letter next to the number.

1. Whereas economist Holmes contends that the financial crisis is far from over, the presidential advisor Jones points out that it is vital to catch the first wave of opportunity to increase market share. We can use elements of both experts' visions. Let me explain how.

2. In 2000, foreign money flowed into the United States, contributing to easy credit conditions. People bought larger houses than they could afford, eventually defaulting on their loans as interest rates rose.

3. The Emergency Economic Stabilization Act, known by most of us as the humungous government bailout, caused mixed reactions. Although supported by many political leaders, the statute provoked outrage among grassroots groups. In their opinion, the government was actually rewarding banks for their appalling behavior.

1. Audience: An instructor
   1. Purpose: To analyze the reasons behind the 2007 financial crisis
   2. Content:

2. Audience: Classmates
   1. Purpose: To summarize the effects of the $700 billion government bailout
   2. Content:

3. Audience: An employer
   1. Purpose: To synthesize two articles on preparing businesses for economic recovery
   2. Content:

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

Exercise 6

Using the assignment, purpose, audience, and tone from Note 6.18 “Exercise 4”, generate a list of content ideas. Remember that content consists of examples, statistics, facts, anecdotes, testimonies, and observations.

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

Key Takeaways

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

Write more effective documents and save time by considering the audience, purpose, context, and media for a document. Adjust your voice, tone, and persona to accommodate your communication situation.

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/0wCkGpQ3qn8

For every writing project, you can best determine what you want to say and how you want to say it by analyzing the components of your rhetorical situation (which is sometimes called your communication situation). Learning to think rhetorically is one of the most important benefits of an education. Successful leaders and decision makers are capable of making good decisions because they have learned to examine problems from a rhetorical perspective. Successful writers have learned they can write a more effective document in less time by thinking rhetorically.

Thinking rhetorically can refer to many mental activities—such as focusing on identifying the needs of a particular audience or context.

AUDIENCE AWARENESS

Knowing your audience—whether readers or listeners—will help you determine what information to include in a document or presentation, as well as how to convey it most effectively. You should consider your audience when choosing your tone, content, and language—or else your message may seem unfocused or inappropriate.

In the classroom, your audience is often your professor. However, some assignments are designed so that you are addressing a secondary audience such as an expert in the field or the general public. Even when your audience is your instructor, tailor your communication to meet expectations. For example, your professor may expect you to demonstrate critical thinking or to employ an academic style.

Audience Awareness in the Composing Process

You should consider your audience early in the course of writing documents or speeches, but not necessarily as the first step. Worrying too much about accommodating an audience can inhibit early stages of composition. Do some research and prewriting first. Once you’re knowledgeable about the topic and confident you have something to say about it, consider how to make it interesting and significant for specific readers or listeners.

Here are some questions to ask when analyzing your audience:
• How much does the audience know about the subject? The level and type of knowledge your audience already has determines how much background you need to provide, which terms will need definition or explanation, and whether you'll use an academic or familiar tone.

• How does the audience feel about your topic? You may need to convince a skeptical audience that your views have merit. If the audience is biased against your stance, you'll have to find ways to bring them around to your viewpoint. In that case, finding common ground might be a good place to start.

• What new information can you provide? Consider why your topic is important to your audience and what they can gain by giving you their attention. Can you motivate them to think more about your issue? To take action?

• What is your relationship to the audience? Are you giving orders, suggestions, or advice? Your tone may be more personal with a peer. If you’re an authority, you need to sound sure of yourself; if you’re a subordinate, you need to show respect.

The Effect of Audience on Style

Your style is determined in part by your audience. Together, the following elements constitute style; adjust them to reach your intended audience:

• Message. What does the audience care about, or what are they likely to act upon? What do they need to know from you?

• Argument/Content. What sort of evidence would convince them? What would they need to hear to agree with your argument? Would they appreciate a story or find it distracting?

• Word choice. Should you use jargon and slang? Formal or informal words? Contractions?

• Sentence type and length. Should you use long, complex sentences or short, simple ones? Can you use fragments?

• Tone. Should it be personal or distanced, humorous or serious, formal or informal?

Reaching Out to the Audience in the Introduction

The introduction helps the audience decide if a text is worth reading or a speech is worth their attention. Consider the choices the author makes in the following introduction:

Example 1

Natalie, 11, is a timid kid, and her parents, though possessing the best of intentions, aren’t making it any easier for her. The Portland, Maine, sixth grader says, “I hate it when Mom and Dad get all supercheery and say, ‘Don’t be shy. See how your sister Tracy does it? Just go up to that kid and say hi.’ But I’m not Tracy. It’s really hard for me. I feel like everyone is watching me and waiting for me to mess up.”

The above is from a Good Housekeeping article, “10 Smart Ways to Help a Shy Child” by Beth Johns (March 2001, page 89). The intended audience is middle-class American women with at least a high school education. The readers have children and know ways to deal with them, but are looking for something new. The writer presents herself as a peer and draws interest immediately by using a human interest story about a particular child to introduce the topic. Her tone is informal and her language is casual: “kid” instead of “child,” a contraction for “are not,” and slang (“supercheery”). She uses active voice and short sentences. Compare Johns’ introduction with “An Ambulatory Physiological Monitor for Animal Welfare Studies” in the scholarly journal Computers and Electronics in Agriculture (2001, Volume 32, pages 181-194):

Example 2

A fundamental problem in recording continuous and rapidly varying physiological signals such as the electrocardiogram (ECG), electromyogram (EMG), or electroencephalogram (EEG) from freely-moving subjects over extended periods of time is the large volume of data that must be collected. This problem is further exacerbated when a number of signals and/or subjects are monitored simultaneously. In animal welfare studies, researchers often wish to record multiple signals from multiple animals while the animals are subjected to various stressors over periods of several weeks (Krantz and Falconer, 1995; Rollin, 1997).

Phillip J. Harris, Peter N. Schaare, Christian J. Cook, and Jon D. Henderson, the research team who wrote this, are clearly addressing fellow researchers who want to gain detailed knowledge on a topic they’re familiar with. Because these readers expect that the authors have read the most current literature on the topic, careful
Addressing a Diverse Audience

An additional but important factor to consider when writing a document or preparing a speech is the differences that exist in our diverse society. Your goal should be to not only address your audience accurately and clearly, but also in a socially acceptable and professional manner. The following are suggestions to help you adapt your document or speech to meet this goal:

- **Recognize your cultural filter.** Cultures are not monolithic, but are formed from many factors such as class, gender, generation, religion, or education. Your cultural filter shapes how you view the world and can at times prevent understanding different backgrounds.

- **Avoid ethnocentrism.** Assuming that your culture’s values, customs, or beliefs are superior to another’s is ethnocentrism. It’s an attitude that can alienate your audience. Be careful not to assume that all cultural practices are shared. Suspend any judgments or cultural stereotypes. An example of an ethnocentric attitude is assuming that everyone in your audience believes capitalism is the best economic system just because that’s the system you live under.

- **Be aware of gestures when speaking.** In many cultures, different gestures have different meanings. For example, in North America, eye contact is a sign of respect. However, in Japan and Korea, the same eye contact is considered intimidating. Some gestures (sitting cross-legged, folding your arms) might be acceptable in one culture, but may appear rude or defensive in another. When giving a speech, consider whether your audiences might misconstrue any gestures you’re likely to make.

- **Distinguish between people and their abilities.** When referring to an individual with a disability, always use people-first language. For example, instead of “the blind woman,” write “the woman who is blind.” This will ensure the person is the focus of your message and not the disability. Also, avoid outdated terms (“handicapped,” “crippled”) and never identify someone solely by that person’s disability (“a quadriplegic,” “an epileptic.”).

- **Adopt bias-free language.** Biased language privileges one group or leaves out other groups or individuals and often makes unwarranted assumptions. For example, using the term “flesh-colored” assumes that every reader will have the same skin color—or that one color of skin is better than another. Don’t write “the male lawyer” when it is unnecessary to signify the lawyer’s gender. Avoid mentioning a person’s sex, gender, ethnic background, religion, disability, or physical characteristics without a sufficient reason for doing so.

- **Avoid sexist language and gender-specific terms.** Sexist language creates stereotypes that assume one gender is the norm. Nonsexist language refrains from addressing sex at all when it’s irrelevant. Gender-specific words (policeman) stress one sex, excluding the other. Consider substituting gender-neutral words (police officer).

- **Acknowledge issues of oppression.** Similar to ethnocentrism, the language we write or speak might convey a negative bias towards individuals or groups. If your message stereotypes a group, even unconsciously, you risk offending your audience. Examples of discriminating language to avoid include:
  - **Racism** – Your audience will be diverse. By recognizing that there are many cultural frames of reference, you’ll reach each reader or listener effectively. Unless it is necessary, avoid references to ethnicity.
  - **Heterosexism** – If your essay or speech depicts a relationship, don’t assume that each member of your audience is heterosexual.
  - **Ageism** – Many pervasive stereotypes exist with regard to the age of individuals. If you write or speak about an elderly person, challenge discriminating ideas such as “old people are feeble” or “teenagers lack wisdom.”
  - **Sexism** – While sexist language assumes one term for both genders, sexism suggests one sex or gender is inferior to the other. To suggest that females are emotional and men are logical privileges one sex over the other, while stereotyping that all of one sex have the same traits or characteristics.

References


AUDIENCE

What this handout is about

This handout will help you understand and write for the appropriate audience when you write an academic essay.

Audience matters

When you’re in the process of writing a paper, it’s easy to forget that you are actually writing to someone. Whether you’ve thought about it consciously or not, you always write to an audience: sometimes your audience is a very generalized group of readers, sometimes you know the individuals who compose the audience, and sometimes you write for yourself. Keeping your audience in mind while you write can help you make good decisions about what material to include, how to organize your ideas, and how best to support your argument.

To illustrate the impact of audience, imagine you’re writing a letter to your grandmother to tell her about your first month of college. What details and stories might you include? What might you leave out? Now imagine that you’re writing on the same topic but your audience is your best friend. Unless you have an extremely cool grandma to whom you’re very close, it’s likely that your two letters would look quite different in terms of content, structure, and even tone.

Isn’t my instructor my audience?

Yes, your instructor or TA is probably the actual audience for your paper. Your instructors read and grade your essays, and you want to keep their needs and perspectives in mind when you write. However, when you write an essay with only your instructor in mind, you might not say as much as you should or say it as clearly as you should, because you assume that the person grading it knows more than you do and will fill in the gaps. This leaves it up to the instructor to decide what you are really saying, and she might decide differently than you expect. For example, she might decide that those gaps show that you don’t know and understand the material. Remember that time when you said to yourself, “I don’t have to explain communism; my instructor knows more about that than I do” and got back a paper that said something like “Shows no understanding of communism”? That’s an example of what can go awry when you think of your instructor as your only audience.

Thinking about your audience differently can improve your writing, especially in terms of how clearly you express your argument. The clearer your points are, the more likely you are to have a strong essay. Your instructor will say, “He really understands communism—he’s able to explain it simply and clearly!” By treating your instructor as an intelligent but uninformed audience, you end up addressing her more effectively.
How do I identify my audience and what they want from me?

Before you even begin the process of writing, take some time to consider who your audience is and what they want from you. Use the following questions to help you identify your audience and what you can do to address their wants and needs.

- Who is your audience?
- Might you have more than one audience? If so, how many audiences do you have? List them.
- Does your assignment itself give any clues about your audience? What does your audience need? What do they want? What do they value?
- What is most important to them?
- What are they least likely to care about?
- What kind of organization would best help your audience understand and appreciate your arguments?
- What do you have to say (or what are you doing in your research) that might surprise your audience?
- What do you want your audience to think, learn, or assume about you? What impression do you want your writing or your research to convey?

How much should I explain?

This is the hard part. As we said earlier, you want to show your instructor that you know the material. But different assignments call for varying degrees of information. Different fields also have different expectations. For more about what each field tends to expect from an essay, see the Writing Center handouts on writing in specific fields of study. The best place to start figuring out how much you should say about each part of your paper is in a careful reading of the assignment. We give you some tips for reading assignments and figuring them out in our handout on how to read an assignment. The assignment may specify an audience for your paper; sometimes the instructor will ask you to imagine that you are writing to your congressperson, for a professional journal, to a group of specialists in a particular field, or for a group of your peers. If the assignment doesn’t specify an audience, you may find it most useful to imagine your classmates reading the paper, rather than your instructor.

Now, knowing your imaginary audience, what other clues can you get from the assignment? If the assignment asks you to summarize something that you have read, then your reader wants you to include more examples from the text than if the assignment asks you to interpret the passage. Most assignments in college focus on argument rather than the repetition of learned information, so your reader probably doesn’t want a lengthy, detailed, point-by-point summary of your reading (book reports in some classes and argument reconstructions in philosophy classes are big exceptions to this rule). If your assignment asks you to interpret or analyze the text (or an event or idea), then you want to make sure that your explanation of the material is focused and not so detailed that you end up spending more time on examples than on your analysis. If you are not sure about the difference between explaining something and analyzing it, see our handouts on reading the assignment and argument.

Once you have a draft, try your level of explanation out on a friend, a classmate, or a Writing Center tutor. Get the person to read your rough draft, and then ask her to talk to you about what she did and didn’t understand. (Now is not the time to talk about proofreading stuff, so make sure she ignores those issues for the time being). You will likely get one of the following responses or a combination of them:

- If your listener/reader has tons of questions about what you are saying, then you probably need to explain more. Let’s say you are writing a paper on piranhas, and your reader says, “What’s a piranha? Why do I need to know about them? How would I identify one?” Those are vital questions that you clearly need to answer in your paper. You need more detail and elaboration.
- If your reader seems confused, you probably need to explain more clearly. So if he says, “Are there piranhas in the lakes around here?” you may not need to give more examples, but rather focus on making sure your examples and points are clear.
- If your reader looks bored and can repeat back to you more details than she needs to know to get your point, you probably explained too much. Excessive detail can also be confusing, because it can bog the reader down and keep her from focusing on your main points. You want your reader to say, “So it seems like your paper is saying that piranhas are misunderstood creatures that are essential to South American ecosystems,” not, “Uh… piranhas are important?” or, “Well, I know you said piranhas don’t usually attack
people, and they’re usually around 10 inches long, and some people keep them in aquariums as pets, and dolphins are one of their predators, and…a bunch of other stuff, I guess?"

Sometimes it’s not the amount of explanation that matters, but the word choice and tone you adopt. Your word choice and tone need to match your audience’s expectations. For example, imagine you are researching piranhas; you find an article in National Geographic and another one in an academic journal for scientists. How would you expect the two articles to sound? National Geographic is written for a popular audience; you might expect it to have sentences like “The piranha generally lives in shallow rivers and streams in South America.” The scientific journal, on the other hand, might use much more technical language, because it’s written for an audience of specialists. A sentence like “Serrasalmus piraya lives in fresh and brackish intercoastal and proto-arboreal sub-tropical regions between the 45th and 38th parallels” might not be out of place in the journal.

Generally, you want your reader to know enough material to understand the points you are making. It’s like the old forest/trees metaphor. If you give the reader nothing but trees, she won’t see the forest (your thesis, the reason for your paper). If you give her a big forest and no trees, she won’t know how you got to the forest (she might say, “Your point is fine, but you haven’t proven it to me”). You want the reader to say, “Nice forest, and those trees really help me to see it.” Our handout on paragraph development can help you find a good balance of examples and explanation.

Reading your own drafts

Writers tend to read over their own papers pretty quickly, with the knowledge of what they are trying to argue already in their minds. Reading in this way can cause you to skip over gaps in your written argument because the gap-filler is in your head. A problem occurs when your reader falls into these gaps. Your reader wants you to make the necessary connections from one thought or sentence to the next. When you don't, the reader can become confused or frustrated. Think about when you read something and you struggle to find the most important points or what the writer is trying to say. Isn't that annoying? Doesn’t it make you want to quit reading and surf the web or call a friend?

Putting yourself in the reader’s position

Instead of reading your draft as if you wrote it and know what you meant, try reading it as if you have no previous knowledge of the material. Have you explained enough? Are the connections clear? This can be hard to do at first. Consider using one of the following strategies:

• Take a break from your work—go work out, take a nap, take a day off. This is why the Writing Center and your instructors encourage you to start writing more than a day before the paper is due. If you write the paper the night before it’s due, you make it almost impossible to read the paper with a fresh eye.
• Try outlining after writing—after you have a draft, look at each paragraph separately. Write down the main point for each paragraph on a separate sheet of paper, in the order you have put them. Then look at your “outline”—does it reflect what you meant to say, in a logical order? Are some paragraphs hard to reduce to one point? Why? This technique will help you find places where you may have confused your reader by straying from your original plan for the paper.
• Read the paper aloud—we do this all the time at the Writing Center, and once you get used to it, you’ll see that it helps you slow down and really consider how your reader experiences your text. It will also help you catch a lot of sentence-level errors, such as misspellings and missing words, which can make it difficult for your reader to focus on your argument.

These techniques can help you read your paper in the same way your reader will and make revisions that help your reader understand your argument. Then, when your instructor finally reads your finished draft, he or she won’t have to fill in any gaps. The more work you do, the less work your audience will have to do—and the more likely it is that your instructor will follow and understand your argument.
WHAT TO THINK ABOUT WHEN WRITING FOR A PARTICULAR AUDIENCE

Writers must have a clear sense of to whom they are writing (the audience) and what the audience’s values and/or opinions related to the topic are.

Imagine a history professor who opens her lecture on the Victorian era by asking her undergraduate students, “Did you see the Victorian-era furniture on Antiques Roadshow last night?” Can you imagine how many in the class would raise his/her hand? Can you hear the confused silence?

Most of the students in the audience are under the age of thirty, with the majority falling between the ages of eighteen and twenty-five. They do not own property and probably have little interest in antiques. The target audience of Antiques Roadshow, though, reflects middle-aged and older middle class folks who, most likely, own property and, perhaps, antiques of their own. How effective of an opener was this professor’s question given her audience? Not very.
To communicate effectively and persuasively

Writers must have a clear sense of to whom they are writing (the audience) and what the audience’s values and/or opinions related to the topic are. When in conversation, we often shift our tone and/or language to adapt to our audience.

Consider how you talk differently to young children than you do to your professors. When communicating with a child, you may use simple language and a playful or enthusiastic tone. With your professors, however, you may try out academic language, using bigger words and more complex sentences. Your tone may be more professional than casual.

For example . . .

Imagine that you need money. When you craft an email to your parents asking for money, your approach might be different than if you were to ask your roommate for money. Your tone, language, and means of appeal will adapt to who your audience is.

- The **tone** of your email is casual, conversational, and upbeat (“School is great!”).
- The **language** that you use is simple, easy to read. Sentences are short and rely mostly on action verbs.
- You **appeal** to your parent first by recalling positive memories of home, as though you know your mom is missing you ("reminds me of home"). This is a tug at the heartstrings (or *pathos* appeal). By offering specific details about the cost of your chemistry textbook, you make a *logos* appeal (to her sense of logic). You also highlight your responsible nature, which develops an *ethos* appeal: “I study nearly all the time,” “I try to sleep,” and “books [more than] I budgeted.” Telling your mom that books were more expensive than you imagined links your request for additional cash to your pursuit of an education, something that makes her happy and that adds to your credibility.
For more information about ethos, pathos, and logos, see “Rhetorical Appeals.”

- When asking your roommate for cash, the **tone** may remain casual though it will appear less conversational. I mean, after all, you talk to this person every day. Also, noting “I’m totally okay with” buying two rounds of groceries creates a feeling of generosity rather than resentment.

- The **language** gets even simpler. Notice how much shorter the sentences are and how quickly the writer gets to the point; there is less need for “window dressing” your appeal. Colloquial language appears here—“could you spot me some cash”—rather than the more formal request the writer made to his mother, “I’m out of funds for groceries and gas. Can you help?”

- Reminding the roommate that you bought the last two rounds of groceries functions as an **appeal** in two ways: first, it establishes your credibility as a good friend; and second, it appeals to the roommate’s sense of logic (of course you need some extra money; you’ve got a free loader kind of roommate!).

### A writing assignment . . .

Your professor asks you to write an academic argument paper on a topic of your choice. Academic writing is usually directed to an educated audience interested in critical, analytical thinking.

Let’s imagine you choose to write about adoption rights within the LGBT community. More specifically, you’ll argue that stable LGBT couples deserve the opportunity to adopt children just as stable heterosexual couples are allowed to do.

You’ll adapt **tone**, **language**, and **appeals** to suit the writing project’s

- Audience
- Purpose
- Context
- Medium
**Audience**
What does your audience read (helpful info for adapting tone and language)?
What are some of the values of the audience?
What personal traits do you know about their age, location, region, political ideology, education, race, gender, and familial status?
What might your audience already know about your topic?
What new and insightful information will you offer them?
How do you anticipate that your audience feels about this topic?
Which points of your argument may prove most contentious for this audience?

**Purpose**
What do you want to convince the audience of?
What do you want the audience to do after taking in your argument?
How will your writing contribute to the current conversation on this topic?

**Context**
Where is this debate being discussed (in the media, in LGBT studies, in psychology literature, for example)?
What major points frame the debate?
What perspectives dominate the current conversation? Why?
What points of agreement exist within the debate?
What points of disagreement exist within the debate?
Where is there potential for common ground within the debate?
What is the history of this debate (how long has it been going on; what major events have impacted the discussion)?

**Medium**
Is multimodality possible (combining visual, spatial, auditory, and textual elements)?
What genre will serve your purpose (you're writing an argument for your professor's assignment)?
How will the audience access your writing?
Brainstorming and planning
When you write to *all* readers, you, in fact, write to *no one* at all.

Novice writers may assume that their writing can be directed to a *broad, unnamed, faceless audience* and that their words can be read and experienced universally by diverse individuals. Not so. Such an assumption contributes to ineffective and boring writing. Writers should tailor their tone, language, and appeals to suit the audience (to whom are you writing?), the purpose (why are you writing and what do you want the reader to do after finishing your essay?), the medium (how can you help the reader to understand and be attracted to your writing?), and the context (what is the dominant conversation about this topic? what kinds of evidence will be most valued?).

**CONSIDER YOUR PURPOSE**

Identifying the primary reason for writing provides you with the focus you need to write an effective document in less time.

Like an onion that is peeled, revealing multiple layers, a writing document may have multiple purposes. A persuasive essay, for example, may have paragraphs that inform, paragraphs that persuade, paragraphs that threaten, and paragraphs that request information. However, on a more global level, each document must have one primary purpose.

Watch this video online: [https://youtu.be/_RgABkiMHNI](https://youtu.be/_RgABkiMHNI)

Until you know your primary purpose for writing, you cannot know what information to leave in or leave out or even how to best organize a document. Of course, some academic documents have multiple purposes.

People write documents for countless reasons:

1. **Record**: Keep a record of events or information.
2. **Reflect/Explore**: Write in a journal, attempt to make sense of something or to shape a new idea.
3. **Inform**: Objectively report an event.
4. **Demonstrate Knowledge**: Prove, in school, that you’ve learned course content.
5. **Summarize**: Report someone else’s words, theories, and research in your own words.
6. **Explain**: Help readers understand a difficult concept, theory, or event.
7. **Analyze**: Break down a problem into parts.
8. **Persuade**: Change minds, invoke action.
9. **Theorize**: Speculate on possible causes and effects.
10. **Entertain**: Bring joy, amazement, and thrills.

Textbooks, English instructors, and writers occasionally call the purpose statement the thesis sentence. In school contexts, some instructors require students to place the thesis statement in the introductory paragraphs. Likewise, writers of essays appearing in newspapers, magazines, and books present their thesis up front. The advantage of this deductive approach is that readers immediately know what the topic is and the writer’s stance toward the subject. In contexts where the subject isn’t likely to result in an emotional reaction from readers, explicit statements of purpose make sense.

**When Should You Consider Your Purpose?**

Because of the generative nature of the writing process, your sense of the primary purpose for a document will often become clearer once you have written a few drafts. Yet because the effectiveness of a document is chiefly determined by how well you focus on addressing a primary purpose, you can save time by identifying your purpose as early as possible.

1. What is your primary purpose for writing? For instance, are you attempting to analyze a subject, to explain a cause-and-effect relationship, or to persuade an audience about your position?
2. Do you have competing or conflicting purposes for writing this document? If so, should the document be separated into two papers?
3. What crucial information should you emphasize to affect your audience? You may want to shock, educate, or persuade your readers, for instance.
4. How can you organize the document to emphasize key information that suits your purpose?

---

**CONSIDER YOUR CONTEXT**

Identify the circumstances surrounding the writing project. What is going on in the world at large that relates to how you develop and present your project?

*Context* refers to the occasion, or situation, that informs the reader about why a document was written and how it was written. The way writers shape their texts is dramatically influenced by their context. Writers decide how to shape their sentences by considering their contexts.

For example, the 9/11 terrorist attack on America changed the context for discussions on terrorism. When Americans talk about terrorism post-9/11, they understand the borders of America are threatened, that terrorism can occur in our homes.

Contexts are sometimes described as formal, semi-formal, or informal. Alternatively, contexts for written documents can be described as school-based projects or work-based projects.
Why Is Context Important?

The context for each document strongly affects how you research your topic, how you organize your context, and what media you employ to deliver your message.

Content/Research

What does your reader know about the topic? Will original research be necessary? Will traditional research suffice? Will your audience be persuaded by personal knowledge? Will they require facts and figures?

For example, if you were writing a report on the possibility that Iraq is amassing weapons of mass destruction and your audience were members of the United Nations, you would want to firmly ground your argument in research.

Media/Design

Should the work be published online or transmitted as a printed report? What colors or pictures are appropriate?

Grammar, Mechanics, Usage

The way you structure your sentences is influenced by how formal or informal your context is. Email, for example, tends to be informal. Lots of emoticons and abbreviated expressions can be used. In contrast, an end-of-the-semester research report may require formal diction.

Context Analysis Questions

• What is going on in the world of the readers that will influence the readers’ thoughts and feelings about the document?
• Does the intellectual content of the document rest on the shoulders of other authors? Will your readers expect you to mention particular scholars or researchers who did the original, ground-breaking work on the subject you are exploring?
• What background information can you assume your reader is already familiar with?

CONSIDER YOUR MEDIA

Learn how to be more creative about the effective use of media.

Media can refer to how meaning is conveyed. For example, people speak of TV and radio as a kind of media—the mass media. They refer to printed documents distributed by newspapers, magazines, and books as print media. Texts such as databases or multimedia published on the Internet are called online media. The term media is broadly defined, yet two definitions are particularly popular:

1. Print Media: Paper essays and reports, magazines, books, hypertext
   Mass Media: Radio, TV, magazines, newspapers
Media Analysis Questions

1. Does the text employ multiple media? What is the ratio of visuals to words?
2. Would an alternative medium be more appropriate for the text’s purpose and audience?
3. What additional media could be used to enhance the message?

CONSIDER YOUR VOICE, TONE, AND PERSONA

Enhance the likelihood that readers will respond favorably to your document by projecting an effective voice, tone, and persona. Voice, Tone, and Persona are slippery terms/concepts. In some instances, these terms can be used interchangeably, yet important differences do exist.

Voice

The term voice may be used to define a writer’s stance toward his subject or readers. For example, a writer could say, “I’m using a satirical (or humorous, condescending, patronizing) voice in this editorial.”

Alternatively, some writers and English instructors talk about a writer’s voice as a representation of the trueness of a document. An accomplished writer is said to have found his or her voice while a beginning writer is said to be searching for his or her voice. When used in this way, voice refers to the “trueness” or “honesty” or “authority” or “power” of a writer’s message. Back in the 1960s, some writing instructors suggested inexperienced writers needed to find their true voice—that each of us has a specific voice that we need to find, that voice is a powerful, mystical force that helps us convey truth or the inner quality of a topic.

Tone

When writers and English instructors talk about tone, they are typically referring to the author’s stance toward his or her readers and message. Specific documents or authors can be described as having a condescending, arrogant, pedantic, racist, confident, or satirical tone (or voice). In this way, tone is used interchangeably with voice, although tone does not refer to the “truth” of the writer’s message, unlike voice.

Persona

The term persona refers to an author’s use of a literary mask to hide his or her true opinion about a matter. For example, if you were writing about how you act while waiting in long lines, you might want to honestly inform your reader that you become a raging lunatic, that your heart rate doubles, and that you can keep calm only by doing sit-ups and push-ups. Yet if you are not proud of this type-A tendency, you might present the persona of a patient...
person who has mastered the ability to meditate calmly and think deeply about important issues when forced to wait in a seemingly endless line.

Different readers may make different assessments regarding a particular author’s voice, tone, and persona. An author may describe his tone as reasoned, thoughtful, and intelligent whereas the reader might dismiss the author’s text as biased, underdeveloped, or emotional.

Why Should You Consider Your Voice, Tone, and Persona?

Just as listeners make assumptions about your personality by observing how you dress and act and by listening to the tone of your voice, readers make judgments about your personality and feelings regarding a subject based on what and how you write. When you avoid use of the first person and personal references, readers make judgments about what kind of person you are and about your professional abilities. Readers make assumptions about how clever and fair a thinker you are by noting the quality of your reasoning, the words you choose, and the way you format your text. By noting an author’s examples, organization, and word choices, we might say, for instance, that he or she displays an opinionated, logical, or emotional persona. Problems such as spelling and punctuation errors or pronoun agreement errors can turn readers against you, making them consider you to be careless or uneducated.

Consider these questions when revising a document:

- What inferences about my personality do I want my readers to make?
- Given my audience and purpose, is it appropriate to express my feelings about this subject?
- Would it be more appropriate for me to project a strong, passionate tone, or should I try to appear more objective?
- Based on what I have written, what sense about my personality or feelings about the subject will readers be likely to infer?
- Have I used any words or examples that are emotionally charged and likely to alienate my readers?
- What personal examples should I add or delete to help my readers better understand me and my message?

Why Read Your Work Out Loud?

The challenge of juggling apparently unrelated ideas can be so great that you may overlook your voice or tone. When attempting to explain complex ideas and processes, you may understandably focus your critical energies on being coherent and logical. Yet, you might also remember that readers are people too, and they are likely to be swayed as much by their sense of how credible you are as by the logic of your argument. One trick that writers use to gauge the voice in a document is to read a manuscript aloud or to speak it into a tape recorder and then listen to how they sound.

Create an Energetic Voice

The vitality of a writer’s voice or persona often has a tremendous influence on readers’ responses. Sometimes readers say they enjoy a text because an author seems straightforward and personable. In contrast, sometimes readers dislike a book because the author seems stuffy or cold-hearted. As an example of the latter, note the “computer tone” in the following letter, which I received after the birth of my first child:

Thank you for cooperating with the hospital stay verification component of your Health Insurance Policy. The company has been notified of the patient’s emergency admission. The information submitted has been reviewed and a length of stay has been assigned. This emergency stay is certified for two days.

We remind you that the review of your hospital stay was limited to determining the appropriate length of stay for the emergency admitting diagnosis and did not question medical necessity. We further remind you that payment of benefits is still subject to the terms of your Health Insurance Policy.

Surely this is an impersonal, mechanical way to say that my newborn would be covered by my insurance policy—a fact that I already knew. Although the letter was signed by a person, it seems to have been written by a computer.
If I had called this person on the phone, she probably would have said something like, “Congratulations on the birth of your baby. As you already know, your insurance covers expenses for two days of hospitalization. Enjoy that little one!” One message, two very different voices.

Trying to communicate your subject in a coherent way can be so overwhelming that you forget to consider the influence of your voice or persona on the reader.

Avoid a Pedantic, Passive Tone

Based on what you say, your readers will make judgments about whether you seem knowledgeable, educated, compassionate, angry, or confused. If you use excessive jargon, write extensively in the passive voice, fail to offer specific examples to illustrate your point, or do not elaborate on essential information, then some readers might consider you to be aloof or pompous, while others might assume that you are reluctant or unable to communicate.

Sometimes people believe they need to sound “academic” when they write; they don’t think they can simply be themselves and write naturally. Rather than trying to simplify their prose, they reach for a thesaurus and select the least understood or most impressive-sounding word. Here’s a sample of terribly technical language that a colleague of mine wrote to satirize the humorous elements of jargon-ridden prose:

Health is generally benefited by the voluntary ingestion of 4000 to 5000 ml of hydrogen hydroxide in each 24-hour period, distributed more or less equally across the time period in 250 to 500 ml units.

When you read this, it may at first seem sophisticated, enshrouded as it is in pseudoscientific garb. Yet, properly translated into readable English, it simply says, “Drink eight glasses of water a day.”

Pretentious jargon and obscure language can at first be intimidating because the authors appear to be implying that we should understand the message. However, college-educated, critical readers are rarely impressed by vague, abstract language. For example, what do you think of the following prose, which is excerpted from a draft of a graduate student’s essay on language development?

An oral language production system is the first one learned by children. The task of learning a written language production system occurs when children enter school. A noticeable difference between these two systems is the presence of a conversational partner. This difference is significant when you compare speaking and writing at the level of continuous discourse. Conversational partners provide constant cues, such as to elaborate, to clarify, to keep a goal in mind, to stay on the topic, etc. Evidence of children’s dependence on conversational inputs when learning to write comes from observing effects of prompting children to continue, that is to take another conversational turn. Children are dependent to some extent on conversation interchange to develop a text. However, no conversational partner exists in written composition. Learning to write involves a transition from a language introduction system dependent on inputs from a conversational partner to a system capable of functioning autonomously. Without conversational supports, children have problems in thinking what to say, in making choices appropriate to a remote audience, in staying on the topic, and in producing an intelligible whole.

Clearly, this passage is weakened by jargon. A critical reader will wonder, for example, about the need for such terms as “oral language production system,” “continuous discourse,” or “conversational interchange.” More insidious in this example, however, is the abundance of passive constructions and lack of people-oriented references. For example, who is doing the observing in the following sentence: “Evidence of children’s dependence on conversational inputs when learning to write comes from observing effects of prompting children to continue, that is to take another conversational turn”? Also, take a look at the emptiness of the third sentence: “A noticeable difference between these two systems is the presence of a conversational partner.” Even with rereading, it is unclear whether the “oral language production system” or the “written language production system” has “the presence of a conversational partner.” Of course, the author could argue that everyone knows that
conversation usually involves a dialogue between speakers while writing usually lacks such an exchange. Naturally, clever readers will see through the fog with a discerning eye and recognize that the writer’s ideas are in fact relatively simple:

Perhaps children don’t learn to write until they enter school because writing demands more than speech. Whereas children can easily develop their ideas through dialogue—that is, by listening to queries and comments and suggestions from other speakers—they must conceptualize an audience when they write.

Ultimately, however, if you think about the gist of this writer’s message long enough, it becomes so obvious that you wonder about the need to say it at all. Surprisingly, you will often find this to be the case: pedantic, long-winded speakers and writers are often hiding simple concepts behind verbal smoke screens. Thus, when you read, remember to be a critical reader.

LOGOS

“Logos” by Emily Lane, Jessica McKee, and Megan McIntyre

“Logic is the anatomy of thought.”
– John Locke

“Logos” is the appeal to logic. Logos isn’t logic like the formal logic in math, philosophy, or even computer science; it is the consistency and clarity of an argument as well as the logic of evidence and reasons.

In formal logic, in abstraction, the following is the case: if A is true and B is true and A is an instance of B, then the repercussions of B will always be true. The problem, however, is that this kind of logic doesn’t work for real-life situations. This is where argument comes into play. Formal logic would say that spending, for example, is a violation of traffic laws. A repercussion of violating a traffic law is a ticket; therefore, every person who speeds gets a ticket. However, in real life, not in abstract theory, things aren’t that cut and dried. Most people would not agree that all speeders, in every circumstance, should receive a ticket. In an argument about a real-life situation, the audience needs particulars to make their decisions. Sometimes there’s an exception. Why was that person speeding? Well, if an eighteen-year-old is speeding to show off for his friends, then yes, most people would agree that he deserves a ticket. However, if a man is driving his pregnant wife to the hospital, then maybe he does not deserve the ticket. One could, and probably would, make the argument that he should not get a ticket.

Let’s examine how the appeal to logic would work in an argument for the speeding father-to-be.

Because arguments are based on values and beliefs as well as facts and evidence, it is logical that the argument must coincide with accepted values and beliefs. The enthymeme is the foundation of every argument.

Enthymemes have three parts: the claim, the reason, and the unstated assumption that is provided by the audience. All three of these things must make sense to your audience in order for your argument to be considered logical. The claim of an argument for the father-to-be could be something like, “This man should not get a speeding ticket.” That’s it. The claim is pretty simple. It is your educated opinion on the matter. The reason would be something like “because his wife is in labor in the backseat.” So the two stated parts of your enthymeme would be, “This man should not get a speeding ticket because his wife is in labor in the backseat.” Now, this seems obviously logical to us; however, what is our underlying value, our unstated assumption about this argument? Most of us would probably agree that a hospital is a better place to give birth in than a backseat. That is the third
part of the enthymeme. Your audience must agree that your assumption is true in order for your argument to be considered logical. If your readers don’t have the same assumption, they are not going to see your logic. You must find an enthymeme that works for your audience. The pregnant wife enthymeme is fairly easy to see. In more volatile claims and reasons, the unstated assumptions can be trickier to identify and work out with your audience.

Reasons like “because his wife is in labor” are motivations for the driver’s actions, not evidence. Most audiences need facts. Evidence is the facts. Both reasons and evidence are used in an appeal to logic; however, reasons cannot be your only support. Evidence as to why the man should speed might include studies about the problems with births in difficult or dangerous circumstances, interviews with women who have given birth in automobiles, and infant mortality rates for births that do not occur in hospitals. As you can see, there are many different kinds of evidence you could provide for this argument.

Consistency means not changing the unstated or stated rules governing your argument. Consistency is essential to logic. Let us continue with the speeding example. If, for instance, you are arguing that the infant mortality rate is too high for babies born outside the hospital and that the father is required to speed for the safety of his unborn child, then you may not want to include evidence of the high infant mortality rate in car crashes. Although this information may be part of the infant mortality rate, it goes against the underlying assumption that speeding is acceptable because of the high risk of harming the baby if it is born in the backseat.

So why should you care about logos? In your own writing, logos is important because it appeals to your readers’ intellects. It makes you readers feel smart. Logos is the part of the argument where you treat your audience like purely rational, “only the facts, ma’am” kind of people. Also, gaps, leaps, and inconsistencies in logic, no matter how well developed the other appeals may be, can tear apart an argument in short order. This is the same reason you cannot ignore logos in others’ arguments either. All the appeals are linked together; for instance, if you use as evidence an article that has leaps in logic, or relies only on authority and emotions, this article could damage your own ethos as an author. It is important to remember that all three appeals must be well developed and work together to make a good argument.

As you now know, logos can be defined as a writer’s or speaker’s attempt to appeal to the logic or reason of her audience. Let’s look at some examples of logos that you might commonly find when reading texts of various media:

- **Statistics.** When a writer employs data or statistics within a text, you can probably assume that he or she is attempting to appeal to the logic and reason of the reader. For example, an argument in favor of keeping abortion legal may cite the May 2011 Pew Research poll that found 54 percent of Americans in favor of legal abortion. This figure makes a logical argument: abortion should be legal because the majority of Americans support it, and in a democracy, the majority makes the decisions.

- **Causal statements.** When you see an “if-then” statement, with credible supporting evidence, the writer is likely appealing to your reason. Consider an argument about lowering the drinking age from 21 to 18: a writer might suggest that, if the legal drinking age were 18, then people between 18 and 21 would be less likely to drive under the influence. If the writer offers evidence that the reason that some between the ages of 18 and 21 drive drunk is that they fear calling a friend or parent because they have illegally ingested alcohol, then this causal statement would be an appeal to a reader’s sense of reason.

- **Relevant examples or other evidence.** You might begin to think about logos as evidence that doesn’t involve an appeal to your emotions. Even expert testimony, which would certainly be an example of ethos, also could be an example of logos, depending on its content. For example, in a discussion about recent cuts in education funding, a statement from the Hillsborough County, Florida, superintendent would be an appeal to authority. But if that statement contained a discussion of the number of teachers and classes that would have to be cut if the state were to reduce the district’s funding, the statement from the superintendent could also be an appeal to logic.

See also:

**Fallacious Logos**
“Ethos” was written by Jessica McKee and Megan McIntyre

I’ve always wondered why candidates have to “approve this message”; I mean, if President Obama is on camera talking about himself, then can’t I assume he approves the message? Why does he have to state that he approves it at the end?

There’s certainly a law that governs what must be said at the end of a political advertisement, or else President Obama wouldn’t say exactly the same thing as every other politician at the end of an ad, but there’s also an element of persuasion at work here. By appearing on camera saying that he approves the content, the President is giving the ad credibility. It’s about him, his work, and his beliefs, and by saying he has approved the ad, President Obama is saying, “You can trust this information about me.”

This appeal to credibility is known as “ethos.” Ethos is a method of persuasion in which the speaker or writer (the “rhetor”) attempts to persuade the audience by demonstrating his own credibility or authority.

I think the best way to understand this kind of appeal to the credibility of the author is to look at the three most common ways a rhetor attempts to demonstrate authority on a topic.

By now, you’ve hopefully gotten an idea of what ethos is: an attempt to persuade by appealing to authority or credibility. You might be wondering, though, what ethos looks like in writing or in speaking. Here are a few examples:

- **References to work experience or life experience related to the topic.** When an author writing about the stock market talks about his years working for an investment bank, that’s an appeal to credibility.
- **References to college degrees or awards related to the topic.** When your biology instructor makes clear in the syllabus that he has a PhD in biology and that you’ll be using the textbook he’s written for the class, he’s reminding you of his authority and credibility on the subject.
- **References to the character of the writer.** When a politician writes in a campaign brochure about his years of public service and the contributions he’s made to the community, he’s letting you know he’s trustworthy, a good person, and a credible source of information about the community and the issues that affect it.
- **The use of supporting sources written by authorities on the subject.** When a student writes a paper about why school hours should be changed and uses quotations from principals, teachers, and school board members (all of whom know something about the topic), he’s borrowing their credibility and authority to increase his own.
- **References to symbols that represent authority.** When a candidate gives a speech in front of an American flag, he or she is associating him- or herself with the symbol and borrowing the authority it represents.

See also:

**Fallacious Ethos**

Licensing & Attributions

CC licensed content, Shared previously

“Pathos” was written by Kendra Gayle Lee, Jessica McKee, and Megan McIntyre

“Let’s not forget that the little emotions are the great captains of our lives, and we obey them without realizing it.”
– Vincent Van Gogh

Remember those after-school specials that aired on TV when you were a kid? They always had some obvious moral (like “don’t drink and drive”). And they were often really emotionally driven.

At the end of the show, the camera would pan out, showing the protagonist alone and suffering for the poor decisions that he or she had made. When you were a child, that sort of heavy-handed emotionalism was effective in getting a point across. Now that you’re an adult, it becomes easier to feel frustrated, and even manipulated, by an overload of emotion. Emotion, or “pathos,” is a rhetorical device that can be used in an argument to draw the audience in and to help it connect with the argument. Relying too much on pathos, though, can make your writing sound like an after-school special.

Pathos works in conjunction with logos (logic) and ethos (credibility) to help form a solid argument. However, not every argument employs all three rhetorical devices. Each writer must choose which combination of rhetorical devices will work well for his or her writing and will suit the chosen topic. Used correctly, pathos can make a bland argument come alive for the audience. Pathos offers a way for the audience to relate to the subject through commonly held emotions. However, it is important to determine when pathos will be useful and when it will only serve to muddy the argumentative waters.

Take, for instance, a student who is writing an essay on human trafficking. Human trafficking—abducting or entrapping people (usually women and children) and subjecting them to horrific working situations—should be a subject that is already fraught with emotion. However, once the student starts working on the paper, he notices that he has a collection of facts and figures from which the audience will easily be able to disconnect. What the needs is to make the topic come alive for the reader. He needs to make the reader feel sympathy and horror. Then he comes upon a first-person account of a teenager who was trafficked into the United States. By incorporating her account into his essay (with proper citation, of course), he allows the reader to experience the teenager’s disbelief and fear. And by experiencing this emotion, the reader begins to develop his or her own emotional response: sympathy, horror, and anger. The student has helped the reader connect to his argument through the effective use of pathos.

Here’s another example of a new media text that employs pathos to elicit sympathy from its audience:

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/9gspElv1yvc

Pathos becomes a liability in an argument when it is inappropriate for the subject matter or genre of writing being used. For instance, if you are writing a letter to Publix supermarket to express your displeasure with its corporate response to migrant farmers’ call for a living wage, then a narrative encouraging sympathy for the plight of the migrant worker might not be as effective as a straightforward statement of purpose: if Publix doesn’t change its policies, you will take your business to a supermarket that is more interested in supporting social justice.

An audience can also find an overload of pathos to be off-putting. For instance, after September 11, 2001, the majority of people in the United States experienced an overwhelming sense of anger and fear. However, when references to 9/11 were used extensively in some of the 2004 presidential campaigns, many people were outraged. Why? Because they felt as though their intense feelings about the tragedy of 9/11 were being exploited and cheapened by the candidates, and they were intentionally being made to feel fearful. They felt as though their emotions were being manipulated to obtain votes. In this case, an overload of pathos backfired on the candidates.

Understanding pathos is important for readers and for writers. As a reader, you want to be in tune with the author’s use of pathos, consciously evaluating the emotions the author tries to elicit. Then you can make informed decisions about the author’s motives and writing methods. As a writer, you want to be aware of proper uses of
pathos, paying close attention to both your subject matter and your audience. There is no need to sound like an after-school special, unless, of course, you are writing for one.

It’s probably clear by now what pathos does: it evokes an emotional response from a reader by appealing to empathy, fear, humor, or some other emotion. Now let’s look at a few examples of pathos that you may find in written, spoken, or visual texts:

- **Anecdotes or other narratives.** When a writer employs a narrative or anecdote, he or she is usually attempting to connect with the reader emotionally. For example, beginning an essay about human trafficking by relaying the personal story of a victim captures the attention of the audience because it humanizes the problem and draws on readers’ empathy.

- **Images or other forms of media.** When a writer uses images, songs, and other types of nontextual media, he or she is often attempting to engage a reader’s emotions. Songs and pictures produce emotional responses. For example, Toby Keith’s post-9/11 anthem, “Courtesy of the Red, White, and Blue,” seems to embody the nation’s anger after the 9/11 terrorist attacks. While you may not agree with the song’s sense of justice, the lyrics recall a painful time in our nation’s history. For many, that recollection prompts an emotional response.

Watch this video online: [https://youtu.be/ruNrdmjcNTc](https://youtu.be/ruNrdmjcNTc)

- **Direct quotations.** Though quotations are used for a myriad of reasons, direct quoting from an individual who has been personally affected by an issue is usually an appeal to the emotions of a reader. For example, if I were writing an essay about breast cancer and I quoted a cancer patient, that quotation would be an attempt to humanize the topic and appeal to the sympathy of my readers.

- **Humor.** When a writer uses humor in order to illustrate a point, he or she is employing pathos. Though there is logic to satirical humor (as used on *The Daily Show* or *The Colbert Report*), the main appeal of such television shows is that they make viewers laugh.

See also:

**Fallacious Pathos**

License & Attributions

CC licensed content, Shared previously

- Pathos. **Authored by:** Kendra Gayle Lee, Jessica McKee, and Megan McIntyre. **Provided by:** Writing Commons. **Located at:** [http://writingcommons.org/index.php/open-text/information-literacy/rhetorical-analysis/rhetorical-appeals/591-pathos](http://writingcommons.org/index.php/open-text/information-literacy/rhetorical-analysis/rhetorical-appeals/591-pathos). **License:** CC BY-NC-ND: Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives

All rights reserved content

- Sarah McLachlan Animal Cruelty Video. **Authored by:** ragefc. **Located at:** [https://youtu.be/9gspElv1yvc](https://youtu.be/9gspElv1yvc). **License:** All Rights Reserved. **License Terms:** Standard YouTube License

- Toby Keith - Courtesy Of The Red, White And Blue (The Angry American). **Authored by:** TobyKeithVEVO. **Located at:** [https://youtu.be/ruNrdmjcNTc](https://youtu.be/ruNrdmjcNTc). **License:** All Rights Reserved. **License Terms:** Standard YouTube License
UNIT 3: HOW WE EDIT

REVISING

Reviewing, Editing, Proofreading, and Making an Overview

Every time you revise your work substantially, you will be conducting three distinct functions in the following order: reviewing for purpose, editing and proofreading, making a final overview.

REVIEWING FOR PURPOSE

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

• Understand why and when to review for purpose.
• Be prepared to use self-questioning in the purpose review process.

Although you will naturally be reviewing for purpose throughout the entire writing process, you should read through your first complete draft once you have finished it and carefully reconsider all aspects of your essay. As you review for purpose, keep in mind that your paper has to be clear to others, not just to you. Try to read through your paper from the point of view of a member of your targeted audience who is reading your paper for the first time. Make sure you have neither failed to clarify the points your audience will need to have clarified nor overclarified the points your audience will already completely understand.

Figure 8.1
Self-questioning is a useful tool when you are in the reviewing process. In anticipation of attaching a writer’s memo to your draft as you send it out for peer or instructor review, reexamine the six elements of the triangle that made up your original statement of purpose (voice, audience, message, tone, attitude, and reception):

- **Voice**: Does it sound like a real human being wrote this draft? Does my introduction project a clear sense of who I am? Honestly, would someone other than my paid instructor or assigned peer(s) read beyond the first paragraph of this essay?
- **Audience**: Does my writing draw in a specific set of readers with a catchy hook? Do I address the same audience throughout the essay? If I don’t, am I being intentional about shifting from one audience to another?
- **Message**: Are my main points strong and clear? Do I have ample support for each of them? Do my supporting details clearly support my main points?
• **Tone:** Am I using the proper tone given my audience? Is my language too casual or not professional enough? Or is it needlessly formal and stiff sounding? Does my tone stay consistent throughout the draft?

• **Attitude:** Will my organization make sense to another reader? Does my stance toward the topic stay consistent throughout the draft? If it doesn’t, do I explain the cause of the transformation in my attitude?

• **Reception:** Is my goal or intent for writing clear? How is this essay likely to be received? What kind of motivation, ideas, or emotions will this draft draw out of my readers? What will my readers do, think, or feel immediately after finishing this essay?

## Handling Peer and Instructor Reviews

In many situations, you will be required to have at least one of your peers review your essay (and you will, in turn, review at least one peer’s essay). Even if you’re not required to exchange drafts with a peer, it’s simply essential at this point to have another pair of eyes, so find a classmate or friend and ask them to look over your draft. In other cases, your instructor may be intervening at this point with ungraded but evaluative commentary on your draft. Whatever the system, before you post or trade your draft for review, use your answers to the questions in Section 8.1 “Reviewing for Purpose” to tweak your original statement of purpose, giving a clear statement of your desired voice, audience, message, tone, attitude, and reception. Also, consider preparing a descriptive outline showing how the essay actually turned out and comparing that with your original plan, or consider writing a brief narrative describing how the essay developed from idea to execution. Finally, include any other questions or concerns you have about your draft, so that your peer reader(s) or instructor can give you useful, tailored feedback. These reflective statements and documents could be attached with your draft as part of a writer’s memo. Remember, the more guidance you give your readers, regardless of whether they are your peers or your instructor, the more they will be able to help you.

When you receive suggestions for content changes from your instructors, try to put aside any tendencies to react defensively, so that you can consider their ideas for revisions with an open mind. If you are accustomed only to getting feedback from instructors that is accompanied by a grade, you may need to get used to the difference between evaluation and judgment. In college settings, instructors often prefer to intervene most extensively after you have completed a first draft, with evaluative commentary that tends to be suggestive, forward-looking, and free of a final quantitative judgment (like a grade). If you read your instructors’ feedback in those circumstances as final, you can miss the point of the exercise. You’re supposed to do something with this sort of commentary, not just read it as the justification for a (nonexistent) grade.

Sometimes peers think they’re supposed to “sound like an English teacher” so they fall into the trap of “correcting” your draft, but in most cases, the prompts used in college-level peer reviewing discourage that sort of thing. In many situations, your peers will give you ideas that will add value to your paper, and you will want to include them. In other situations, your peers’ ideas will not really work into the plan you have for your paper. It is not unusual for peers to offer ideas that you may not want to implement. Remember, your peers’ ideas are only suggestions, and it is your essay, and you are the person who will make the final decisions. If your peers happen to be a part of the audience to which you are writing, they can sometimes give you invaluable ideas. And if they’re not, take the initiative to find outside readers who might actually be a part of your audience.

When you are reviewing a peer’s essay, keep in mind that the author likely knows more about the topic than you do, so don’t question content unless you are certain of your facts. Also, do not suggest changes just because you would do it differently or because you want to give the impression that you are offering ideas. Only suggest changes that you seriously think would make the essay stronger.
Key Takeaways

- You should review for purpose while you are writing, after you finish your first draft, and after you feel your essay is nearly complete.
- Use self-questioning to evaluate your essay as you are revising the purpose. Keep your voice, audience, message, tone, attitude, and reception in mind as you write and revise.
- When you are reviewing a peers’ essay, make only suggestions that you think will make the essay stronger. When you receive reviews from instructors or peers, try to be open minded and consider the value of the ideas to your essay.

Exercises

1. Find multiple drafts of an essay you have recently completed. Write a descriptive outline of at least two distinct drafts you wrote during the process.
2. For a recently completed essay, discuss how at least one element of your statement of purpose (voice, audience, message, tone, attitude, or reception) changed over the course of the writing process.
3. With your writing group, develop five questions you think everyone in your class should have to answer about their essay drafts before submitting them for evaluation from a peer or your instructor.

MAKING A FINAL OVERVIEW

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Understand the types of problems that might recur throughout your work.
- Know when you should conduct isolated checks during a final overview.
- Understand how to conduct isolated checks.

While you are managing the content of your essay and moving things around in it, you are likely to notice isolated issues that could recur throughout your work. To verify that these issues are satisfactorily dealt with from the beginning to the end of your essay, make a checklist of the issues as you go along. Conduct isolated checks of the whole paper after you are finished editing and proofreading. You might conduct some checks by flipping through the hard-copy pages, some by clicking through the pages on your computer, and some by conducting “computer finds” (good for cases when you want to make sure you’ve used the same proper noun correctly and consistently). Remember to take advantage of all the editing features of the word processing program you’re using, such as spell check and grammar check. In most versions of Word, for instance, you’ll see red squiggly lines underneath misspelled words and green squiggly lines underneath misuses of grammar. Right click on those underlined words to examine your options for revision.

Figure 8.3
The following checklist shows examples of the types of things that you might look for as you make a final pass (or final passes) through your paper. It often works best to make a separate pass for each issue because you are less likely to miss an issue and you will probably be able to make multiple, single-issue passes more quickly than you can make one multiple-issue pass.

- All subheadings are placed correctly (such as in the center or at the beginning of a page).
- All the text is the same size and font throughout.
- The page numbers are all formatted and appearing as intended.
- All image and picture captions are appearing correctly.
- All spellings of proper nouns have been corrected.
- The words “there” and “their” and “they’re” are spelled correctly. (Or you can insert your top recurring error here.)
- References are all included in the citation list.
- Within the citation list, references are all in a single, required format (no moving back and forth between Modern Language Association [MLA] and American Psychological Association [APA], for instance).
- All the formatting conventions for the final manuscript follow the style sheet assigned by the instructor (e.g., MLA, APA, Chicago Manual of Style [CMS], or other).
This isn’t intended to be an all-inclusive checklist. Rather, it simply gives you an idea of the types of things for which you might look as you conduct your final check. You should develop your unique list that might or might not include these same items.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- Often a good way to make sure you do not miss any details you want to change is to make a separate pass through your essay for each area of concern. You can conduct passes by flipping through hard copies, clicking through pages on a computer, or using the “find” feature on a computer.
- You should conduct a final overview with isolated checks after you are finished editing and proofreading the final draft.
- As you are writing, make a checklist of recurring isolated issues that you notice in your work. Use this list to conduct isolated checks on the final draft of your paper.

**EXERCISES**

Complete each sentence to create a logical item for a list to use for a final isolated check. Do not use any of the examples given in the text.

1. All the subheadings are…
2. The spacing between paragraphs…
3. Each page includes…
4. I have correctly spelled…
5. The photos are all placed…
6. The words in the flow charts and diagrams…

**EDITING AND PROOFREADING**

**LEARNING OBJECTIVES**

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Understand why editing and proofreading is important even for careful writers.
- Recognize the benefits of peer editing and proofreading and the similarities between editing and proofreading your work and the work of others.
- Know how to edit and proofread for issues of both mechanics and style.

When you have made some revisions to your draft based on feedback and your recalibration of your purpose for writing, you may now feel your essay is nearly complete. However, you should plan to read through the entire final draft at least one additional time. During this stage of editing and proofreading your entire essay, you should be looking for general consistency and clarity. Also, pay particular attention to parts of the paper you have moved around or changed in other ways to make sure that your new versions still work smoothly.
Although you might think editing and proofreading isn’t necessary since you were fairly careful when you were writing, the truth is that even the very brightest people and best writers make mistakes when they write. One of the main reasons that you are likely to make mistakes is that your mind and fingers are not always moving along at the same speed nor are they necessarily in sync. So what ends up on the page isn’t always exactly what you intended. A second reason is that, as you make changes and adjustments, you might not totally match up the original parts and revised parts. Finally, a third key reason for proofreading is because you likely have errors you typically make and proofreading gives you a chance to correct those errors.

Figure 8.2

Editing and proofreading can work well with a partner. You can offer to be another pair of eyes for peers in exchange for their doing the same for you. Whether you are editing and proofreading your work or the work of a peer, the process is basically the same. Although the rest of this section assumes you are editing and proofreading your work, you can simply shift the personal issues, such as “Am I…” to a viewpoint that will work with a peer, such as “Is she…”

As you edit and proofread, you should look for common problem areas that stick out. There are certain writing rules that you must follow, but other more stylistic writing elements are more subjective and will require judgment calls on your part.
Be proactive in evaluating these subjective, stylistic issues since failure to do so can weaken the potential impact of your essay. Keeping the following questions in mind as you edit and proofread will help you notice and consider some of those subjective issues:

- **At the word level**: Am I using descriptive words? Am I varying my word choices rather than using the same words over and over? Am I using active verbs? Am I writing concisely? Does every word in each sentence perform a function?
- **At the sentence level**: Am I using a variety of sentence beginnings? Am I using a variety of sentence formats? Am I using ample and varied transitions? Does every sentence advance the value of the essay?
- **At the paragraph and essay level**: How does this essay look? Am I using paragraphing and paragraph breaks to my advantage? Are there opportunities to make this essay work better visually? Are the visuals I’m already using necessary? Am I using the required formatting (or, if there’s room for creativity, am I using the optimal formatting)? Is my essay the proper length?

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- Edit and proofread your work since it is easy to make mistakes between your mind and your typing fingers, as well as when you are moving around parts of your essay.
- Trading a nearly final version of a draft with peers is a valuable exercise since others can often more easily see your mistakes than you can. When you edit and proofread for a peer, you use the same process as when you edit and proofread for yourself.
- As you are editing and proofreading, you will encounter some issues that are either right or wrong and you simply have to correct them when they are wrong. Other more stylistic issues, such as using adequate transitions, ample descriptive words, and enough variety in sentence formats, are subjective. Besides dealing with matters of correctness, you will have to make choices about subjective and stylistic issues while you proofread.

**EXERCISES**

1. Write a one-page piece about how you decided which college to attend. Give a copy of your file (or a hard copy) to three different peers to edit and proofread. Then edit and proofread your page yourself. Finally, compare your editing and proofreading results to those of your three peers. Categorize the suggested revisions and corrections as objective standards of correctness or subjective matters of style.
2. Create a “personal editing and proofreading guide” that includes an overview of both objective and subjective issues covered in this book that are common problems for you in your writing. In your guide, include tips from this book and self-questions that can help you with your problem writing areas.

**REVISING WITHIN IN A WRITING COMMUNITY**

When revising written work within a writing community, it is a good idea to visualize the process and workflow before you get started in earnest. While revision is a recursive (circling back) practice and writers frequently move back and forth between editorial stages, the flowchart below is designed to help you follow and appreciate the general progression of revision.
Revising After Writing Community Feedback

After submitting and receiving your peer reviews in your writing community, return to your own work and take a long, hard look at the recommendations your instructor and classmates have made regarding your draft. Remember that you are seeking ways to make the meaning clear in your essay. Do not be afraid of changing the essay in radical ways, especially if the ideas and organization haven’t conveyed the meaning you intended. Build on the strengths and add, cut, reorder, or start over where needed.

Use a Writing Rubric

After you have incorporated some of the recommendations into your revision, review the 6+1 Traits Rubric, which features the five areas (below) by which the final draft of your essay will be graded. Make sure that you are fully editing and proofreading your draft.

By editing, you are reviewing and revising the big picture items:

1. **Ideas—Are my ideas and content developed?**
   You are looking for ideas to be clear and focused, remaining on topic throughout the essay. Make sure your details support the central focus of the narrative.

2. **Organization—Does my essay provide a logical organization, demonstrating an order or structure that supports the ideas clearly?**
   Give your narrative a creative title and provide an inviting introduction. Craft thoughtful transitions as the essay progresses, making sure that the structure is logical.
3. Word Choice—Have I provided language that sounds natural and conveys the intended message of the essay? Your essay should flow naturally from your own choice of words and phrases. Use action verbs and avoid linking verbs. Don’t forget to read aloud to see if your voice comes through in this essay.

4. Sentence Fluency—Are my sentences well-built, demonstrating a strong sense of varied structure? One quick editing technique you can use to test for fluency is to circle the first word of every sentence. Do you see initial words repeating? Do you start sentences with articles (a, an, the) or with pronouns (or names of characters)? If so, try to incorporate some prepositional phrases and introductory clauses so you incorporate sentence variety and create a rhythm to your sentences that avoid choppiness.

By proofreading, you are taking into consideration standard writing conventions:

5. Conventions—Have I demonstrated a good grasp of standard writing conventions? Have I checked the essay for any misspellings? Is my punctuation accurate? Have I avoided the pitfalls of many common grammar errors? Did I meet the word counts required for this essay? Do I have proper paragraph structure? Have I made sure that what I mean to say is not undermined or impeded by grammatical, mechanical, or stylistic errors?

Proofread Your Writing Backward

While there are a number of ways to proofread written content for errors, it is often useful to review your writing “backward.” That is, you read the last sentence of the essay first, then backward, sentence by sentence, until you finish your proofreading with the first sentence. This kind of reading isolates individual sentences from the essay’s context, so that you are not reading for meaning within a paragraph but for errors that may appear in individual sentences.

Apply the backward review to the Revision Practices within a Writing Community flowchart above: did you find the error?

Writing to the Final Version: Suit Up!

Writing a polished paper is, in and of itself, an intellectual challenge and following formatting guidelines in this and other college courses signals to your readers that your paper should be taken seriously as a contribution to a particular course or a given academic or professional field. Think of presenting your essay in the correct format like wearing a tailored suit to a job interview.

Of course, there’s more to making a narrative presentable than its format. The narrative should be presentable in terms of its grammar, mechanics, and style. If you would like to get a little practice with sentence-by-sentence proofreading, feel free to try either of the proofreading exercises made available by Pen and Page:

- Proofreading Exercise 1
- Proofreading Exercise 2

MATTERS OF GRAMMAR, MECHANICS, AND STYLE

For many students, the discussion of grammar, mechanics, and style is intimidating. There are rules, and lots of them. And when rules are broken, some kind of inquisition or punishment is bound to follow. Any student who has
experienced an instructor’s editorial comments (also known as the red pen “blood” in the margins of a paper) knows what it feels like to be a hapless violator of the rules.

Rules Matter

Despite your gut reactions to learning certain rules for grammar, mechanics, and style, you have to acknowledge that the rules matter. People communicate daily in written forms, such as emails, letters, reports, and essays. And many of them need to communicate in such a way that they are taken seriously.

In academic writing, it is your job to make sure that the people who read what you write (your instructor and classmates) understand what you are trying to say. If your thoughts are not arranged appropriately, your readers may get confused. If you do not acknowledge and employ the rules of grammar, mechanics, and style, you are at a distinct disadvantage as a communicator.

The Grammar Report

Being able to identify grammatical, mechanical, or stylistic problems that exist in your writing is one way to improve your writing. These problems may have been with you for some time, failing to be identified, researched, and remedied.

The Grammar Report assignments will assist you in not only identifying your problem, but also you help you seek out examples of the problem, research the rules related to the problem, and finally “reporting” on your experience to your classmates. Indeed, the process is not just about you addressing a writing problem; it is about sharing your experience and remedies, so that you can teach others to avoid writing errors.

Improving Grammar, Mechanics, and Style

There are a wide variety of resources to support your research. A good place to start is the free online textbook, Successful Writing. You can use the find/search feature of your browser to look up particular topics and use the practice exercises to work through the process of identifying and correcting errors.

Here are some online resources that you may find useful, as well:

- Capital Community College’s Guide to Grammar and Writing
- Grammar Book
- Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)
- Grammar Girl

At some point, you may find that you share the same grammatical, mechanical, or stylistic problems with others in this course. Take a moment to look at the most commonly occurring grammar errors listed in the “Attending to Grammar” materials developed by the Dartmouth Writing Program. Of the top 20 grammar errors listed, consider which ones are common to you. Then make sure you make every effort to eradicate them from your writing.
UNIT 4: TYPES OF WRITING

NARRATIVE ESSAYS

What is Narrative Writing?

When you write a book report or tell a story or explain what happened first, second, and third you are giving a narrative account. Narrative writing is commonly used when we want to share our ideas with others. We write about what we like, what’s important to us, and what we think others will enjoy reading. Narrative writing is descriptive writing, but it is not usually associated with academic writing that requires higher-order thinking skills, including the research components described in Bloom’s taxonomy (knowledge, comprehension, application, analysis, synthesis, and evaluation).

Narrative writing is often associated with fiction writing. We write about people who do things. We write about a struggle and how it is overcome. We usually write from a particular perspective or point of view: “Let me tell you about my first day in public school. It still stands out as one of the worst days of my life…..” or “Going to first grade for me was so exciting! I could hardly wait to get there, and when I look back at that wonderful day with a beautiful teacher and all those new people I’d never seen before, I still get a thrill.”

You can see from the two above examples that narratives are often written in first person. Readers are encouraged to be a part of the author’s world. They’re invited into that world by the author’s words and images and details. Narrative writing involves vivid, descriptive examples of people and events.

If you think of narrative writing as storytelling, you can begin a short narrative project. Consider the essential elements of a story: it must have a setting, it must contain characters, there must be a particular plot or story line, a problem (sometimes called ‘conflict’) must come into play to help move the story along, there must eventually be a resolution to the problem, and the story must be told from someone’s perspective (or point of view). We’ll look at each of these elements of narrative writing:

- Setting
- Characters
- Plot
- Problem and Resolution
- Perspective, often called Point of View
“It was a dark and stormy night.” There’s a setting for you. Charlie Brown’s dog, Snoopy, began his great American novel with that opening line. It sent chills down every child’s spine just thinking about Snoopy looking out drearily from within the shelter of his dog house!

A setting must be somewhere. The story you are telling must take place in some specific place at some specific time, whether it’s in a space ship on its way to another galaxy or the attic in your house. It can certainly be an imaginary place, but even imaginary places have to be described. Your reader must have a sense of place. If you’re writing about a log cabin in the woods, is it a vacation cabin that your family rents each summer, with all the modern conveniences (including WiFi), or is it a pioneer family’s crudely-constructed hut quickly built from scavenged logs in the Wyoming wilderness of 1820? The characters and story that you develop are clearly dependent on the setting you develop for the reader.

Characters

Your setting needs to have characters that do things connected to the place you’ve put them in. If you’re writing about dogs and cats, you don’t necessarily need people. In that case, the dogs and cats are your characters. If you do have people, they’ll be interacting with each other in some way. Dogs, cats, and people (and any characters you create) will have names and personalities and they will speak to each other and deal with all the situations in your story.

You may be very creative with your characters, assigning very particular characteristics to each. You need main characters and supporting characters. Your narrative will be about a person or two or three people who interact within the plot of your narrative. Characters can be heroic “protagonists” and their arch enemies, the “antagonists,” who are out to get them. Characters are needed to move the story through the events needed to get from the beginning to the end.

You may include “stock characters,” like Charlie Brown’s teacher whose only lines throughout the history of the cartoon are “wah, wah, wah.” In other words, stock characters are in a story as place holders – they’re there to fill out the background and we don’t expect them to do anything unexpected. Another example would be those people in TV shows or movies that always do the same thing. They’re minor characters, and we’re never surprised by them. The irate boss is always irate. Remember Bulldog of the Frazier TV show? Every time he lost something he got angry and used the same lines, dissing people who must have stolen whatever he lost; then he found it and said, “oh, there it is.” We come to expect Bulldog to do that and would be shocked if he changed his habit.

Plot

A story’s plot is the raison d’être of the characters’ coming together in the setting and doing what they do. If you’re telling about a vacation you took, you have some element in mind to hang the characters and events together. Was that the summer you got the worst sunburn of your life? How did you get the sunburn? What led up to it? Who were you with and how did the sunburn affect your summer? Your reader will assume that your sunburn finally went away.

Problem and Resolution

“Last summer I got the worst sunburn of my life! I thought I would die, it hurt so much. No one could touch me, and I couldn’t lean back on anything because my back would stick to chairs. I couldn’t wear anything but really loose shirts, and I had a fever and my skin itched. It wasn’t just my back, either. My face was red and my eyes
hurt. I had to stay inside and couldn’t hang with my friends. It was the worst summer of my life and I will never go
with Jake and Mary to that stupid beach again. They didn’t tell me what would happen, and when it did happen
and I got sunburned they just laughed at me…..”

Poor girl. Here’s a real problem, she’s upset, and she’s trying to write a narrative account of this horrible time in
her life. She’s introduced two characters who probably started out as friends but aren’t her friends any more. She
got involved in a situation that she was unprepared for. The consequences were disastrous, according to her. She
will always remember the beach where the event took place, and until the day she dies she will likely never return
to it. Who knows what she’ll do about Jake and Mary, but they should probably watch out.

Every story needs some kind of problem to move it along. Problems are much more interesting to read
about than situations where nothing needs fixing. If Cinderella’s father had married a wonderful woman
with loving daughters Cinderella probably never would have been in a situation to marry Prince Charming. In
fact, her name probably would have been Cynthia instead of Cinderella, and maybe she wouldn’t be
quite the sweet girl we expect her to be in the fairy story.

Problems can’t go on forever, though. Neither can stories. All good stories really do need to come to an
end. The reader has to be able to close the book and say, “well, that’s the end,” and feel pretty good about
how the story progressed. We like to solve problems. We don’t like to live in a world where things are
continually wrong and nothing gets fixed. Good stories need to resolve their problems.

If the problem in a story is a part of the story’s plot, the problem has to appear and then develop through the
actions of the characters involved. One or some of those characters will try to solve the problem in various ways,
and by the time you get to the end of the story the problem has been resolved. The writer is happy and the reader
is happy. Good stories do this.

Even stories that have sad endings have resolutions. Somebody dies and the world is a sadder place, but people
do move on. That sounds harsh, but that’s what happens. The world doesn’t stop because somebody dies. The
world is changed, and people are changed, but another story comes into play and characters move into new
settings and new plots are hatched and new problems occur.

Try writing your story idea in one sentence. “I’ll tell you about a medieval knight who traveled through the Alps on
a quest to find the Holy Grail, had adventures with lions and tigers and bears and even a dragon, rescued the girl
of his dreams from an evil sorcerer, and returned home to live happily ever after.” Within this long sentence you
have characters, plot, and problems. The problems develop and are eventually resolved. Your knight could die in
the wilderness and the love of his life could go off with someone else. But that would be hard on the knight, and if
he’s your main character your story will get pretty confusing to the reader, who has built up certain expectations
for the knight and the love of his life.

Perspective, often called Point of View

This is where perspective comes in. What do you want to say and who is interested in hearing about your
characters, their problems, and their resolutions? You want to connect to particular readers, and in order to do
that you should be able to write from a particular perspective. Your perspective helps your reader have a clear
perspective. Are you writing a story about outer space aliens? You may assume the perspective of an alien, and
share with the reader the particular attributes and characteristics of the residents of his planet. Perhaps you want
the reader to conform to that perspective; if so, those attributes should connect positively to your reader. Maybe
the alien is away from his family and misses them. The alien is probably not going to be an evil monster intent on
killing every living creature on earth. If he is, then sharing that perspective with your reader will require making
that creature downright blatantly nasty in the eye of the reader.
Tips for Writing a Narrative

It's time to put your cards on the table. Writing means thinking, imagining, organizing, drafting, revising, revising, editing, and sharing your ideas.

- **Thinking:** Every good narrative begins with an idea. Brainstorm ideas. Ask questions. Think of stories you've read and how you wish they were different. How would you change a story? What kind of characters do you enjoy reading about? Do you want to write about someone you know or someone you imagine? What problems can you write about in a narrative style in which other people get involved, the plot develops, the problem is resolved? What is familiar to you that you can share with others?

- **Imagining:** Use your imagination. Just because something usually turns out the way it does you don’t have to write your narrative that way. Change the situation a bit; change the setting or the characters. Think “what if” something else came into play in the story? Shake off the dust of what you expect and imagine the unexpected.

- **Organizing:** A plot needs to have a beginning, middle, and an end. Anticipate the end by planning for it throughout the beginning and the middle. If Cinderella is going to find Prince Charming, how will that happen? How will she get to the ball if the fairy godmother doesn’t show up? What if one of her step sisters distracts the Prince and throws him out the window while he’s not paying attention? Sometimes when you’re writing characters try to take over you plot. They’ll say things and do things that you hadn't planned for. Clear organizing at the start will help you keep your characters in line. Sure, give them some flexibility, but make sure you stick to your organizational plan. Outline the plot. List the characters and their attributes. Create a story board of what happens first, next, and so on until you reach the point of resolution. Then determine how the “happily ever after (or not)” will lead to closure.

- **Drafting:** This sounds like a lot of work. Haven’t you already gotten everything finished at this point? No. You’ve got a good plan in mind. Now, put your money where your mouth is and start writing. You don’t have to start at the beginning. Write the scene that stands out to you. Get your narrative underway by writing about the things that seem really important to you. If Jake and Mary’s laughing at your sunburn is what you remember best, then write about it first. Get those scenes down on paper. That’s the important part.

- **Revising:** Now take those scenes and put them in the order of when they occurred. See if this fits the plot line you have in mind.

- **Revising:** Work through your plot. Change some of the scenes around. Develop the characters. Add descriptors.

- **Revising:** Read over your revision and continue to make changes. Show your work to others. Get their input. Keep revising until your narrative shines.

- **Editing:** This is the final stage. Make sure your grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure are clear. Check paragraph development. The editing part is like looking in the mirror before you go out on a date. Is everything as good as it’s going to get?

- **Sharing:** Now your narrative is at the publishing stage. This is where you present it in its final form to the reader. If that date led to marriage, then this is the walk down the aisle. It’s the beginning of a new stage in life. It’s your narrative!
INTRODUCTION TO NARRATIVE ESSAY

Narrative Essay

Reflect for a moment on the last memorable story you heard, told, or read. What made the story remain with you? Was it a compelling character or participant in the action? An interesting set of circumstances? Was it told in an amusing or serious manner, and did it make you react emotionally?

Everyone loves a good story, and each day we seek out good stories in a variety of media: novels, short stories, newspapers, works of fine art, blogs, even notes and posts on social media pages.

Narration is the art of storytelling, and in this module, you will investigate the ways in which writers employ common narration strategies to engage readers from the beginning to the end of a significant event. You will also look critically at some examples of effective narration as you draft your narrative essay.

Module Outcomes

After successfully completing this module, you should be able to:

1. Describe the purpose, basic components, characteristics, and structure of narrative writing
2. Demonstrate writing techniques of a narrative essay

NARRATIVE EXAMPLES

“The Danger of a Single Story”

Our lives, our cultures, are composed of many overlapping stories. Novelist Chimamanda Adichie tells the story of how she found her authentic cultural voice — and warns that if we hear only a single story about another person or country, we risk a critical misunderstanding.

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/D9Ihs241zeg

“The Narrative Essay” by Jared Gomez, Ivy Tech Student

Jared Gomez
CDA
8-30-15
Many children around the globe come from broken homes. Tons of these children will have emotional and behavioral issues from a lack of discipline and bottled emotions. For these children success comes when they find something that fills the void and supplies the structure and emotional outlet needed. For me, that outlet was my training in MMA. This was a time in my life where I found peace, learned disciplined, while in the best shape of my life. MMA could save many others from the trouble that surrounds them.

I came from a broken home. I bottled up lots of rage and spent a majority of my time wreaking havoc anywhere I could. That’s when I discovered MMA, or Mixed Martial Arts, which can be a combination of kickboxing, boxing, jujitsu, muy thai, karate, and judo. MMA became the place I went to become lost and have amnesia to what was around me. When I was there I was in my own dimension and zoned into mastering all that I could. Every swing I incorporated a piece of the madness that consumed my mind. The trouble that haunted me was gone, I was safe.

The training I did infused itself into my life through my behavior outside the gym. Prior to the gym, I was a hot-headed boy who had no self-control. I’d explode without warning or reason. While training you learn technique, including one that many use to beat their opponent before the fight even begins, invading their mind. Getting inside someone’s head to make them explode and compete out of swarms of emotions meanwhile abandoning their entire plan. You practice that in the gym, which leads to a better sense of self and of self-control. Outside the gym I learned to put out the flame that sparked inside me when tempers flared. In another way training is grueling it takes a lot out of someone to be pulverized minute after minute day after day and never allowing themselves to taste defeat. If you can do that homework is nothing, and work ethic is formed.

Along with all those brutal hours being battered comes the bonus of a magnificent physique. All day your body endures and enormous amount of torture. An average human body is not a body that can endure that. Every minute you are drowning in sweat, muscles burning, and cardio wasting away, you create a different version of yourself that you never had before. Your muscles grow to endure the punches, your cardio blasts forward to be able to keep giving the punches back, and the fat burns off so you look good doing both.

Training for mixed martial arts can be the safe place for many with trouble in their life. It is a place that allows you to escape the negativity that overwhels your life. A place to instill the discipline needed to succeed in any area of life, and for your self-esteem get you in the best shape of your life. I reflect everyday on the memories of being in the gym, it was my place to be me, without any of the negative.

The trouble that haunted me was gone, I was safe.

The training I did also infused itself into my life through my behavior outside the gym. Prior to joining the gym, I was a hot-headed boy who had no self-control. I could explode without warning or reason. While training you learn technique, and one that many use to beat their before the fight even begins is invading their mind.

Getting inside someone’s head to make them explode and compete out of a swarm of emotions meanwhile abandoning their entire game plan. You practice that in the gym, which leads to a better sense of self and of self-control. Outside the gym I learned to put out the flame that sparked inside me when something I didn’t like would occur. In another way the training is grueling it takes a lot out of someone to be pulverized minute after minute day after day and never allowing themselves to taste defeat. If you can do that homework is nothing, and work ethic is formed.

Along with all those brutal hours being battered comes the bonus of a magnificent physique. All day your body endures and enormous amount of torture. An average human body is not a body that can endure that. Every minute you are in there drowning in sweat, muscles burning, and cardio wasting away, you are creating a different version of yourself that you never had before. Your muscles grow to endure the punches, your cardio blasts forward to be able to keep giving the punches back, and the fat burns off so you can look good doing both.

Training for mixed martial arts can be the safe place for many with trouble in their life. It is a place that allows you to escape the negativity that has overwhelmed your life. A place to instill the discipline needed to succeed in any area of your life, and for your self-esteem get you in the best shape of your life. I reflect everyday on the memories of being in the gym, it was my place to be me, without any of the negative.
“A Proud Granddaughter” by Megon Ganzeveld, Ivy Tech Student

Megon Ganzeveld  
English 111 CEA  
September 1, 2015

A Proud Granddaughter

Every child has a pair of grandparents, and every grandparent can make an impact in a child’s life. Grandpa, I thank you for always supporting me and being my role model growing up. You have filled my heart with pride, love, and gratefulness. I would like to share a memory that demonstrates how proud and thankful I am to have you as my Grandpa.

It was our first softball practice and Ashley and I were quite nervous. You had offered to take us to the fields after school to meet the team. All day we felt the butterflies in our stomachs as we were not quite sure what to expect at practice. As we got off the bus that day from school we seen you were sitting at our house with a bag full of stuff. “What’s in the bag Papa?” my sister asked, as you began to pull out cleats, socks, and two softball mitts. You had went out and purchased everything we would need. Our faces lit up with smiles and we couldn’t wait to try out the new items. After we had gotten dressed and tried on the cleats and socks we loaded into the car and off we went.

As we pulled up at the softball fields we see many other young girls with the same nervous facial expression as we had. Headed to the fields, we walked on the pavement in our cleats, you could hear the pitter patter of our brisk walk. You gave us a gentle smile and grabbed our hands. We walked up to our team and wondered where the coach was? After hanging around for 20 minutes it was apparent our coach had forgotten about us. As some of the other parents started to gather their children and leave you stood up and said “Hold on these girls came to learn softball and I would love to teach them!” You had decided in that instant to dedicate your time and coach our softball team. You, knowing exactly what to do, huddled the team together and got us excited about the season ahead. Instantly my butterflies seemed to fade and excitement replaced it.

The way you just stepped up and took control eased my anxiousness and made me so proud to be your granddaughter. The unsettling feeling of not knowing what to expect turned into a rush of excitement every time practice came around. You were not only my role model, but the entire team looked up to you as well. Your thoughtfulness in preparing us, and your support in taking us to practice that evening will forever remain close to my heart. The ongoing support that I have received has left me filled with love and feeling proud and forever grateful for being blessed with you as my grandpa.

“Feelings of the First Combat Convoy” by William Robinson, Ivy Tech Student

William Robinson  
English Composition  
Descriptive Essay  
1 SEPT 2015

Feelings of the First Combat Convoy

Have you ever been so scared and nervous because your life was in danger? You will when you go through your deployment. Hot heat, combative enemies trying to get you with small arms fire, and roadside bombs are just a few things you might have to go through in a deployment. In August of 2008, I was on my first deployment in the Army, in the Al Anbar Province of Iraq. I was preparing for my first “mission” or military convoy. I was scared and nervous because my life was in danger. Concerns included the possibility of enemy force interference during the mission, or my own mishap that could cause problems in the logistics and the safety of my fellow soldiers.
My Army unit deployed July 2008 to Iraq, and by August we were ready for our first mission inside a hostile country during a direct conflict. We had been trained proper combat techniques, combat convoy etiquette, and safety tips, but this was still a first deployment for many of us. When in a combat zone, on a convoy, you must scan your whole surroundings looking for bombs or combative enemies, secure your loads, watch your fellow soldier’s backs, and be safe, to make sure everything goes as planned and for the whole safety of every individual involved. My first mission was a round trip, from Al-Taqaddum to Fallujah, and was a refueling mission of military grade petroleum. Remarkably the mission was a success, with minor mishaps of no significance to the overall mission.

Also since it was a conflict, there were combative enemies who would want to disrupt us with road side bombs or small arms fire. Many things could go wrong, either from an individual in our unit not doing his assigned tasks or from direct conflict of a combative enemy. So tensions were high and many people nervous during the initial part of the mission. Feelings that you may go through are adrenaline high, high stress, and lots weight on your shoulders. Things I did to deal with my feelings were meditate about good things, and goof around with battle buddies. The overall deployment was a success for our unit with minor hostile conflict to the unit in whole, and no major injuries to our soldiers.

August of 2008 was my first successful mission while deployed in the conflict zone of Iraq. My deployment ran from July 2008 to October of 2009. There was a lot of tension and nervousness with my unit, and myself during that first mission, but it was a success and helped with the rest of our deployment. My unit successfully completed their mission with no major setbacks throughout the unit, during our deployment. Our first mission helped paved the rest of our deployment success. Always find something that makes you happy and focus on that during the difficult times in your deployment, also always stay Army strong.

ILLUSTRATION ESSAYS

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

This section will help you determine the purpose and structure of illustration/ example in writing.

The Purpose of Illustration in Writing

To illustrate means to show or demonstrate something clearly. An effective illustration essay, also known as an example essay, clearly demonstrates and supports a point through the use of evidence.

The controlling idea of an essay is called a thesis. A writer can use different types of evidence to support his or her thesis. Using scientific studies, experts in a particular field, statistics, historical events, current events, analogies, and personal anecdotes are all ways in which a writer can illustrate a thesis. Ultimately, you want the evidence to help the reader “see” your point, as one would see a good illustration in a magazine or on a website. The stronger your evidence is, the more clearly the reader will consider your point.
Using evidence effectively can be challenging, though. The evidence you choose will usually depend on your subject and who your reader is (your audience). When writing an illustration essay, keep in mind the following:

- Use evidence that is appropriate to your topic as well as appropriate for your audience.
- Assess how much evidence you need to adequately explain your point depending on the complexity of the subject and the knowledge of your audience regarding that subject.

For example, if you were writing about a new communication software and your audience was a group of English-major undergrads, you might want to use an analogy or a personal story to illustrate how the software worked. You might also choose to add a few more pieces of evidence to make sure the audience understands your point.

However, if you were writing about the same subject and your audience members were information technology (IT) specialists, you would likely use more technical evidence because they would be familiar with the subject.

Keeping in mind your subject in relation to your audience will increase your chances of effectively illustrating your point.

The Structure of an Illustration Essay

The controlling idea, or thesis, belongs at the beginning of the essay. Evidence is then presented in the essay’s body paragraphs to support the thesis. You can start supporting your main point with your strongest evidence first, or you can start with evidence of lesser importance and have the essay build to increasingly stronger evidence. This type of organization is called “order of importance.”

Transition words are also helpful in ordering the presentation of evidence. Words like first, second, third, currently, next, and finally all help orient the reader and sequence evidence clearly. Because an illustration essay uses so many examples, it is also helpful to have a list of words and phrases to present each piece of evidence. Certain transitional words and phrases aid in keeping the reader oriented in the sequencing of a story. Some of these phrases are listed here:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phrases of Illustration</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>case in point</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>for instance</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in particular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>in this case</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>one example/another example</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>specifically</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>to illustrate</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Vary the phrases of illustration you use. Do not rely on just one. Variety in choice of words and phrasing is critical when trying to keep readers engaged in your writing and your ideas.

Writing an Illustration Essay

First, decide on a topic that you feel interested in writing about. Then create an interesting introduction to engage the reader. The main point, or thesis, should be stated at the end of the introduction.

Gather evidence that is appropriate to both your subject and your audience. You can order the evidence in terms of importance, either from least important to most important or from most important to least important. Be sure to fully explain all of your examples using strong, clear supporting details.
Letter to the City
By Scott McLean in Writing for Success
To: Lakeview Department of Transportation
From: A Concerned Citizen

The intersection of Central Avenue and Lake Street is dangerous and demands immediate consideration for the installation of a controlling mechanism. I have lived in Lakeview my entire life, and during that time I have witnessed too many accidents and close calls at that intersection. I would like the Department of Transportation to answer this question: how many lives have to be lost on the corner of Central Avenue and Lake Street before a street light or stop sign is placed there?

Over the past twenty years, the population of Lakeview has increased dramatically. This population growth has put tremendous pressure on the city’s roadways, especially Central Avenue and its intersecting streets. At the intersection of Central Avenue and Lake Street it is easy to see how serious this problem is. For example, when I try to cross Central Avenue as a pedestrian, I frequently wait over ten minutes for the cars to clear, and even then I must rush to the median. I will then have to continue to wait until I can finally run to the other side of the street. On one hand, even as a physically fit adult, I can run only with significant effort and care. Expecting a senior citizen or a child to cross this street, on the other hand, is extremely dangerous and irresponsible. Does the city have any plans to do anything about this?

Recent data show that the intersection of Central Avenue and Lake Street has been especially dangerous. According to the city’s own statistics, three fatalities occurred at that intersection in the past year alone. Over the past five years, the intersection witnessed fourteen car accidents, five of which were fatal. These numbers officially qualify the intersection as the most fatal and dangerous in the entire state. It should go without saying that fatalities and accidents are not the clearest way of measuring the severity of this situation because for each accident that happens, countless other close calls never contribute to city data. I hope you will agree that these numbers alone are sufficient evidence that the intersection at Central Avenue and Lake Street is hazardous and demands immediate attention.

Nearly all accidents mentioned are caused by vehicles trying to cross Central Avenue while driving on Lake Street. I think the City of Lakeview should consider placing a traffic light there to control the traffic going both ways. While I do not have access to any resources or data that can show precisely how much a traffic light can improve the intersection, I think you will agree that a controlled busy intersection is much safer than an uncontrolled one. Therefore, at a minimum, the city must consider making the intersection a four-way stop. Each day that goes by without attention to this issue is a lost opportunity to save lives and make the community a safer, more enjoyable place to live. Because the safety of citizens is the priority of every government, I can only expect that the Department of Transportation and the City of Lakeview will act on this matter immediately. For the safety and well-being of Lakeview citizens, please do not let bureaucracy or money impede this urgent project.

Sincerely,
A Concerned Citizen

Key Takeaways

- An illustration essay clearly explains a main point using evidence.
- When choosing evidence, always gauge whether the evidence is appropriate for the subject as well as the audience.
- Organize the evidence in terms of importance, either from least important to most important or from most important to least important.
- Use time transitions to order evidence.
- Use phrases of illustration to call out examples.
ILLUSTRATION EXAMPLES

“She’s Your Basic L.O.L. in N.A.D.”

In “She’s Your Basic L.O.L. in N.A.D,” pediatrician and writer Perri Klass discusses the medical-speak she encountered in her training as a doctor and its underlying meaning.

Click on the link to view the essay: “She’s Your Basic L.O.L. in N.A.D” by Perri Klass

As you read, look for the following:

• The author’s primary thesis or theme
  • The examples provided by each author to assert the theme
  • See if you can determine which essay uses “multiple” examples (a series of brief examples to illustrate or assert the thesis) and which essay uses “extended” examples (longer examples explained through multiple sentences or paragraphs)

“April & Paris”

In “April & Paris,” writer David Sedaris explores the unique impact of animals on the human psyche.

Click on the link to view the essay: “April & Paris” by David Sedaris

As you read, look for the following:

• The author’s primary thesis or theme
  • The examples provided by the author to assert the theme
  • See if you can determine which essay uses “multiple” examples (a series of brief examples to illustrate or assert the thesis) and which essay uses “extended” examples (longer examples explained through multiple sentences or paragraphs)
The Purpose of Compare/Contrast in Writing

Comparison in writing discusses elements that are similar, while contrast in writing discusses elements that are different. A compare-and-contrast essay, then, analyzes two subjects by comparing them, contrasting them, or both.

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

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

The Structure of a Compare/Contrast Essay

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**Phrases of Comparison and Contrast**
Writing an Compare/Contrast Essay

First choose whether you want to compare seemingly disparate subjects, contrast seemingly similar subjects, or compare and contrast subjects. Once you have decided on a topic, introduce it with an engaging opening paragraph. Your thesis should come at the end of the introduction, and it should establish the subjects you will compare, contrast, or both as well as state what can be learned from doing so.

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

After you finish analyzing the subjects, write a conclusion that summarizes the main points of the essay and reinforces your thesis.

Compare/Contrast Essay Example

Comparing and Contrasting London and Washington, DC
By Scott McLean in Writing for Success
Both Washington, DC, and London are capital cities of English-speaking countries, and yet they offer vastly different experiences to their residents and visitors. Comparing and contrasting the two cities based on their history, their culture, and their residents show how different and similar the two are.

Both cities are rich in world and national history, though they developed on very different time lines. London, for example, has a history that dates back over two thousand years. It was part of the Roman Empire and known by the similar name, Londinium. It was not only one of the northernmost points of the Roman Empire but also the epicenter of the British Empire where it held significant global influence from the early sixteenth century on through the early twentieth century. Washington, DC, on the other hand, has only formally existed since the late eighteenth century. Though Native Americans inhabited the land several thousand years earlier, and settlers inhabited the land as early as the sixteenth century, the city did not become the capital of the United States until the 1790s. From that point onward to today, however, Washington, DC, has increasingly maintained significant global influence. Even though both cities have different histories, they have both held, and continue to hold, significant social influence in the economic and cultural global spheres.

Both Washington, DC, and London offer a wide array of museums that harbor many of the world’s most prized treasures. While Washington, DC, has the National Gallery of Art and several other Smithsonian galleries, London’s art scene and galleries have a definite edge in this category. From the Tate Modern to the British
National Gallery, London’s art ranks among the world’s best. This difference and advantage has much to do with London and Britain’s historical depth compared to that of the United States. London has a much richer past than Washington, DC, and consequently has a lot more material to pull from when arranging its collections. Both cities have thriving theater districts, but again, London wins this comparison, too, both in quantity and quality of theater choices. With regard to other cultural places like restaurants, pubs, and bars, both cities are very comparable. Both have a wide selection of expensive, elegant restaurants as well as a similar amount of global and national chains. While London may be better known for its pubs and taste in beer, DC offers a different bar-going experience. With clubs and pubs that tend to stay open later than their British counterparts, the DC nightlife tend to be less reserved overall. Both cities also share and differ in cultural diversity and cost of living. Both cities share a very expensive cost of living—both in terms of housing and shopping. A downtown one-bedroom apartment in DC can easily cost $1,800 per month, and a similar “flat” in London may double that amount. These high costs create socioeconomic disparity among the residents. Although both cities’ residents are predominantly wealthy, both have a significantly large population of poor and homeless. Perhaps the most significant difference between the resident demographics is the racial makeup. Washington, DC, is a "minority majority" city, which means the majority of its citizens are races other than white. In 2009, according to the US Census, 55 percent of DC residents were classified as “Black or African American” and 35 percent of its residents were classified as “white.” London, by contrast, has very few minorities—in 2006, 70 percent of its population was “white,” while only 10 percent was “black.” The racial demographic differences between the cities is drastic. Even though Washington, DC, and London are major capital cities of English-speaking countries in the Western world, they have many differences along with their similarities. They have vastly different histories, art cultures, and racial demographics, but they remain similar in their cost of living and socioeconomic disparity.

**KEY TAKEAWAYS**

- A compare-and-contrast essay analyzes two subjects by either comparing them, contrasting them, or both.
- The purpose of writing a comparison or contrast essay is not to state the obvious but rather to illuminate subtle differences or unexpected similarities between two subjects.
- The thesis should clearly state the subjects that are to be compared, contrasted, or both, and it should state what is to be learned from doing so.
- There are two main organizing strategies for compare-and-contrast essays.

1. Organize by the subjects themselves, one then the other.
2. Organize by individual points, in which you discuss each subject in relation to each point.

- Use phrases of comparison or phrases of contrast to signal to readers how exactly the two subjects are being analyzed.

**COMPARE/ CONTRAST EXAMPLES**

“Friending, Ancient or Otherwise”

In “Friending, Ancient or Otherwise,” writer Alex Wright explores the evolution and purpose of friendship in the age of social media.
Click on the link to view the essay: “Friending, Ancient or Otherwise” by Alex Wright

As you read, look for the following:

• What “points for comparison” does the author use?
• How does the author go beyond the obvious similarities and differences to surface interesting ideas and insights?

SUMMARY & RESPONSE ESSAYS

Summaries, Analyses, and Responses

In order to write well, you need to practice good reading skills. You can’t expect to understand something just by glancing over it once. **You need to read it once** to get the general sense of the article, and **then read it again** more carefully, looking for the main point and the key supporting points. By **reading it a third or even a fourth time** you should be able to develop a very good sense of the author’s intention and method of supporting his or her main ideas to effectively get the message across.

A thorough and complete reading will enable you to do several things with the article: you’ll be able to **summarize** the article, you’ll be aware of the author’s intended audience and purpose, you’ll make your own personal connections to the article, you’ll be able to **organize** it yourself and consider the strength or value or even the weaknesses of the article. You’ll also be able to consider using the author’s work to **support your own ideas**.

Your entire class may be assigned to read the same article. **We'll use a sample article for this exercise so you can get the hang of the SAR.** Read the article with the intention of actually understanding it and connecting to it. For example, all of us tend to do more than one thing at a time. It’s called multi-tasking, and depending on what combination of tasks you’re doing, it may be effective or it may not. Alina Tugend discusses the dangers of multi-tasking in an article she wrote for the New York Times. You can practice summarizing and responding and analyzing Tugend’s article in this section. Then, when you do your own research for a project for class, you’ll know how to go about the same process. **Tugend’s article is found here:** [http://www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/featured_articles/20081029wednesday.html](http://www.nytimes.com/learning/teachers/featured_articles/20081029wednesday.html)

Read the article with an open mind. You’ll come to it, of course, with some sense of understanding of multi-tasking. You may consider yourself an excellent multi-tasker, or you may think you’re lousy at it. It’s ok. Just read the article.

You’ll have an opinion, of course, but leave that opinion aside for right now. You’ll be able to express it later. You want to construct a Summary of the article before you write a reaction to it.

Here are a few things to consider as you read through the article:

• What’s the initial hook?
• How does the intro shift into the body?
• How is the body organized?
• What connections are made?
• How does the conclusion look back to the introduction
• Is the take-away worth the wait?
The hook

How are you drawn into the article? Is it by the title? Does the opening sentence attract you? Is there a photo or graphic that draws your eye? What catches your attention?

The shift

Getting hooked isn’t enough. Once the author has introduced the topic, a shift occurs. The writer must develop the thesis and draw you further into the body of the article. Do you stay hooked or do you quickly lose interest? If you’ve lost interest, what happened? If you stay hooked, what’s going on?

The organization

Good fishermen bait their hooks with a fat worm dangling enticingly. And once a fish grabs on, that worm had better have some content to it or the fish will try to get rid of it. We can take this analogy only so far, because if you’re a fish, you’re caught and doomed to the frying pan. Instead, you as a reader have a choice: go for the bait and hang on for the duration, or move to the next article and check out its content. How is the article organized? Does the writer move clearly from one point to another, building on that initial enticing hook by stating the main ideas to you, and then developing each of those main ideas with strong examples and details?

A fish isn’t very discerning, and never having eaten a worm, I can’t discuss the attributes one worm may have over another, but we all get hungry and we all want to eat. So let’s see the organization of an article from the perspective of a meal in a restaurant: the hook is what gets you into the restaurant, and the shift is the focus on the menu. If you find what you want, you expect to be fed, right? Now the food comes to the table. If dessert comes first, and the steak comes before the soup or salad, obviously something’s wrong with the organization. But if everything comes in the order as expected (as indicated on the menu), but the vegetables are cold or flavorless and the steak is tough, you know you made the wrong choice. Finally, if the server doesn’t pay attention to your needs, everyone who knows you learns why you won’t be back at the restaurant again.

How is your article organized? Since we’re using Tugend’s article throughout these samples, consider how she delivers each point to her readers. It’s your job to look for the delivery, but since you’ve already summarized the article, you know the main points being made and you know how those points are delivered to the reader in the topic sentences or focal points. What follows are details that connect the unfamiliar to the familiar in the mind of the reader.

The connections

The author develops her ideas and connects them to her thesis by using strong sources. She makes a point, and then delivers it neatly on a serving plate with source support and details. Her point is strengthened not just by her own ideas but by the way she incorporates the ideas of others. When we use sources to strengthen our ideas, we help our readers understand. Tugend does this effectively with her sources, and you can write effectively if you use your sources well. When you analyze an article, be sure to check for the author’s effective use of source support.

The short version of this comes from the 12th-century philosophy Bernard of Chartres, who claimed that we see further by “standing on the shoulders of giants.” Everyone from Sir Isaac Newton to George Santayana has said this. In fact, an old country song contains a lyric about getting out of a pick-up truck in West Texas, standing on a can of tuna, and seeing for hundreds of miles. Consider this a good way to remind you to use sources!

The conclusion

A strong conclusion should never bring in new material, but should instead remind the reader of where the idea began and suggest where it should lead. Tugend doesn’t just leave the reader with a wealth of details gleaned from credible sources. Tugend tells the reader that multi-tasking can only be effective if it is done in ways that support the task. She draws the reader into her conclusion by stating “So the next time…..” as a reminder that we all fall into the pit of multi-tasking, but we can pull ourselves up by reminding ourselves of those very things that
have been expressed throughout the entire article. The conclusion brings effective closure to the article. It doesn’t start a new point, but it draws the article to a close. Check out “conclude” in a thesaurus. You’ll find some good synonyms for the word, including “put to bed” and “bring down the curtain.” Get the picture? End. Finale. Finito. The party’s over. Don’t come back.

The take-away

If the party is over, was it a good party? Was it worth attending? Was it memorable? Will you talk about it later? The best take-away for any article you read is to be able to use some of the material yourself in your own writing. Make your own point, using the words of the author you read. Stand on some shoulders, will you? That’s what those giants are there for, after all.

Summary

- Find something interesting to read
- Read it carefully
- Highlight the main points
- Create an outline
- Verify the author’s credibility
- Determine who the intended reading audience is
- Write about each point in your own words

Read the article all the way through. Set it aside and think about it. Then read it again. This time, using a pen or highlighter, underline the main points in each paragraph. Focus on what Tugend is telling her reader in each paragraph.

Once you’ve highlighted or underlined the main points of each paragraph, copy those sentences onto paper. You’ll be making list of the focus of each paragraph.

Then look at your list. You’ll notice that the points follow some kind of order. Tugend may connect several points together in a few paragraphs. Circle or block together those points that seem to connect to each other. What’s the overall thrust of each group of paragraphs? Her overall thrust is a major point for that part of the article. Give that block of points a title. This is one main point of the article.

As you do this, you’ll notice that your grouping begins to look like an outline of sorts. It is. You’ve just outlined Tugend’s article. The main points are used as a standard to then provide the details and examples that are shown in the paragraphs of Tugend’s article. If you were to make a presentation on multi-tasking in a public speaking class, you could use her article alone to inform your audience of multi-tasking. Don’t do this, though. Repeating someone else’s ideas without including your own or giving credit is, of course, plagiarism. And you don’t want the plagiarism beast to follow you around. It’s nasty.

So, you’ve got an outline. This is the first step to creating a summary. From here on, it’s easy sailing!

Since summaries are often used in research writing, always check out the author. For a start, Google the author’s name. You’ll learn about the author’s credibility, professional work, and publications. A summary should provide a brief overview of the author. “Alina Tugend is a columnist for the New York times” is a good way to start, but you’ll be able to add a little more information about her in your own summary. You can state the name of the article and when and where it was published as well.

Credibility

Do some leg-work. Find out what you can about the author. Who is she and what has she written and where has she been published? Is the publication in which she has written a credible venue – is it a respected and responsible journal or book publisher, based on its own publication history? What makes the author qualified to write about the topic she has chosen? Alina Tugend wouldn’t be considered “an expert multi-tasker,” but she does have the backing of the New York Times. As a columnist for that world-renowned newspaper she has no doubt established herself over a period of years as one who can clearly identify a subject, research it thoroughly, write with clarity to a selected group of people, and connect with that audience on a level that makes people want to
read her column. Since she has other publishing credits, she is known by the publishing community and is respected by her peers. She is considered a trustworthy source of information. And the New York Times is no fly-by-night scrap of yellow journalism; it was founded in 1851 and has published almost 60,000 issues for over 160 years. Its readership is worldwide. You can examine The New York Times digital edition at http://www.nytimes.com/.

**Audience**

Who is likely to read the article in question? Consider the demographics of the intended reader: age level, educational level, family/work/responsibility/profession interests. Do you think that the audience likely to be made up of people who are open or closed to new information and ideas or are settled with the ideas they currently have? What makes you think this? Check out the language used: the terminology being used, the complexity or simplicity of sentence structure, the length of the article and the main focus. What readers are most likely to be interested in the article?

**Write about each point**

Look back at the outline you've created and the author and audience information. What is the topic of the article? State it in your own words. What is the author’s main purpose in writing this? Why is it important to her? What’s her “thesis point”? Her thesis connects to the overall point of the article. Next, identify those main points that you titled in your outline. A summary briefly lists the author’s main points. Finally, examine the conclusion. What is the take-away the author provides to the reader?

A summary leaves your own ideas out and merely identifies the author’s thesis and purpose and main points.

**Analysis**

An Analysis is quite different from a Summary. In order to analyze an article you will reflect on those things you did for the summary, including the following:

- The author’s credibility and the credibility of the publication, and
- The intended audience

The Analysis takes into account other details about the article you’re studying. In an analysis, you move from making note of credibility and audience to figuring out particulars of the essay. These particulars include the following. You should be able to:

- Comment on the author’s effective (or not) use of source material,
- Determine whether or not the author has been able to demonstrate or share multiple perspectives or views on the topic, and
- Consider whether or not the article adds to the body of current knowledge on the topic. This is based on research you may be doing on the topic and your experience with that body of research.

Be reminded that you have already examined the following in your Summary. Now, in the Analysis, you’ll develop your ideas more thoroughly.

Your Analysis should examine the article from your own perspective. You’re not merely summarizing; you’re connecting to the article. You’ll examine these points in detail, but you’ll only need to make brief responses to each in writing. An Analysis need not be long, and it need not focus on each part equally. These points are provided, because they are all of value, but as you gain expertise in analyzing the words of others you’ll learn to focus in on the most essential elements of an analysis for the sake of your own purpose.

For example, if you’re reading a work by a well-known author whose list of publishing credits is extensive, you may assume the credibility of the author. If the article is specifically written to a particular group that is identified, you don’t need to analyze the audience. If the sources are well-documented and extensive, then you may not need to go over them with a magnifying glass!
You must be able to clearly connect to the author’s thesis and main points and you must be able to explain those points so you can share what you’ve read with others.

**Use of Sources**

Has the author used sources to support her ideas? What types of sources have been used? Where were the sources published? Are those publications reliable? You need to look back and see what information was gathered and how it was used to support the point the author is making. Is the author using the source material as it was originally intended, or has she twisted or misshaped the material to suit herself? In popular publications (newspapers and magazines) the writer provides in-text information about sources. In academic and professional writing (journals and books) an MLA Works Cited, an APA References, or a bibliography list is provided at the end of an article or book.

**Multiple Perspectives**

Does the author strive to inform or persuade using a variety of views and positions? Recognizing that there is no single correct solution to almost any problem, credible writers will share multiple viewpoints in order to open the readers’ eyes to the many ways of seeing an issue, and then focus in on what the author feels is the most effective way of considering a solution to the problem. An author often shows multiple perspectives by stating, “Some people argue…. while other….” “One view holds …. Another writer suggests …. “By examining the varied positions held by others we can see that …."

**Worthwhile**

Having carefully studied the author’s own credibility and connection to audience, as well as her thesis, main points, perspective, and use of sources, you must finally determine whether or not the article adds significantly to your own understanding of the topic. Does it also contribute to the body of information available on this topic? If the article merely rehashes the ideas of one or two people without using those ideas to see the issue from another perspective, then perhaps the article has not contributed to the body of work currently available. In the long run, if no contribution has been made, then the article will fall by the wayside.

**Response**

You’ve summarized an article, you’ve carefully analyzed the article, and now you must respond to the article. Tugend’s own article is in response to her sources. When you research a topic for the sake of writing a research paper, you must develop your own thesis based on your original idea and the source materials that you have read in connection with your idea. You work together with those sources to bring your ideas to the table in a new way. In responding to sources, you:

- Support your ideas with facts from those sources
- Make sure you haven't changed the source’s original purpose

Imagine you have all of your sources around a table. You start the conversation by posing your original idea. You may ask your sources to share their perspective on the idea. Each one does. Some agree with each other; some disagree; some argue with each other. You listen and you take it all in and you decide what you’re going to do. Should you change your original idea? Maybe you were asking the wrong thing. Or maybe you need to qualify your original idea. Your original thesis may need some tweaking, based on what your sources have to say.

Based on your own purpose for writing to the audience most appropriate, you’ll respond to those sources around the table. “Mr. So-And-So, you state this …. But if I’m to implement this then certain things need to happen. Ms. Know-It-All suggests this …. So if we combine these two factors, then what I’m proposing should work. I think Dr. Ya-Da-Ya-Da tried that already, or something similar. If it worked for him in his situation, then it should work for me.”

You see, it’s fairly simple to respond if you think of your single source as being face-to-face with you. Respond to each source separately. Then group them together and consider how you’ll make use of them. Tugend undoubtedly interviewed each of her sources or read articles from each source, thought about them in relation to
her thesis, and then incorporated their ideas into hers in order to strengthen her own thesis. The result was an article that would appeal to people who may be frustrated with the issue of multi-tasking.

Put it all together!

A very simple combination of the SAR is the annotated bibliography. This is usually a separate assignment for a research project, but it’s a good idea to mention it here, because annotations use all three parts of the SAR in brief form. Those annotations can remind you of the good sources you found.

When you read a source that you may want to use in a research project, you must summarize it, analyze it, and respond to it. This can be done in a three-paragraph annotation, which includes the following:

- Full documentation of source
- One paragraph summary of the source’s thesis and main points.
- A second paragraph states how you might connect particular points made by the author to your own understanding of the argument situation that you are addressing.
- A third paragraph should state how you may be able to use specific things from the source to support a point you will be making in your paper.
UNIT 5: HOW WE RESEARCH

RESEARCH OVERVIEW

The next few modules of the course address one problem (the same problem). You will learn how to investigate and solve a problem by researching the problem, reporting the data, and offering solutions.

The problem must be a practical problem, one in which you have a personal impact on solving. First, you will collect analysis and recommend solutions to the problem. Second, you will gather external research on how companies like yours solved similar problems and report your findings. Third, you will compile the findings from your investigation into a Feasibility Report or Proposal on solving the problem. Fourth and last, you will write a Persuasive PowerPoint Presentation that outlines your research solutions.

Remember that this is not a typical research paper, where you research an issue and simply report the research. Therefore, do not choose issues like changing laws, fighting wars, drug usage, or global warming, among others. While these are important issues and you can certainly offer solutions, they are too broad for you to have a personal effect on their changing. They would fit the definition of writing a typical research paper to research the issue and write a research paper reporting your findings.

Your problem for this course needs to be a practical problem, one in which you will have a personal effect on changing. The problem does not need to be a real problem. You can create a scenario and work from that. We will develop and narrow our problems together as the course progresses.
DEMYSTIFY RESEARCH METHODS

“Demystify Research Methods” was written by Joseph M. Moxley

Research Myths

Critique research myths that may be impairing your ability to locate, evaluate, and use information.

If you are like most people, you have some definite ideas about what research is. You may envision a pale figure in a white lab coat bent over a microscope or a beaker of bubbling liquid. Perhaps you imagine this isolated and humorless figure engaged in tedious procedures, carefully recorded on graph paper or reduced to inscrutable formulas scrawled in notebooks. Given a few moments, you might expand this vision of research to include a khaki-clad archaeologist digging for relics in the desert or a tweed-jacketed professor studying musty manuscripts in a dusty corner of the library.

These visions of imaginary researchers probably seem disconnected from your personal experience with research. Your first encounter with the term “research” may have been in the form of an English class assignment that required you to write a paper of a specified number of words in which you referenced a minimum number of sources using correct bibliographic citations. You may have spent a few uncomfortable hours in the library searching for material that had some bearing on the topic of your paper, then tried to collect bits and pieces from these sources into a more-or-less coherent whole without committing an obvious act of plagiarism. As you struggled with the apparently contradictory requirements to base your paper on the work of others but say something new, you probably wondered what this assignment had to do with “research.”

Five Misconceptions About Research

None of these visions accurately represent the research process. Most people have a distorted picture of what researchers do. They tend to view research as tedious, repetitious, dull, and irrelevant to most of our immediate practical concerns. In fact, research should be the opposite. In order to envision research as interesting, exciting, and fun, you may need to dispel some common misconceptions about where research is done, who does it, and what it entails.

• Misconception #1: Research is conducted in a laboratory.
• Misconception #2: Research is for eggheads.
• Misconception #3: Research has little to do with everyday life.
• Misconception #4: Researchers across disciplines agree about what constitutes effective research.
• Misconception #5: Researchers think, research, and then write.

Misconception #1: Research Is Conducted In A Laboratory

Whether we realize it or not, most of us have acquired our understanding of research from the images presented by popular culture. Mary Shelley’s Frankenstein, for example, has provided one of the most dramatic and enduring representations of laboratory research. Contemporary films like Outbreak suggest an updated version of the researcher, still white-coated but now isolated from normal social contact by the need for extraordinary anticontamination precautions. Perhaps because it is unfamiliar and, therefore, potentially dangerous, the
laboratory offers a more dramatic setting for fictional accounts than other, more accessible research environments.

Of course, some kinds of research require the controlled environments that laboratories provide. The medical research that developed the antibiotics and pain relievers your doctor prescribed that last time you had the flu was conducted in a laboratory. And most of the commercially produced consumer products you use every day—from paint to cereal to hand lotion—undergo testing and refining in some sort of laboratory. But laboratory research is only one particular kind of research.

In reality, research is conducted everywhere. You may have noticed an amiable young person with a clipboard stopping shoppers in the local mall to ask questions about their buying preferences. That person was conducting research. The best-selling account of Lewis and Clark’s explorations is the result of research, as is the Thursday night lineup of your favorite TV shows, the design of your computer desk, the pattern of the traffic flow through your neighborhood, and the location of the nearest restaurant. None of the research that produced these results was conducted in a laboratory.

If, for example, you are interested in investigating how people behave in natural situations and under normal conditions, you cannot expect to gather information in a laboratory. In other words, the questions researchers are trying to answer and the methods they select for answering these questions will determine where the research is conducted. Research is carried out wherever researchers must go to collect the information they need.

**Misconception #2: Research Is for Eggheads**

Just as images from popular culture have influenced our ideas about where research is conducted, pop culture has also created some persistent stereotypes of researchers. In addition to the rather demonic Dr. Frankenstein, you may also think of friendlier, if slightly addled eggheads like the professor on Gilligan’s Island, the Jerry Lewis or Eddie Murphy version of *The Nutty Professor*, or the laughable Disney character, Professor Ludwig von Drake. These images all reinforce the notion of researchers as absentminded eccentrics, engrossed in highly technical, specialized projects that most of us cannot understand.

However, just as research can be carried out almost anywhere, anyone can be a researcher. Asking questions about your friend’s new romance, gathering evidence of who she was seen with, making deductions based on her new style of dress, and spreading the word about your conclusions is a form of research. These activities don’t sound like research to most people because they have not been expressed in academic language. But what if the activities were organized into a research project titled “The Psychosocial Determinants of Gender Relations in Postmodern Dating Culture: A Psychoanalytic Approach”? The point, of course, is not to suggest that gossip qualifies as legitimate research but rather that everyone employs the investigative and exploitative elements of research to make sense of their lives. Research is not just for “eggheads.”

**Misconception #3: Research Has Little to Do with Everyday Life**

While the first two misconceptions concern where research is done and who does it, the third misconception misrepresents the subject matter of research. Because some research focuses on very narrow questions and relies on highly technical knowledge, people often assume that all research must be hard to understand and unrelated to everyday concerns.

However, research need not be difficult to understand, and research is an activity that is defined by its method, not by its subject. In other words, it is true that some significant research is difficult for nonspecialists to understand. Yet all research is valuable to the extent that it affects everyday life.

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/MSShNSgOAR0

Research takes many forms, but it always entails a search, conducted carefully and diligently, aimed at the discovery and interpretation of new knowledge. Thus, how you go about gathering information, analyzing data, drawing conclusions, and sharing results determines whether your activities qualify as research. Sometimes these activities will be informal, spontaneous, and intuitive, as when you infer that your friend has a new romance or when you read reviews in a computer magazine before purchasing new software. In school and in the workplace, where results are disseminated and evaluated by others, research is likely to be more formal. Regardless of its
final form, however, whenever you systematically gather information for the purpose of generating new knowledge, you are conducting research.

Misconception #4: Researchers Across Disciplines Agree About What Constitutes Effective Research

Academic disciplines—for example, mathematics, psychology, physics, engineering, or business—have different ways of conducting and evaluating research. An anthropologist’s account of kinship patterns in a tribe of Native Americans bears almost no resemblance to a cognitive psychologist’s investigation of sensory responses to light stimuli. Even within a particular academic discipline, researchers may disagree over what makes good research.

Not only do people disagree about appropriate methods of research, but their ideas may change over time. Conceptions about knowledge, available technologies, and research practices influence each other and change constantly. For example, capturing gorillas and studying them in cages might have been considered good research in the 1920s. The work of later researchers like Dian Fossey, however, demonstrated how animals might be better understood in their natural environment. Today, research based on observations of wild animals in captivity would gain little support or interest.

Because no one way of doing research is equally acceptable to all researchers in all academic disciplines, researchers must select the methodology that will be most persuasive to their readers.

Misconception #5: Researchers Think, Research, and Then Write

When you first begin a research project, you are wise to integrate writing activities with research activities. Unfortunately, many people wrongly separate the research process from the writing process. They naively assume they should first think about a topic, identify a research question, research it, and then—after all of the excitement is drained from the project—write it up. Rather than using the generative power of writing (that is, our ability to generate new ideas by writing) to help define and energize a research project, some people delay writing until after they have completed the research. Waiting to write about a research project until you’re done researching may waste your time and can result in dull, listless prose.

You can save time and ensure that your research is focused by writing summaries of others’ research, by writing drafts of your research goals, and by writing about the results you hope to find before you find them. In the process, you will eliminate vague or contradictory ideas you may have about your project.

Incorporating writing into your research activities helps you identify your rhetorical situation and define your readers’ priorities. Writing about your project in its early stages gives you time to develop ways of describing your research that are comprehensible and interesting to your audience. As you redraft and revise, your writing—and your thinking—will become clearer, more precise, and thus more credible. We can all take a lesson in the importance of making your research your own from Gary Starkweather, who built a laser printer that made billions of dollars for Xerox and helped change the way business is done all over the world. The experience taught him several things:

• It’s better to try and fail than to decide something can’t be done and not try at all. Research is a place where failure should be, if not encouraged, at least viewed as a sign that something’s happening. Uncertainty is bad for manufacturing, but essential for research.

• Believe in your own ideas and don’t trim your sails just to be popular with your colleagues. Howard Aiken, inventor of the first digital computer, said: “If it’s truly a good idea, you’ll have to jam it down their throats.”

• Be open to suggestion. Often someone who hasn’t stared at a problem until they went cross-eyed has the fresh view that can solve it. The best way to a breakthrough is constant small improvement — those waiting for the big break are just lazy; they’re waiting to be teleported to the top of the hill instead of walking.
You might want to try some of the following:

In a couple of paragraphs describe a research project or a paper you have written in the past that you felt was interesting, fun, or successful. Try to identify what made the project appealing. Why did it spark your interest? Did you develop the idea yourself, did someone help you, or was it assigned? How did your readers respond to your work? Why do you think they acted that way? Do you feel it might be worthwhile to build on the work you completed earlier by digging deeper into the subject? In what ways did your attitude influence the way you conducted and wrote your research? How can you take advantage of your experience in order to enjoy future projects? What additional misconceptions about research can you identify?

To develop a better understanding of the research process, maintain a journal of your activities and thoughts while you conduct a research project.
any particular books you should use in writing your paper or the names of any authors who have written about your topic? How long should your paper be (longer works may require more, or more varied, evidence)? What themes or topics come up in the text of the prompt? Our handout on understanding writing assignments can help you interpret your assignment. It’s also a good idea to think over what has been said about the assignment in class and to talk with your instructor if you need clarification or guidance.

WHAT MATTERS TO INSTRUCTORS?

Instructors in different academic fields expect different kinds of arguments and evidence—your chemistry paper might include graphs, charts, statistics, and other quantitative data as evidence, whereas your English paper might include passages from a novel, examples of recurring symbols, or discussions of characterization in the novel. Consider what kinds of sources and evidence you have seen in course readings and lectures. You may wish to see whether the Writing Center has a handout regarding the specific academic field you’re working in—for example, literature, sociology, or history.

WHAT ARE PRIMARY AND SECONDARY SOURCES?

A note on terminology: many researchers distinguish between primary and secondary sources of evidence (in this case, “primary” means “first” or “original,” not “most important”). Primary sources include original documents, photographs, interviews, and so forth. Secondary sources present information that has already been processed or interpreted by someone else. For example, if you are writing a paper about the movie “The Matrix,” the movie itself, an interview with the director, and production photos could serve as primary sources of evidence. A movie review from a magazine or a collection of essays about the film would be secondary sources. Depending on the context, the same item could be either a primary or a secondary source: if I am writing about people’s relationships with animals, a collection of stories about animals might be a secondary source; if I am writing about how editors gather diverse stories into collections, the same book might now function as a primary source.

WHERE CAN I FIND EVIDENCE?

Here are some examples of sources of information and tips about how to use them in gathering evidence. Ask your instructor if you aren’t sure whether a certain source would be appropriate for your paper.

Print and electronic sources

Books, journals, websites, newspapers, magazines, and documentary films are some of the most common sources of evidence for academic writing. Our handout on evaluating print sources will help you choose your print sources wisely, and the library has a tutorial on evaluating both print sources and websites. A librarian can help you find sources that are appropriate for the type of assignment you are completing. Just visit the reference desk at Davis or the Undergraduate Library or chat with a librarian online (the library’s IM screen name is undergradref).

Observation

Sometimes you can directly observe the thing you are interested in, by watching, listening to, touching, tasting, or smelling it. For example, if you were asked to write about Mozart’s music, you could listen to it; if your topic was how businesses attract traffic, you might go and look at window displays at the mall.

Interviews

An interview is a good way to collect information that you can’t find through any other type of research. An interview can provide an expert’s opinion, biographical or first-hand experiences, and suggestions for further research.
Surveys

Surveys allow you to find out some of what a group of people thinks about a topic. Designing an effective survey and interpreting the data you get can be challenging, so it’s a good idea to check with your instructor before creating or administering a survey.

Experiments

Experimental data serve as the primary form of scientific evidence. For scientific experiments, you should follow the specific guidelines of the discipline you are studying. For writing in other fields, more informal experiments might be acceptable as evidence. For example, if you want to prove that food choices in a cafeteria are affected by gender norms, you might ask classmates to undermine those norms on purpose and observe how others react. What would happen if a football player were eating dinner with his teammates and he brought a small salad and diet drink to the table, all the while murmuring about his waistline and wondering how many fat grams the salad dressing contained?

Personal experience

Using your own experiences can be a powerful way to appeal to your readers. You should, however, use personal experience only when it is appropriate to your topic, your writing goals, and your audience. Personal experience should not be your only form of evidence in most papers, and some disciplines frown on using personal experience at all. For example, a story about the microscope you received as a Christmas gift when you were nine years old is probably not applicable to your biology lab report.

USING EVIDENCE IN AN ARGUMENT

Does evidence speak for itself?

Absolutely not. After you introduce evidence into your writing, you must say why and how this evidence supports your argument. In other words, you have to explain the significance of the evidence and its function in your paper. What turns a fact or piece of information into evidence is the connection it has with a larger claim or argument: evidence is always evidence for or against something, and you have to make that link clear.

As writers, we sometimes assume that our readers already know what we are talking about; we may be wary of elaborating too much because we think the point is obvious. But readers can’t read our minds: although they may be familiar with many of the ideas we are discussing, they don’t know what we are trying to do with those ideas unless we indicate it through explanations, organization, transitions, and so forth. Try to spell out the connections that you were making in your mind when you chose your evidence, decided where to place it in your paper, and drew conclusions based on it. Remember, you can always cut prose from your paper later if you decide that you are stating the obvious.

Here are some questions you can ask yourself about a particular bit of evidence:

1. O.k., I’ve just stated this point, but so what? Why is it interesting? Why should anyone care?
2. What does this information imply?
3. What are the consequences of thinking this way or looking at a problem this way?
4. I’ve just described what something is like or how I see it, but why is it like that?
5. I’ve just said that something happens—so how does it happen? How does it come to be the way it is?
6. Why is this information important? Why does it matter?
7. How is this idea related to my thesis? What connections exist between them? Does it support my thesis?
   If so, how does it do that?
8. Can I give an example to illustrate this point?

Answering these questions may help you explain how your evidence is related to your overall argument.
HOW CAN I INCORPORATE EVIDENCE INTO MY PAPER?

There are many ways to present your evidence. Often, your evidence will be included as text in the body of your paper, as a quotation, paraphrase, or summary. Sometimes you might include graphs, charts, or tables; excerpts from an interview; or photographs or illustrations with accompanying captions.

Quotations

When you quote, you are reproducing another writer’s words exactly as they appear on the page. Here are some tips to help you decide when to use quotations:

1. Quote if you can’t say it any better and the author’s words are particularly brilliant, witty, edgy, distinctive, a good illustration of a point you’re making, or otherwise interesting.
2. Quote if you are using a particularly authoritative source and you need the author’s expertise to back up your point.
3. Quote if you are analyzing diction, tone, or a writer’s use of a specific word or phrase.
4. Quote if you are taking a position that relies on the reader’s understanding exactly what another writer says about the topic.

Be sure to introduce each quotation you use, and always cite your sources. See our handout on quotations for more details on when to quote and how to format quotations.

Like all pieces of evidence, a quotation can’t speak for itself. If you end a paragraph with a quotation, that may be a sign that you have neglected to discuss the importance of the quotation in terms of your argument. It’s important to avoid “plop quotations,” that is, quotations that are just dropped into your paper without any introduction, discussion, or follow-up.

Paraphrasing

When you paraphrase, you take a specific section of a text and put it into your own words. Putting it into your own words doesn’t mean just changing or rearranging a few of the author’s words: to paraphrase well and avoid plagiarism, try setting your source aside and restating the sentence or paragraph you have just read, as though you were describing it to another person. Paraphrasing is different than summary because a paraphrase focuses on a particular, fairly short bit of text (like a phrase, sentence, or paragraph). You’ll need to indicate when you are paraphrasing someone else’s text by citing your source correctly, just as you would with a quotation.

When might you want to paraphrase?

1. Paraphrase when you want to introduce a writer’s position, but his or her original words aren’t special enough to quote.
2. Paraphrase when you are supporting a particular point and need to draw on a certain place in a text that supports your point—for example, when one paragraph in a source is especially relevant.
3. Paraphrase when you want to present a writer’s view on a topic that differs from your position or that of another writer; you can then refute writer’s specific points in your own words after you paraphrase.
4. Paraphrase when you want to comment on a particular example that another writer uses.
5. Paraphrase when you need to present information that’s unlikely to be questioned.

Summary

When you summarize, you are offering an overview of an entire text, or at least a lengthy section of a text. Summary is useful when you are providing background information, grounding your own argument, or mentioning a source as a counter-argument. A summary is less nuanced than paraphrased material. It can be the most effective way to incorporate a large number of sources when you don’t have a lot of space. When you are summarizing someone else’s argument or ideas, be sure this is clear to the reader and cite your source appropriately.
Statistics, data, charts, graphs, photographs, illustrations

Sometimes the best evidence for your argument is a hard fact or visual representation of a fact. This type of evidence can be a solid backbone for your argument, but you still need to create context for your reader and draw the connections you want him or her to make. Remember that statistics, data, charts, graph, photographs, and illustrations are all open to interpretation. Guide the reader through the interpretation process. Again, always, cite the origin of your evidence if you didn’t produce the material you are using yourself.

DO I NEED MORE EVIDENCE?

Let’s say that you’ve identified some appropriate sources, found some evidence, explained to the reader how it fits into your overall argument, incorporated it into your draft effectively, and cited your sources. How do you tell whether you’ve got enough evidence and whether it’s working well in the service of a strong argument or analysis? Here are some techniques you can use to review your draft and assess your use of evidence.

Make a reverse outline

A reverse outline is a great technique for helping you see how each paragraph contributes to proving your thesis. When you make a reverse outline, you record the main ideas in each paragraph in a shorter (outline-like) form so that you can see at a glance what is in your paper. The reverse outline is helpful in at least three ways. First, it lets you see where you have dealt with too many topics in one paragraph (in general, you should have one main idea per paragraph). Second, the reverse outline can help you see where you need more evidence to prove your point or more analysis of that evidence. Third, the reverse outline can help you write your topic sentences: once you have decided what you want each paragraph to be about, you can write topic sentences that explain the topics of the paragraphs and state the relationship of each topic to the overall thesis of the paper.

For tips on making a reverse outline, see our handout on organization.

Color code your paper

You will need three highlighters or colored pencils for this exercise. Use one color to highlight general assertions. These will typically be the topic sentences in your paper. Next, use another color to highlight the specific evidence you provide for each assertion (including quotations, paraphrased or summarized material, statistics, examples, and your own ideas). Lastly, use another color to highlight analysis of your evidence. Which assertions are key to your overall argument? Which ones are especially contestable? How much evidence do you have for each assertion? How much analysis? In general, you should have at least as much analysis as you do evidence, or your paper runs the risk of being more summary than argument. The more controversial an assertion is, the more evidence you may need to provide in order to persuade your reader.

Play devil's advocate, act like a child, or doubt everything

This technique may be easiest to use with a partner. Ask your friend to take on one of the roles above, then read your paper aloud to him/her. After each section, pause and let your friend interrogate you. If your friend is playing devil’s advocate, he or she will always take the opposing viewpoint and force you to keep defending yourself. If your friend is acting like a child, he or she will question every sentence, even seemingly self-explanatory ones. If your friend is a doubter, he or she won’t believe anything you say. Justifying your position verbally or explaining yourself will force you to strengthen the evidence in your paper. If you already have enough evidence but haven’t connected it clearly enough to your main argument, explaining to your friend how the evidence is relevant or what it proves may help you to do so.

COMMON QUESTIONS AND ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- I have a general topic in mind; how can I develop it so I’ll know what evidence I need? And how can I get ideas for more evidence? See our handout on brainstorming.
• Who can help me find evidence on my topic? Check out UNC Libraries.
• I’m writing for a specific purpose; how can I tell what kind of evidence my audience wants? See our handouts on audience, writing for specific disciplines, and particular writing assignments.
• How should I read materials to gather evidence? See our handout on reading to write.
• How can I make a good argument? Check out our handouts on argument and thesis statements.
• How do I tell if my paragraphs and my paper are well-organized? Review our handouts on paragraph development, transitions, and reorganizing drafts.
• How do I quote my sources and incorporate those quotes into my text? Our handouts on quotations and avoiding plagiarism offer useful tips.
• How do I cite my evidence? See the UNC Libraries citation tutorial.
• I think that I’m giving evidence, but my instructor says I’m using too much summary. How can I tell? Check out our handout on using summary wisely.
• I want to use personal experience as evidence, but can I say “I”? We have a handout on when to use “I.”

WORKS CONSULTED

We consulted these works while writing the original version of this handout. This is not a comprehensive list of resources on the handout’s topic, and we encourage you to do your own research to find the latest publications on this topic. Please do not use this list as a model for the format of your own reference list, as it may not match the citation style you are using. For guidance on formatting citations, please see the UNC Libraries citation tutorial.


http://www.lib.umd.edu/UES/library_guides_subject.html

RESEARCHING

Your Research Process

When you are given an assignment that requires you to conduct research, you should make an overall plan, choose search terms wisely, manage and evaluate the information you find, and make ethical choices regarding its use.
ORGANIZING RESEARCH PLANS

Organizing Research Plans

Learning Objectives

1. Know how to begin a research project by examining the assignment closely and considering the genre(s) you will use.
2. Understand how to make decisions about how and where you will research, what genre(s) you will use for writing, and how you will track your sources.
3. Know how to create a schedule and understand how to start and use a research log.

In Chapter 5 “Planning” and Chapter 6 “Drafting”, you learned about choosing and narrowing a topic to arrive at a thesis, and you learned that once you have 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.

- Organize your research
- Revisit your assignment
- Choose your genre(s)
- Decide how and where you will research
- Elect a writing venue
- Set up a method of documenting sources
- Determine your timeline
- Start a research log to track your ideas
- Research!

Choosing Your Genre(s)

Clarify whether your assignment is asking you to inform, to interpret, to solve a problem, or to persuade or some combination of these four genres. This table lists key imperative verbs that match up to each kind of assignment genre.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Words Suggesting an Informative Essay</th>
<th>Key Words Suggesting an Interpretive Essay</th>
<th>Key Words Suggesting a Persuasive Essay</th>
<th>Key Words Suggesting a Problem-Solving Essay</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• Explain</td>
<td>• Classify</td>
<td>• Interpret</td>
<td>• Take a position</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Define</td>
<td>• Analyze</td>
<td>• Defend</td>
<td>• Alleviate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Describe</td>
<td>• Compare</td>
<td>• Determine</td>
<td>• Assess</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

92
If the assignment does not give you a clear idea of genre through the imperative verbs it uses, ask your instructor for some guidance. This being college, it’s possible that genre, like some other matters, is being left up to you. In such a scenario, the genre(s) you adopt will depend on what you decide about your purposes for writing. The truth is, genres blend into each other in real writing for real audiences. For example, how can you “take a position” about a social issue like teen pregnancy without doing some reporting and offering some solutions? How can you offer solutions to problems like climate change without first reporting on the severity of the problem, arguing for the urgency of the need for solutions, arguing that your solution is the best of several proposals, and finally arguing for your solution’s feasibility and cost effectiveness?

Take the case of Jacoba, who is given the following inquiry-based research assignment, a genre of academic writing that is becoming increasingly common at the college level:

In an essay of at least twenty-five hundred words, I want you to explore a topic that means something to you but about which you do not yet have a clear opinion. Unlike other “research papers” you may have been asked to write in the past, you should not have a clear sense of your position or stance about your topic at the outset. Your research should be designed to develop your thinking about your topic, not to confirm an already held opinion, nor to find “straw men” who disagree with you and whose ideas you can knock down with ease.

Make no mistake, by the end of this process, if you have chosen a topic about which you’re really curious and if you research with an open mind, you will have plenty to say. The final product may be submitted in any number of forms (possibilities include an interpretive report, a problem-solving proposal, a manifesto-like position statement) but it must be grounded in source work and it must demonstrate your ability to incorporate other voices into your work and to document them appropriately (using MLA standards). And like any other writing we have done in this course so far, you are responsible for determining the audiences you want to reach and the purposes you want to achieve.

In this assignment, Jacoba and her classmates are intentionally given very little direct guidance and very few explicit instructions from their instructor about how to proceed. After some class discussion and some initial brainstorming on her own, she decides he wants to research and write about the crisis in solvency in Social Security. Prior to researching, she isn’t exactly sure how she feels about the issue, much less about an appropriate audience or purpose. She just knows she’s worried about her own aging parents and feels they deserve what’s coming to them. At the same time, she’s rankled that, in her early twenties, she has no expectation of ever seeing any of the money that’s been coming out of her paycheck every two weeks. The combination of uncertainty and interest she feels about the topic actually makes it ideal for this kind of inquiry-based research project.

Using the tips in Chapter 4 “Joining the Conversation”, Jacoba puts together two preliminary statements of purpose intentionally at odds with each other.

Table 7.1 Statement of Purpose I

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>I am writing as a daughter and young adult.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Message</td>
<td>I want to convey the message that we need to come up with realistic solutions for how Social Security needs to be fixed.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Audience  I want to write to people my parents’ age: 55 years old and up.

Attitude  My attitude toward the subject is positive toward Social Security and what it has meant to this country since the Great Depression.

Reception  I want my audience to have the tools they need to mobilize support for saving Social Security, for themselves, and for my generation.

Tone  My tone toward my readers will be concerned but determined to find solutions.

Table 7.2 Statement of Purpose II

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Voice</th>
<th>I am writing as a concerned and informed citizen and voter.</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Message</td>
<td>I want to convey the message that we need to come to terms with the fact that Social Security has outlived its usefulness and must be gradually phased out.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Audience</td>
<td>I want to write to members of Congress eager to reduce the size of government.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attitude</td>
<td>My attitude toward the subject is negative toward the strain Social Security is placing on our budget deficit.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Reception</td>
<td>I want my audience to have the tools they need to persuade their colleagues in Congress to develop the political will to phase out Social Security.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tone</td>
<td>My tone toward my readers will be respectful but assertive and persuasive.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Jacoba knows that these are just two of the possible purposeful paths she may take over the course of her research process. A change to any of the six elements of her chart will mean writing up another statement of purpose. Using a research log, she will periodically reflect on how each of the elements of her preliminary statements of purpose are affected by each new source she encounters.

Deciding How and Where You Will Research

Although you might think that you can accomplish all of your research online from the comfort of your home, you should at least begin by visiting your school library. Talk to a research librarian about your planned paper and get his or her advice. You will likely learn about some in-library sources that would be helpful. But you will also probably discover some online sources and procedures that will be very beneficial. Another technique you can use for learning about research options is to talk to fellow students who have recently completed research projects. As always, you might be surprised what you can learn by such networking. Primary sources, such as in-person interviews and observations, can add an interesting dimension to a researched essay. Determine if your essay could benefit from such sources.

Selecting a Writing Venue

Your writing venue might be predetermined for you. For example, you might be required to turn in a Microsoft Word file or you might be required to work on an online class site. Before you start, make sure you know how you will be presenting your final essay and if and how you are to present drafts along the way. Having to reroute your work along the way unnecessarily wastes time.
Setting Up a Method of Documenting Sources

You will need to document your sources as you research since you clearly do not want to have to revisit any of your sources to retrieve documentation information. Although you can use the traditional method of creating numbered source cards to which you tie all notes you take, it makes much more sense to create digital note cards. Most college library databases include options for keeping a record of your sources. Using these tools can save you time and make the research process easier. Such sites also allow you to take notes and tie each note to one of the citations. Make sure to explore the services that are available to you. If you haven’t seen a college library database in some time, you will be pleasantly surprised at all the time-saving features they provide.

You can also create your version of digital note cards simply by making a file with numbered citations and coding your notes to the citations. If you choose, you can go online and find a citation builder for assistance. Once you put a source’s information into the builder, you can copy and paste the citation into your citation file and into the citation list at the end of your paper. Your college library’s databases include tools that will help you build citations in American Psychological Association (APA), Modern Language Association (MLA), or other styles. Similar tools are also available with no college or university affiliation, but these tend to have ad content and can sometimes be less reliable. Another, less commercial option is an online writing lab (OWL). OWLs are college-level writing instruction sites managed by university writing programs and usually open to public use. The most famous and, according to many, still the best, is managed by the Purdue Writing Program: http://owl.english.purdue.edu. Bookmark this site on your computer for the rest of your college career. You won’t regret it.

Determining Your Timeline

Begin with the amount of time you have to complete your project. Create a research and writing schedule that can realistically fit into your life and allow you to generate a quality product. Then stick with your plan. As with many time consuming tasks, if you fall off your schedule, you are likely to find yourself having to work long hours or having to make concessions in order to finish in time. Since such actions will probably result in an end product of lesser quality, making and keeping a schedule is an excellent idea.

As a rule, when you make a schedule, it is best to plan to spend a little time each day as opposed to long blocks of time on a few days. Although, on a long project, you might find it beneficial to have some lengthy days, as a rule, long hours on a single project do not fit into one’s daily life very well.

As you schedule your time, plan for at least one spare day before the project is due as sort of an insurance policy. In other words, don’t set your schedule to include working through the last available minute. A spare day or two gives you some flexibility in case the process doesn’t flow along perfectly according to your plan.

If you plan to have others proofread your work, respectfully consider their schedules. You can’t make a plan that requires others to drop what they are doing to read your draft on your schedule.

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.

Key Takeaways

- When preparing to start a research paper, revisit your assignment to make sure you understand and remember all the guidelines. Then choose the writing genre that best fits the assignment guidelines and your statement of purpose. In some cases, you may elect to use a mix of writing to inform, to interpret, to persuade, and to solve a problem.
• As a rule, you should begin your research with a meeting with a college librarian to make sure you are aware of your research options. Also, as you begin a research project, you have to decide whether you will use a simple word processing document or a more complex format, such as an online class site set up by your instructor. At the very beginning of a project, you should also make a plan for documenting your sources so that you are organized from the start.

• Based on the desired length of your essay and the amount of research you have to do, plan a realistic schedule that you can follow. Create a research log to keep track of information you want to remember and address as you research.

Exercises

1. Describe your research plans for this sample assignment: 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. Describe your research plans for this assignment: In eight to ten double-spaced pages, take a stand on gay marriage and defend your position. Turn in a hard copy of your essay at the beginning of class one week from today. 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.

3. Describe your research plans for this assignment that is due at the end of the semester: Work with a team of four to six people and create an online collaboration site. Each of you should choose a different topic related to technology benefits and review the related information. Complete your first draft within at least four weeks left in the semester. Then have each of your teammates review and make suggestions and comment. Complete all peer reviewing prior to the last two weeks of the semester. Gather all the reviews and make edits as desired. Limit your final paper to thirty pages and publish it on the class site by the last day of the semester. 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.

4. For each of the above projects, work with your writing group to develop at least one preliminary statement of purpose (indicating voice, audience, message, tone, attitude, and reception). Then change at least one element of the six and revise the statement of purpose accordingly. (See Chapter 5 “Planning” for more on compiling a statement of purpose.)

**CHOOSING SEARCH TERMS**

Choosing Search Terms

Learning Objectives

1. Understand how to use synonyms and topic components to expand a search.
2. Know how to use multiple words, quotation marks, asterisks, question marks, and parentheses to improve your search results.
3. Recognize how to use “AND,” “OR,” and “NOT” to strengthen a keyword search.
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

Another technique you can use is to refine the presentation of your search terms using suggestions in the following table.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Use multiple words.</th>
<th>Use multiple words to more narrowly define your search.</th>
<th>renewable energy instead of energy</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Use quotation marks.</td>
<td>Place quotation marks around two or more words that you want to search for only in combination, never individually.</td>
<td>“renewable energy”</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use “AND” to connect words.</td>
<td>Use “AND” between words when you want to retrieve only articles that include both words.</td>
<td>algae AND energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use “OR” to choose one or the other.</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td>ethanol OR ethyl alcohol</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use “NOT” to eliminate likely options.</td>
<td>Use “NOT” to eliminate one category of ideas you know a search term will likely generate.</td>
<td>algae NOT food</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use “*” or “?” to include alternate word endings.</td>
<td>Use “*” or “?” to include a variety of word endings. This process is often called using a “wildcard.”</td>
<td>alternate* energy</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Use parentheses to combine multiple searches.</td>
<td>Use parentheses to combine multiple related terms into one single search using the different options presented in this table.</td>
<td>(renewable OR algae OR biofuel OR solar) AND energy</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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. When possible, copy and paste terms and links into your log. When you have to retype, take great care with spelling, spacing, and most of all, attributing direct quotations to their original source.

The aforementioned tips are general ideas for keyword searching. When you are searching within a database or a certain search engine, pay attention to any search tips or help screens that present methods that work well with the specific database or search engine. For example, you may have the option to narrow your search to “full text” entries only or to refine it to texts published within a certain time frame.

Key Takeaways

- A quick and easy way to increase your search results is to try synonyms of your initial search term, such as “ethanol” for “ethyl alcohol.” A similar step is to try components of an idea, such as “wood,” “ethanol,” and “algae” when you are searching for biofuel.
- You can use special techniques to more accurately target your search. Using multiple words will typically narrow your search more specifically to the information you want. For example, “ethyl alcohol” will bring up a wide range of uses of ethyl alcohol, such as fuel, drinking alcohol, chemistry, and lotions. A search for “ethyl alcohol as fuel” will limit the results to only the use of ethyl alcohol as fuel. Similarly, the use of quotation marks will limit search results to a complete term rather than to individual parts of a term. For example, within quotations, “algae energy” returns only results that include both words. Following a word with an asterisk or a question mark invites results including alternate endings of the word. And using parentheses allows you to combine multiple searches.
- Using “AND” allows you to make sure a search includes identified words. Inserting “OR” between two words lets you conduct two individual searches at once. Placing “NOT” between two words excludes all results including the second word.

Exercises

1. Write a search term you could use if you wanted to search for sites about the Eisenhower family, but not about Dwight Eisenhower.
2. Write a search term that would work to find sites about athlete graduation rates but not about nonathlete graduation rates or other information about athletes.
3. Brainstorm a list of search terms to use when researching the topic “television violence.” Include all the techniques from this section at least once. After finding at least ten sources, work with your writing group to develop at least three different statements of purpose (specifying your desired voice, audience, message, tone, attitude, and reception) for possible research projects of eight to ten pages. Discuss how the sources you found in each case affected your decisions about purpose.
Learning Objectives

1. Understand the value of your university library to you as a researcher.
2. Be aware of the different research options that are available online.
3. Know that you might find some field sources helpful in your research.
4. Be aware of other online tools that will help you in your research process.

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. If you are attending a traditional brick-and-mortar college, the quickest way to learn about your library options is to physically go to the library and meet with a librarian. If you are attending school mostly or completely online, look for online tutorials offered by your college library. 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. However, databases can take you only so far in your research. If you have questions that need quick answers, especially involving facts or statistics, there’s nothing wrong with using popular search engines like Google or even online encyclopedias like Wikipedia, provided you use them critically. Confirm the truth of the information you find by finding corroboration from at least two other sources, and follow up on the sources listed in the sites to which you are directed. For more on evaluating online sources, see Section 7.5 “Evaluating Sources”.

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. Some of these options include citation builders and writing guides, dictionaries, thesauruses, encyclopedias, RSS feeds (providing subscriptions to specific blogs and podcasts), collections of famous quotations, government data, stock photo collections, collaboratively produced wikis and websites, and much more. 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.

Key Takeaways

• You should use your school library services as a starting point for your research project. Your library staff can direct you to the most appropriate online databases for your project.
• The Internet includes a variety of directories, databases, and search engines that provide excellent sources for academic research.
• Some of the useful online tools for researchers include citation builders, dictionaries, thesauruses, RSS feeds, quotation sites, writing guides, government sites, stock photo collections, wikis, and blogs.
• Field sources, such as interviews, documents, observations, and events, often provide meaningful information for research papers.
Exercises

1. Provide contact information, including personal name(s), for school library staff you could turn to for help when you start a research project.

2. Using an annotated bibliography format, list five academic library databases and the URLs for five nonacademic sites that you could use to locate sources for a research paper. For each address, provide a paragraph explaining what the source offers.

3. Once you’ve gotten to know more about your library’s online databases, use what you already know about popular search engines to decide which would be an easier method of finding reliable, trustworthy sources for the following information: an academic database or a popular search engine?
   1. rates of military service in the United States since World War II
   2. arguments in favor of and against the existence of climate change
   3. studies on the effects of television viewing on infants
   4. average age of first marriage among men and women every year since 1960
   5. proposed solutions to unemployment
   6. the highest grossing films of the last twenty years

4. Indicate three research topics of interest to you. Then describe a field source for each topic that you could use as a resource.

CONDUCTING RESEARCH

Conducting Research

Learning Objectives

1. Understand that attitude and stamina are important when writing a research paper.
2. Grasp the importance of keeping an open mind and reading critically.
3. Know when to read a source completely and when to read selectively.
4. Understand that different genres require distinct kinds of 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. (See
Chapter 6 “Drafting”, Section 6.2 “Testing a Thesis” for more on how to test a thesis or topic for whether it is arguable.

Along with keeping an open mind (attitude) and keeping to a schedule (stamina), you should, of course, read critically, using some of the guidelines discussed in Chapter 2 “Becoming a Critical Reader”. In other words, you should evaluate the arguments and assumptions authors make and, when appropriate, present your evaluations within your paper. You can include biased information if you choose, but be certain to note the bias. This move might be appropriate in a persuasive essay if you are taking issue with a source with which you disagree. But be careful not to settle for too easy a target in such an essay. Don’t pick on a fringe voice in the opposing camp when there’s a more reasonable argument that needs to be dealt with fairly. If a source is simply too biased to be useful even as an opposing argument, then you may choose not to include it as part of your essay. Your basic principle of selection for a source, regardless of whether you agree with it as a matter of opinion, should be based on whether you think the information includes sound assumptions, meaningful evidence, and logical conclusions.

You also need to pose productive questions throughout the process, using some of the guidelines in Chapter 1 “Writing to Think and Writing to Learn”. If you are writing on a topic about which you already have a very clear stance, consider whether there is common ground you share with your ideological opponents that might lead to a more productive use of your time and theirs. In general, persuasive essays are more effective if they also solve problems instead of just staking out an inflexible position based on a core set of inflexible assumptions. 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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Old Question about Classic Topic</th>
<th>New Questions about Classic Topic</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| 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? |

**Key Takeaways**

- Attitude and stamina are key issues when writing a research paper.
- Attitude issues include keeping an open mind, reading critically, and handling biased information.
• Stamina issues include giving the needed time and energy and thoroughly reading all relevant sources.
• Good research processes also require the ability to read critically and pose productive questions, two of the composing habits of mind from Chapter 1 “Writing to Think and Writing to Learn”, Chapter 2 “Becoming a Critical Reader”, Chapter 3 “Thinking through the Disciplines”, and Chapter 4 “Joining the Conversation”.

Exercises

1. Choose a persuasive research topic of interest to you about which you already have a strong opinion. Find four sources:
   1. One that agrees with your stance and presents a nonbiased view
   2. One that agrees with your stance and presents a biased view
   3. One that disagrees with your stance and presents a nonbiased view
   4. One that disagrees with your stance and presents a biased view

2. For the two biased sources from question 1, print out a copy of each source or copy and paste the text into a Word document. In the margins, either by hand or by using Insert Comment, identify moments that help show why you consider each source to be biased.

3. Using the chart in Section 7.4 “Conducting Research” come up with questions to ask for each genre of a research essay for the following topics:
   1. Policies to combat global warming
   2. Decline in the marriage rate
   3. Impact of video games on student learning
   4. Gender roles in the middle school years
   5. Counterterrorism strategies in the current administration

EVALUATING SOURCES

Evaluating Sources

Learning Objectives

1. Know how to ascertain if the information a source offers is relevant to your topic and current enough to use.
2. Comprehend whether information is objective, reasonable and accurate.
3. Understand how to determine if a source is credible.

Returning to Jacoba’s project, we can see that each type of genre she might use to write her essay on Social Security will require different questions to ask, sources to pursue, evidence and support to use.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Genre</th>
<th>Informative Essays</th>
<th>Interpretive Essays</th>
<th>Persuasive Essays</th>
<th>Problem-Solving Essays</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Questions to ask</td>
<td>What are the present facts about Social Security and its solvency?</td>
<td>What has Social Security meant to American history, culture, politics, and government?</td>
<td>Should Social Security be saved or phased out?</td>
<td>Assuming it's worth saving, how can we preserve Social Security in a way that doesn't put us in more debt?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Types of sources</td>
<td>Government budget figures, projections, and reports</td>
<td>Historical records from the 1930s forward</td>
<td>Editorials and position papers from policy experts and think tanks</td>
<td>Articles and book-length works on fiscal policy and government entitlements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evidence and support</td>
<td>Demographics, actuarial tables, and economic statistics</td>
<td>Political speeches and advertisements, congressional and presidential records</td>
<td>Arguments from Social Security proponents and opponents</td>
<td>Policy recommendations and proposals</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The more Jacoba reflects on the kind of research she wants to spend her time conducting and the kind of writing she's most comfortable doing, the better off she'll be.

When you evaluate a source, you need to consider the seven core points shown in Figure 7.2.

Figure 7.2

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.

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.

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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>.edu</th>
<th>Educational</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>.com</td>
<td>Commercial, for-profit, business</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.gov</td>
<td>Government</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.mil</td>
<td>Military</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.net</td>
<td>Network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>.org</td>
<td>Not-for-profit organization</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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.
Key Takeaways

- A source is relevant to your topic if it supports your argument, adds a sense of authority to your argument, contributes background information, provides a different viewpoint, or offers key knowledge the audience will need. As a general rule, unless you are working with a subject that requires some historical research, a source should be no older than ten years.
- Information within a source needs to be accurate, reasonable, reliable, and objective. Accurate means that the facts are correct, reasonable means it makes basic sense to you, reliable means it is without bias or conflict of interest, and objective means it presents more than one viewpoint.
- A source is credible if the source has the expertise to present the information.

Exercises

1. Choose a research topic of interest to you. Find one source that is both related to the overall topic and relevant to your specific topic. Describe the relevant role the source could make (support, authority, background, viewpoints, or knowledge). Find a second source that is related to the overall topic but not as relevant to your specific topic.
2. Find a source that you think is not acceptable due to not being accurate, reasonable, reliable, or objective. Share the source with your classmates and explain why you have deemed the source as unacceptable.
3. Choose a research topic of interest to you. Find two sources with information that relate to your topic—one that is credible and one that is not credible. Explain what makes one credible and the other not credible.

TAKING NOTES

Taking Notes

Learning Objectives

1. Understand the three types of note taking and when to use each.
2. Know how to organize your notes and back up your work.
3. Plan to include your sources and take care not to plagiarize.

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. (For examples of each kind of use of source material, see Section 7.7 “Making Ethical and Effective Choices”.)

You will use most of the information you find in either a summarized or paraphrased format. So use those formats as you write. Make your best guess about how you will want to use the information. Do not ever copy and paste from a source directly into your working files unless you intend to use the information as an exact quotation. If you do intend to use an exact quotation, use the quotations when you take the initial note.

Organizing Your Notes

Traditionally, notes were taken by hand on note cards and then filed by topic until you were ready to sort them out and put them in the order you would use them. Once the note cards were in order, you could begin typing your paper and inserting the information from the cards into the correct spots. You could still use that method if you want to. But to do so would add, depending on the size of your paper, hours, days, or weeks to the process. Since you most likely are not interested in increasing the amount of time needed to write your paper, you should keep your notes in a computer file (backed up elsewhere). Doing so will allow you to use copy and paste features to assemble and rearrange your notes. The digital format also allows you to easily add information as desired.

To organize your notes as you take them, assign each subtopic to a separate section within a file or to a separate file. Sorting your notes so that like topics are grouped together will help streamline the writing process.

Backing Up Your Work

Crashing computers can cause serious loss of data, so make sure you back up your work. You can use a variety of methods of backing up your work, including the following:

- Use a conventional hard drive backup system.
- Copy your work onto a flash drive.
- Post your work to an online site, such as a wiki, so that you can access it from any computer.
- Send your work to an online e-mail address (yours or someone else’s) so you can access it from any computer.

If you do not have a method of backing up your data, periodically print your work so that you won’t lose as much if you have a crash. You could then probably scan the pages using a text format and have the data back in your computer quite quickly. Even if you have to rekey the information to get it back into the computer, that process will be much faster than starting completely over.

Including Your Sources

As you take notes, make sure to include the source for each piece of information. Keep the complete citation in a master reference list that is either at the end of your paper or in a separate reference file. In addition, within your notes, insert the information you need for an in-text reference. (See Chapter 22 “Appendix B: A Guide to
Research and Documentation” for correct formatting of in-text references within the different citation styles.) Including the necessary in-text information within your notes is another way of cutting down the time needed to write your paper.

For all notes you take, record the page(s) where you found the information. Doing so will assure you have the information at hand if you need it for your reference. In addition, having the page numbers readily available will allow you to easily revisit sources. So that you do not inadvertently leave a page number where you do not want it, add bolding and color to your page numbers to make them stand out.

Taking Care Not to Plagiarize

As noted earlier, you should copy and paste only information that you intend to quote. By limiting your copying and pasting to quoted materials, you are not prone to forgetting that some text is copied and end up plagiarizing without intending to do so. If you find it helpful, you can add a colored notation identifying each piece of information as a quotation, summary, or paraphrase. As with the page numbers, by using colored text, you can avoid copying and pasting your tags into your paper as you write. For an example of this kind of color-coding approach, see the annotated bibliography in Section 7.8 “Creating an Annotated Bibliography”.

Another method of inadvertent plagiarism is to paraphrase too closely. You can avoid this pitfall by reading a paragraph and then, without looking back, writing about the paragraph. Unless you have a photographic memory, this method will result in you rewording the idea. When you finish writing, look back to make sure you included all aspects of the original text and to clarify that you depicted the ideas accurately.

When you are planning to quote an author’s exact words, follow these guidelines:

- If possible, copy and paste the quotation so you know you have not made any inadvertent changes.
- Be very careful not to change any word orders, word choices, spellings, or punctuations.
- Use quotations.
- If you choose to omit any words from the quotation, indicate this omission by replacing the words with ellipses (…).
- If you add additional words to the quotation, place them within square brackets ([]).

Key Takeaways

- When you take notes, you will either summarize, paraphrase, or quote all the information. You will summarize when the small details are not important, paraphrase when the details are important but the words are not eloquent, and quote when the information is both important and eloquent.
- Organize your notes by topic either within one file or in one file for each topic. Back up your work by using a backup hard drive or a flash drive, posting it to a wiki, sending it to an online e-mail address, or printing it out.
- Create a master list of your references. Also, include in-text reference information and page numbers with each note you take. To make sure you do not plagiarize, only copy and paste when you are quoting. Paraphrase or summarize all other information. When you are paraphrasing, read the information, look away, and type it in your own words. Then check back to make sure your version is accurate. When you are quoting, take care to use the text exactly as you find it unless you use brackets to indicate additions or ellipses to indicate omissions.

Exercises

1. Find and print a research paper that interests you. Using three colors of highlighters, make a key identifying colors used for summaries, paraphrases, and quotations. Then read through the paper and the highlighters to identify the different types of information within the paper.
MANAGING INFORMATION

Managing Information

Learning Objectives

1. Understand how to proceed once you think you are finished taking notes.
2. Know how to make an outline from your notes.
3. Recognize the process of evaluating your outline.

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?
Key Takeaways

- After you think you are finished taking notes, read through your notes and reorder them as needed.
- Create an outline using your thesis, subtopics, and supporting details.
- Evaluate your outline by reflecting on your thesis, adjusting the subtopics, tweaking your supporting points, considering your quantity of information, looking at the relevancy of the different details, and contemplating the effectiveness of your planned quotations.

Exercises

Choose the best choice for each question.

1. Once you are finished taking notes, you should
   1. start writing immediately.
   2. read through your notes and put them in an order that will work.
   3. make sure, when you write, to use all the information you have found.
2. Your outline should begin with
   1. your thesis (or message).
   2. your best quotation.
   3. your most interesting subtopic.
3. If you have notes that are relevant, but do not fit within the planned subtopics
   1. delete those notes.
   2. you know that you did unneeded research.
   3. consider adding a subtopic.
4. Once you begin to make your outline, you should
   1. tweak your thesis based on information you have learned.
   2. eliminate all information that does not directly support your thesis.
   3. use only your original ideas.

MAKING ETHICAL AND EFFECTIVE CHOICES

Making Ethical and Effective Choices

Learning Objectives

1. Know how to differentiate between common knowledge and proprietary ideas.
2. Understand how to summarize, paraphrase, and cite sources.
3. Recognize whether material is available for use.
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.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Original text</th>
<th>Summarized text</th>
<th>Paraphrased text</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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.</td>
<td>Students report a more personal connection to students in face-to-face classes than in online classes.</td>
<td>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.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Quoted text</td>
<td>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.”</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-------------</td>
<td>-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Plagiarized text</td>
<td>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.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**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). You can read more about these different styles and others in Chapter 22 “Appendix B: A Guide to Research and Documentation”.

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.

**Making Sure Material Is Available for Use**

As you are searching for sources, be sure to determine that you can ethically use the material. As a rule, you can reference most text as long as you properly cite it. Images are another issue. When you search online for images, you will find many private and for-profit sources. You should not use these images without contacting the source and requesting permission. For example, you might find a picture of a darling little boy from someone’s personal unprotected photo page or a good picture of an orderly closet from a company’s web page. Using such photos just because you can access them is not ethical. And citing the source is not adequate in these situations. You should either obtain written permission or forgo the use of such images.

**Key Takeaways**

- Common knowledge is information that most people know and that is available in many sources. Common knowledge does not have to be cited. Proprietary ideas are those that belong to someone else and must be cited.
- Summarized information must be cited, should be written in your words, should be true to the author’s intent, and should be much shorter than the original text. Paraphrased information should be cited, should include all the core points of the original text, should be written in your words, should be true to the author’s intent, and should be about as long as the original text.
- Take care to put exact quotations within quotation marks and to reference all borrowed ideas; use the citation style you are required to use.
• You should determine if you can ethically use content from a source, especially in the case of images. You can usually reference text ethically by citing it correctly, but it is wise to have signed consent when using visual content.

Exercises

1. Consider these two sentences:
   ◦ The KOA system is a large camping organization in the United States.
   ◦ KOA campers and staff take part in many public service activities.
   Explain whether each of these statements is common knowledge or proprietary and why.

2. Online, find a source on a topic of interest to you. Copy a paragraph from the source. Summarize the paragraph. Paraphrase the paragraph. Finally, write a paragraph about the passage that includes a direct quotation from it.

THE SEVEN STEPS OF THE RESEARCH PROCESS

The following seven steps outline a simple and effective strategy for finding information for a research paper and documenting the sources you find. Depending on your topic and your familiarity with the library, you may need to rearrange or recycle these steps. Adapt this outline to your needs. We are ready to help you at every step in your research.

STEP 1: IDENTIFY AND DEVELOP YOUR TOPIC

SUMMARY: State your topic as a question. For example, if you are interested in finding out about use of alcoholic beverages by college students, you might pose the question, “What effect does use of alcoholic beverages have on the health of college students?” Identify the main concepts or keywords in your question.

More details on how to identify and develop your topic.

STEP 2: FIND BACKGROUND INFORMATION

SUMMARY: Look up your keywords in the indexes to subject encyclopedias. Read articles in these encyclopedias to set the context for your research. Note any relevant items in the bibliographies at the end of the encyclopedia articles. Additional background information may be found in your lecture notes, textbooks, and reserve readings.

More suggestions on how to find background information.

STEP 3: USE CATALOGS TO FIND BOOKS AND MEDIA

SUMMARY: Use guided keyword searching to find materials by topic or subject. Print or write down the citation (author, title, etc.) and the location information (call number and library). Note the circulation status. When you pull
the book from the shelf, scan the bibliography for additional sources. Watch for book-length bibliographies and annual reviews on your subject; they list citations to hundreds of books and articles in one subject area. Check the standard subject subheading “–BIBLIOGRAPHIES,” or titles beginning with Annual Review of… in the Cornell Library Classic Catalog.

More detailed instructions for using catalogs to find books.

Finding media (audio and video) titles.

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/R1yNDvmjqAE

STEP 4: USE INDEXES TO FIND PERIODICAL ARTICLES

SUMMARY: Use periodical indexes and abstracts to find citations to articles. The indexes and abstracts may be in print or computer-based formats or both. Choose the indexes and format best suited to your particular topic; ask at the reference desk if you need help figuring out which index and format will be best. You can find periodical articles by the article author, title, or keyword by using the periodical indexes in the Library home page. If the full text is not linked in the index you are using, write down the citation from the index and search for the title of the periodical in the Cornell Library Classic Catalog. The catalog lists the print, microform, and electronic versions of periodicals at Cornell.

How to find and use periodical indexes at Cornell.

STEP 5: FIND INTERNET RESOURCES

SUMMARY: Use search engines. Check to see if your class has a bibliography or research guide created by librarians.

Finding Information on the Internet: A thorough tutorial from UC Berkeley.

STEP 6: EVALUATE WHAT YOU FIND

SUMMARY: See How to Critically Analyze Information Sources and Distinguishing Scholarly from Non-Scholarly Periodicals: A Checklist of Criteria for suggestions on evaluating the authority and quality of the books and articles you located.

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/uDGJ2CYfY9A

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/QAiJL5B5esM

If you have found too many or too few sources, you may need to narrow or broaden your topic. Check with a reference librarian or your instructor. When you’re ready to write, here is an annotated list of books to help you organize, format, and write your paper.

STEP 7: CITE WHAT YOU FIND USING A STANDARD FORMAT

Give credit where credit is due; cite your sources.

Citing or documenting the sources used in your research serves two purposes, it gives proper credit to the authors of the materials used, and it allows those who are reading your work to duplicate your research and locate the sources that you have listed as references.

Knowingly representing the work of others as your own is plagiarism. (See Cornell’s Code of Academic Integrity). Use one of the styles listed below or another style approved by your instructor. Handouts summarizing the APA and MLA styles are available at Uris and Olin Reference.
RefWorks is a web-based program that allows you to easily collect, manage, and organize bibliographic references by interfacing with databases. RefWorks also interfaces directly with Word, making it easy to import references and incorporate them into your writing, properly formatted according to the style of your choice.

See our guide to citation tools and styles.

Format the citations in your bibliography using examples from the following Library help pages: Modern Language Association (MLA) examples and American Psychological Association (APA) examples.

- Style guides in print (book) format:
  - MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers. 7th ed. New York: MLA, 2009. This handbook is based on the MLA Style Manual and is intended as an aid for college students writing research papers. Included here is information on selecting a topic, researching the topic, note taking, the writing of footnotes and bibliographies, as well as sample pages of a research paper. Useful for the beginning researcher.

If you are writing an annotated bibliography, see How to Prepare an Annotated Bibliography.

RESEARCH TIPS

- WORK FROM THE GENERAL TO THE SPECIFIC. Find background information first, then use more specific and recent sources.
- RECORD WHAT YOU FIND AND WHERE YOU FOUND IT. Record the complete citation for each source you find; you may need it again later.
- TRANSLATE YOUR TOPIC INTO THE SUBJECT LANGUAGE OF THE INDEXES AND CATALOGS YOU USE. Check your topic words against a thesaurus or subject heading list.

INTEGRATING SOURCES

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.

THINK, THEN WRITE: WRITING PREPARATION

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

- Explain why preparation is important in business writing.
- Think critically and employ strategies to overcome common fears of writing.

“How do I prepare myself for writing?” is a common question and one that has no single correct answer. When do you do your best work? Whatever your work or task may be, it doesn’t have to be writing. Some people work best in the morning, others only after their daily dose of coffee. Still others burn the midnight oil and work well late into the night while their colleagues lose their productive edge as the sun sets. “To thine own self be true,” is a great idea when you have the freedom to choose when you work, but increasingly our lives are governed by schedules and deadlines that we do not control. You may have a deadline that requires you to work late at night when you recognize that you are far more productive early in the morning. If you can, consider one important step to writing success: know when you are most productive. If you cannot choose your timing, then dedication and perseverance are required. The job must be completed and the show must go on. Your effort demonstrates self-control and forbearance (as opposed to impatience and procrastination) and implies professionalism.

To be productive, you have to be alert, ready to work, and can accomplish tasks with relative ease. You will no doubt recognize that sometimes tasks take a lot longer, the solution is much harder to find, and you may find work more frustrating at other times. If you have the option, try to adjust your schedule so the writing tasks before you can be tackled at times when you are most productive, where you ability to concentrate is best, and when you are your most productive. If you don’t have the option, focus clearly on the task before you.

Every individual is different, and what works for one person may be ineffective for someone else. One thing that professional writers agree on, however, is that you don’t need to be in the “right mood” to write—and that, in fact, if you wait for the right mood to strike, you will probably never get started at all. Ernest Hemingway, who wrote some of the most famous novels of the twentieth century as well as hundreds of essays, articles, and short stories, advised writers to “work every day. No matter what has happened the day or night before, get up and bite on the nail” (1999).

In order for your work to be productive, you will need to focus your attention on your writing. The stereotype of the writer tucked away in an attic room or a cabin in the woods, lost in the imaginary world created by the words as they flow onto the page, is only a stereotype. Our busy lives involve constant interruption. In a distraction-prone business environment, much of your writing will be done while colleagues are talking on the phone, having face-
to-face conversations as they walk by, and possibly stopping at your desk to say hello or ask a question. Your phone may ring or you may have incoming instant messages (IMs) that need to be answered quickly. These unavoidable interruptions make it even more important to develop a habit of concentrating when you write.

The mind has been likened to a brace of wild horses; if you have ever worked with horses, you know they each have a mind of their own. Taken individually they can be somewhat manageable, but together they can prove to be quite a challenge. Our minds can multitask and perform several tasks simultaneously, but we can also get easily distracted. We can get sidetracked and lose valuable time away from our designated task. Our ability to concentrate is central to our ability to write effectively, whether we work alone or as part of a team.

In many business situations, you may not be writing solo but instead collaborating on a document with various coworkers, vendors, or customers. The ability to concentrate is perhaps even more important in these group writing situations (Nickerson, Perkins & Smith, 1985). In this discussion, we'll consider the writing process from a singular perspective, where you are personally responsible for planning, researching, and producing a product of writing. In other areas of this text we also consider the collaborative process, its strengths and weaknesses, and how to negotiate and navigate the group writing process.

Thinking Critically

As you approach your writing project, it is important to practice the habit of thinking critically. Critical thinking can be defined as “self-directed, self-disciplined, self-monitored, and self-corrective thinking” (Paul & Elder, 2007). It is the difference between watching television in a daze versus analyzing a movie with attention to its use of lighting, camera angles, and music to influence the audience. One activity requires very little mental effort, while the other requires attention to detail, the ability to compare and contrast, and sharp senses to receive all the stimuli.

As a habit of mind, critical thinking requires established standards and attention to their use, effective communication, problem solving, and a willingness to acknowledge and address our own tendency for confirmation bias, egocentrism, and sociocentrism. We’ll use the phrase “habit of mind” because clear, critical thinking is a habit that requires effort and persistence. People do not start an exercise program, a food and nutrition program, or a stop-smoking program with 100 percent success the first time. In the same way, it is easy to fall back into lazy mental shortcuts, such as “If it costs a lot, it must be good,” when in fact the statement may very well be false. You won’t know until you gather information that supports (or contradicts) the assertion.

As we discuss getting into the right frame of mind for writing, keep in mind that the same recommendations apply to reading and research. If you only pay attention to information that reinforces your existing beliefs and ignore or discredit information that contradicts your beliefs, you are guilty of confirmation bias (Gilovich, 1993). As you read, research, and prepare for writing, make an effort to gather information from a range of reliable sources, whether or not this information leads to conclusions you didn’t expect. Remember that those who read your writing will be aware of, or have access to, this universe of data as well and will have their own confirmation bias. Reading and writing from an audience-centered view means acknowledging your confirmation bias and moving beyond it to consider multiple frames of references, points of view, and perspectives as you read, research, and write.

Egocentrism and sociocentrism are related concepts to confirmation bias. Egocentrism can be defined as the use of self-centered standards to determine what to believe and what to reject. Similarly, sociocentrism involves the use of society-centered standards (Paul & Elder, 2007). Both ways of thinking create an “us versus them” relationship that can undermine your credibility and alienate readers who don’t share your viewpoint.

This leads to confirmation bias and groupthink, resulting in false conclusions with little or no factual support for a belief. If a person believes the earth is flat and never questions that belief, it serves as an example of egocentric thinking. The person believes it is true even though he has never questioned why he believes it. If the person decides to look for information but only finds information that supports his pre-existing belief, ignoring or discrediting information that contradicts that belief, he is guilty of confirmation bias. If he believes the earth is flat...
because everyone in his group or community believes it, even though he himself has never questioned or confirmed the belief, he is guilty of sociocentrism.

In each case, the false thinking strategy leads to poor conclusions. Watch out for your tendency to read, write, and believe that which reflects only what you think you know without solid research and clear, critical thinking.

Overcoming Fear of Writing

For many people, one of the most frightening things in life is public speaking. For similar reasons, whether rational or irrational, writing often generates similar fears. There is something about exposing one’s words to possible criticism that can be truly terrifying. In this chapter, we are going to break down the writing process into small, manageable steps that, in turn, will provide you with a platform for success. To take advantage of these steps, you need to acknowledge any reluctance or fear that may be holding you back, and bring your interests and enthusiasm to this discussion on writing.

Having a positive attitude about writing in general, and your effort, is also a key ingredient to your success. If you approach a writing assignment with trepidation and fear, you will spend your valuable time and attention in ways that do not contribute positively to your writing. People often fear the writing process because of three main reasons:

1. Negative orientation
2. Risk of failure
3. Fear of the unknown

Let’s take each reason in turn. Negative orientation means the writer has a pre-existing negative association or view of the task or activity. We tend to like people who like us (Gudykunst & Kim, 1997), tend to pursue activities where we perceive rewards and appreciation for our efforts, and are more likely to engage in activities where we perceive we are successful. Conversely, we tend to not like people who we perceive as not like us, tend to ignore or avoid activities where we perceive we are not appreciated or are not rewarded, and are less likely to engage in activities where we perceive we are not successful. For some writers, previous experiences have led to a pre-existing association with writing. That association may be positive if they have been encouraged, affirmed, or rewarded as they demonstrated measurable gain. That association may also be negative if efforts have been met with discouraging feedback, a lack of affirmation, or negative reinforcement.

Effective business writing is a highly valued skill, and regardless of the degree to which writing will be a significant aspect of your designated job duties, your ability to do it well will be a boost to your career. If you have a negative orientation toward writing, admitting this fact is an important first step. Next, we need to actively seek ways to develop your skills in ways that will demonstrate measurable gain and lead to positive affirmation. Not everyone develops in the same way on the same schedule, and measurable gain means that from one writing assignment to the next you can demonstrate positive progress. In an academic setting, measurable gain is one of your clear goals as a writer. In a business or industry setting, you may lack the time to revise and improve, meaning that you will need to get it right the first time. Take advantage of the academic setting to set positive, realistic goals to improve your writing. Surround yourself with resources, including people who will help you reach your goal. If your college or university has a writing center, take advantage of it. If it does not, seek out assistance from those whose writing has been effective and well received.

It is a given that you do not want to fail. Risk of failure is a common fear across public speaking and writing situations, producing predictable behavioral patterns we can recognize, address, and resolve. In public speaking, our minds may go blank at the start of a presentation as we confront our fear of failure. In writing, we may experience a form of blankness often referred to as “writer’s block”—the overwhelming feeling of not knowing what to write or where to start—and sit helplessly waiting for our situation to change.

But we have the power to change our circumstances and to overcome our risk of failure. You may be familiar with the concept of a rough draft, but it may compete in your mind with a desire for perfection. Writing is a dynamic process, a reflection of the communication process itself. It won’t be perfect the first time you attempt it. Awareness that your rough draft serves a purpose, but doesn’t represent your final product, should serve in the same way a rehearsal for a speech serves a speaker. You get a second (or third) chance to get it right. Use this process to reduce your fear of failure and let go of your perfectionist tendencies, if only for a moment. Your desire for perfection will serve you well when it comes to polishing your finished document, but everything has its time and place. Learning where and when to place your effort is part of writing preparation.
Finally, we often fear the unknown. It is part of being human, and is reflected across all contexts, including public speaking and writing. If you have never given a speech before, your first time on stage can be quite an ordeal. If you have never written a formal business report, your fear of the unknown is understandable. How can you address this fear? Make the unknown known. If we take the mystery out of the process and product, we can see it for its essential components, its organizational pattern, and start to see how our product may look before we even start to produce it. In many organizations, you can ask your supervisor or coworkers for copies of similar documents to the one you have been assigned, even if the content is quite different. If this is not an option, simply consider the way most documents in your company are written—even something as basic as an interoffice e-mail will provide some clues. Your goal is to become familiar with the type of document and to examine several successful examples. Once you see a couple of reports, you will have a better feel for what you have to produce and the unknown will be far less mysterious.

**Key Takeaway**

There are several reasons why people fear writing, but there are also several strategies to reduce or eliminate those fears.

**Exercises**

1. How would you describe your orientation to writing? Where does this orientation come from? Discuss your thoughts with a classmate.
2. If you could identify one aspect of your writing you would like to improve, what would it be and why? Write a one- two-page essay on this subject.
3. What kinds of writing do you like? Dislike? Explain why and provide an example of each. Share and compare with the class.
4. Who is your favorite author? What do you like about her or his writing? Discuss your opinion with a classmate.

**USING SOURCES创造性地使用**

**Using Sources Creatively**  Heather Logan  
*(printable version here)*

When writing papers that require the use of outside source material, it is often tempting to cite only direct quotations from your sources. If, however, this is the only method of citation you choose, your paper will become nothing more than a series of quotations linked together by a few connecting words. Your paper will seem to be a collection of others’ thoughts and will contain little thinking on your part.

To avoid falling into this trap, follow a few simple pointers:

- **Avoid using long quotations merely as space-fillers.** While this is an attractive option when faced with a ten-page paper, the overuse of long quotations gives the reader the impression you cannot think for yourself.
• **Don’t use only direct quotations.** Try using paraphrases in addition to your direct quotations. To the reader, the effective use of paraphrases indicates that you took the time to think about the meaning behind the quote’s words. (For further assistance see our materials on “Using Paraphrases.”)

• **When introducing direct quotations, try to use a variety of verbs in your signal phrases.** Don’t always rely on stock verbs such as “states” or “says.” Think for a little while about the purpose of your quotation and then choose a context-appropriate verb.

Also, when using direct quotations try qualifying them in a novel or interesting manner. Depending on the system of documentation you’re using, the signal phrases don’t always have to introduce the quotation.

For example, instead of saying:

“None of them knew the color of the sky” is the opening line of Stephen Crane’s short story, “The Open Boat” (339). This implies the idea that “all sense of certainty” in the lives of these men is gone (Wolford 18).

Try saying:

“None of them knew the color of the sky,” the opening line of Stephen Crane’s, “The Open Boat,” implies that “all sense of certainty” in the lives of these men is gone (Crane 339; Wolford 18).

The combination of these two sentences into one is something different. It shows thought on the writer’s part in how to combine direct quotations in an interesting manner.

---

**USING SOURCES BLENDING SOURCE MATERIAL WITH YOUR OWN WORK**

When working with sources, many students worry they are simply regurgitating ideas that others formulated. That is why it is important for you to develop your own assertions, organize your findings so that your own ideas are still the thrust of the paper, and take care not to rely too much on any one source, or your paper’s content might be controlled too heavily by that source.

In practical terms, some ways to develop and back up your assertions include:

• **Blend sources with your assertions.** Organize your sources before and as you write so that they blend, even within paragraphs. Your paper—both globally and at the paragraph level—should reveal relationships among your sources, and should also reveal the relationships between your own ideas and those of your sources.

• **Write an original introduction and conclusion.** As much as is practical, make the paper’s introduction and conclusion your own ideas or your own synthesis of the ideas inherent in your research. Use sources minimally in your introduction and conclusion.

• **Open and close paragraphs with originality.** In general, use the openings and closing of your paragraphs to reveal your work—“enclose” your sources among your assertions. At a minimum, create your own topic sentences and wrap-up sentences for paragraphs.

• **Use transparent rhetorical strategies.** When appropriate, outwardly practice such rhetorical strategies as analysis, synthesis, comparison, contrast, summary, description, definition, hierarchical structure, evaluation, hypothesis, generalization, classification, and even narration. Prove to your reader that you are thinking as you write.

Also, you must clarify where your own ideas end and the cited information begins. Part of your job is to help your reader draw the line between these two things, often by the way you create context for the cited information. A
phrase such as “A 1979 study revealed that . . .” is an obvious announcement of citation to come. Another recommended technique is the insertion of the author’s name into the text to announce the beginning of your cited information. You may worry that you are not allowed to give the actual names of sources you have studied in the paper’s text, but just the opposite is true. In fact, the more respectable a source you cite, the more impressed your reader is likely to be with your material while reading. If you note that the source is the NASA Science website or an article by Stephen Jay Gould or a recent edition of The Wall Street Journal right in your text, you offer your readers immediate context without their having to guess or flip to the references page to look up the source.

What follows is an excerpt from a political science paper that clearly and admirably draws the line between writer and cited information:

The above political upheaval illuminates the reasons behind the growing Iranian hatred of foreign interference; as a result of this hatred, three enduring geopolitical patterns have evolved in Iran, as noted by John Limbert. First . . .

Note how the writer begins by redefining her previous paragraph’s topic (political upheaval), then connects this to Iran’s hatred of foreign interference, then suggests a causal relationship and ties her ideas into John Limbert’s analysis—thereby announcing that a synthesis of Limbert’s work is coming. This writer’s work also becomes more credible and meaningful because, right in the text, she announces the name of a person who is a recognized authority in the field. Even in this short excerpt, it is obvious that this writer is using proper citation and backing up her own assertions with confidence and style.

SYNTHESIZING YOUR RESEARCH FINDINGS

When you synthesize sources, you combine them in a meaningful way. While at an earlier stage of a research project your work may have focused on gathering sources and taking notes on those sources, here you move into a more analytical mode. In synthesizing sources, you make connections and shape your findings into an argument or response to a question.

Synthesis is something you already do in your everyday life. For example, if you are shopping for a new car, the research question you are trying to answer is, “Which car should I buy”? You explore available models, prices, options, and consumer reviews, and you make comparisons. For example: Car X costs more than car Y but gets better mileage. Or: Reviewers A, B, and C all prefer Car X, but their praise is based primarily on design features that aren’t important to you. It is this analysis across sources that moves you towards an answer to your question.

Early in an academic research project you are likely to find yourself making initial comparisons—for example, you may notice that Source A arrives at a conclusion very different from that of Source B—but the task of synthesis will become central to your work when you begin drafting your research paper or presentation.

Remember, when you synthesize, you are not just compiling information. You are organizing that information around a specific argument or question, and this work—your own intellectual work—is central to research writing.

Below are some questions that highlight ways in which the act of synthesizing brings together ideas and generates new knowledge.

How do the sources speak to your specific argument or research question?

Your argument or research question is the main unifying element in your project. Keep this in the forefront of your mind when you write about your sources. Explain how, specifically, each source supports your central claim/s or
suggests possible answers to your question. For example: Does the source provide essential background information or a definitional foundation for your argument or inquiry? Does it present numerical data that supports one of your points or helps you answer a question you have posed? Does it present a theory that might be applied to some aspect of your project? Does it present a recognized expert’s insights on your topic?

How do the sources speak to each other?

Sometimes you will find explicit dialogue between sources (for example, Source A refutes Source B by name), and sometimes you will need to bring your sources into dialogue (for example, Source A does not mention Source B, but you observe that the two are advancing similar or dissimilar arguments). Attending to interrelationships among sources is at the heart of the task of synthesis.

Begin by asking: What are the points of agreement? Where are there disagreements?

But be aware that you are unlikely to find your sources in pure positions of “for” vs. “against.” You are more likely to find agreement in some areas and disagreement in other areas. You may also find agreement but for different reasons—such as different underlying values and priorities, or different methods of inquiry.

(See also Identifying a Conversation)

Where are there, or aren't there, information gaps?

Where is the available information unreliable (for example, it might be difficult to trace back to primary sources), or limited, (for example, based on just a few case studies, or on just one geographical area), or difficult for non-specialists to access (for example, written in specialist language, or tucked away in a physical archive)?

Does your inquiry contain sub-questions that may not at present be answerable, or that may not be answerable without additional primary research—for example, laboratory studies, direct observation, interviews with witnesses or participants, etc.?

Or, alternatively, is there a great deal of reliable, accessible information that addresses your question or speaks to your argument or inquiry?

In considering these questions, you are engaged in synthesis: you are conducting an overview assessment of the field of available information and in this way generating composite knowledge.

Remember, synthesis is about pulling together information from a range of sources in order to answer a question or construct an argument. It is something you will be called upon to do in a wide variety of academic, professional, and personal contexts. Being able to dive into an ocean of information and surface with meaningful conclusions is an essential life skill.
with the famous quote by the 20th century rhetorician Kenneth Burke who compared writing to a conversation at a
social event. In his 1974 book The Philosophy of Literary Form Burke writes,

Imagine that you enter a parlor. You come late. When you arrive, others have long preceded you, and
you are engaged in a heated discussion, a discussion too heated for them to pause and tell you exactly
what it is about. In fact, the discussion had already begun long before any of them got there, so that no
one present is qualified to retrace for you all the steps that had gone before. You listen for a while, until
you decide that you have caught the tenor of the argument; then you put in your oar. Someone
answers; you answer him, another comes to your defense; another aligns himself against you, to either
the embarrassment of gratification of your opponent, depending upon the quality of your ally’s
assistance. However, the discussion is interminable. The hour grows late, you must depart. And you do
depart, with the discussion still vigorously in progress (110-111).

This passage by Burke is extremely popular among writers because it captures the interactive nature of writing so
precisely. Reading Burke’s words carefully, we will notice that the interaction between readers and writers is
continuous. A writer always enters a conversation in progress. In order to participate in the discussion, just like in
real life, you need to know what your interlocutors have been talking about. So you listen (read). Once you feel
you have got the drift of the conversation, you say (write) something. Your text is read by others who respond to
your ideas, stories, and arguments with their own. This interaction never ends!

To write well, it is important to listen carefully and understand the conversations that are going on around you.
Writers who are able to listen to these conversations and pick up important topics, themes, and arguments are
generally more effective at reaching and impressing their audiences. It is also important to treat research, writing,
and every occasion for these activities as opportunities to participate in the on-going conversation of people
interested in the same topics and questions which interest you.

Our knowledge about our world is shaped by the best and most up-to-date theories available to them. Sometimes
these theories can be experimentally tested and proven, and sometimes, when obtaining such proof is
impossible, they are based on consensus reached as a result of conversation and debate. Even the theories and
knowledge that can be experimentally tested (for example in sciences) do not become accepted knowledge until
most members of the scientific community accept them. Other members of this community will help them test their
theories and hypotheses, give them feedback on their writing, and keep them searching for the best answers to
their questions. As Burke says in his famous passage, the interaction between the members of intellectual
communities never ends. No piece of writing, no argument, no theory or discover is ever final. Instead, they all are
subject to discussion, questioning, and improvement.

A simple but useful example of this process is the evolution of humankind’s understanding of their planet Earth
and its place in the Universe. As you know, in Medieval Europe, the prevailing theory was that the Earth was the
center of the Universe and that all other planets and the Sun rotated around it. This theory was the result of the
church’s teachings, and thinkers who disagreed with it were pronounced heretics and often burned. In 1543,
astronomer Nikolaus Kopernikus argued that the Sun was at the center of the solar system and that all planets of
the system rotate around the Sun. Later, Galileo experimentally proved Kopernikus’ theory with the help of a
telescope. Of course, the Earth did not begin to rotate around the Sun with this discovery. Yet, Kopernikus’ and
Galileo’s theories of the Universe went against the Catholic Church’s teachings which dominated the social
discourse of Medieval Europe. The Inquisition did not engage in debate with the two scientists. Instead,
Kopernikus was executed for his views and Galileo was sentenced to house arrest for his views.

Although in the modern world, dissenting thinkers are unlikely to suffer such harsh punishment, the examples of
Kopernikus and Galileo teach us two valuable lessons about the social nature of knowledge. Firstly, Both
Kopernikus and Galileo tried to improve on an existing theory of the Universe that placed our planet at the center.
They did not work from nothing but used beliefs that already existed in their society and tried to modify and
disprove those beliefs. Time and later scientific research proved that they were right. Secondly, even after Galileo
was able to prove the structure of the Solar system experimentally, his theory did not become widely accepted
until the majority of people in society assimilated it. Therefore, new findings do not become accepted knowledge
until they penetrate the fabric of social discourse and until enough people accept them as true.

Writing Activity: Finding the Origins of Knowledge
• Seeing writing as an exchange of ideas means seeing all new theories, ideas, and beliefs as grounded in pre-existing knowledge. Therefore, when beginning a new writing project, writers never work “from scratch.” Instead, they tap into the resources of their community for ideas, inspiration, and research leads. Keeping these statements in mind, answer the following questions. Apply your answers to one of the research projects described in this book. Be sure to record your answers.

• Consider a possible research project topic. What do you know about your topic before you begin to write?
  • Where did this knowledge come from? Be sure to include both secondary sources (books, websites, etc.) and primary ones (people, events, personal memories). Is this knowledge socially created? What communities or groups or people created it, how, and why?
  • What parts of your current knowledge about your subject could be called “fact” and what parts could be called “opinion?”
  • How can your current knowledge about the topic help you in planning and conducting the research for the project?

Share your thoughts with your classmates and instructor.
UNIT 6: HOW WE DOCUMENT

QUOTING, PARAPHRASING, AND AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

- How to Summarize: An Overview
- How to Quote and Paraphrase: An Overview
- When to Quote, When to Paraphrase
- Four Examples of Quotes and Paraphrases
- How to Avoid Plagiarism in the Research Process
- Plagiarism and the Internet

Learning how to effectively quote and paraphrase research can be difficult and it certainly takes practice. Hopefully, your abilities to make good use of your research will improve as you work through the exercises in part two and three of The Process of Research Writing, not to mention as you take on other research writing experiences beyond this class. The goal of this chapter is to introduce some basic strategies for summarizing, quoting and paraphrasing research in your writing and to explain how to avoid plagiarizing your research.

How to Summarize: An Overview

A summary is a brief explanation of a longer text. Some summaries, such as the ones that accompany annotated bibliographies, are very short, just a sentence or two. Others are much longer, though summaries are always much shorter than the text being summarized in the first place. Summaries of different lengths are useful in research writing because you often need to provide your readers with an explanation of the text you are discussing. This is especially true when you are going to quote or paraphrase from a source.

Of course, the first step in writing a good summary is to do a thorough reading of the text you are going to summarize in the first place. Beyond that important start, there are a few basic guidelines you should follow when you write summary material:

- Stay “neutral” in your summarizing. Summaries provide “just the facts” and are not the place where you offer your opinions about the text you are summarizing. Save your opinions and evaluation of the evidence you are summarizing for other parts of your writing.
- Don’t quote from what you are summarizing. Summaries will be more useful to you and your colleagues if you write them in your own words.
- Don’t “cut and paste” from database abstracts. Many of the periodical indexes that are available as part of your library’s computer system include abstracts of articles. Do no “cut” this abstract material and then “paste” it into your own annotated bibliography. For one thing, this is plagiarism. Second, “cutting and pasting” from the abstract defeats one of the purposes of writing summaries and creating an annotated bibliography in the first place, which is to help you understand and explain your research.

How to Quote and Paraphrase: An Overview

Writers quote and paraphrase from research in order to support their points and to persuade their readers. A quote or a paraphrase from a piece of evidence in support of a point answers the reader’s question, “says who?”
This is especially true in academic writing since scholarly readers are most persuaded by effective research and evidence. For example, readers of an article about a new cancer medication published in a medical journal will be most interested in the scholar’s research and statistics that demonstrate the effectiveness of the treatment. Conversely, they will not be as persuaded by emotional stories from individual patients about how a new cancer medication improved the quality of their lives. While this appeal to emotion can be effective and is common in popular sources, these individual anecdotes do not carry the same sort of “scholarly” or scientific value as well-reasoned research and evidence.

Of course, your instructor is not expecting you to be an expert on the topic of your research paper. While you might conduct some primary research, it’s a good bet that you’ll be relying on secondary sources such as books, articles, and Web sites to inform and persuade your readers. You’ll present this research to your readers in the form of quotes and paraphrases.

A “quote” is a direct restatement of the exact words from the original source. The general rule of thumb is any time you use three or more words as they appeared in the original source, you should treat it as a quote. A “paraphrase” is a restatement of the information or point of the original source in your own words. While quotes and paraphrases are different and should be used in different ways in your research writing (as the examples in this section suggest), they do have a number of things in common. Both quotes and paraphrases should:

• be “introduced” to the reader, particularly the first time you mention a source;
• include an explanation of the evidence which explains to the reader why you think the evidence is important, especially if it is not apparent from the context of the quote or paraphrase; and
• include a proper citation of the source.

The method you should follow to properly quote or paraphrase depends on the style guide you are following in your academic writing. The two most common style guides used in academic writing are the Modern Language Association (MLA), and the American Psychological Association (APA). I discuss both of these different style guides in some detail in the Appendix of this book. Your instructor will probably assign one of these styles before you begin working on your project, however, if he/she doesn’t mention this, be sure to ask.

When to Quote, When to Paraphrase

The real “art” to research writing is using quotes and paraphrases from evidence effectively in order to support your point. There are certain “rules,” dictated by the rules of style you are following, such as the ones presented by the MLA or the ones presented by the APA. There are certain “guidelines” and suggestions, like the ones I offer in the previous section and the ones you will learn from your teacher and colleagues. But when all is said and done, the question of when to quote and when to paraphrase depends a great deal on the specific context of the writing and the effect you are trying to achieve. Learning the best times to quote and paraphrase takes practice and experience.

In general, it is best to use a quote when:

• The exact words of your source are important for the point you are trying to make. This is especially true if you are quoting technical language, terms, or very specific word choices.
• You want to highlight your agreement with the author’s words. If you agree with the point the author of the evidence makes and you like their exact words, use them as a quote.
• You want to highlight your disagreement with the author’s words. In other words, you may sometimes want to use a direct quote to indicate exactly what it is you disagree about. This might be particularly true when you are considering the antithetical positions in your research writing projects.

In general, it is best to paraphrase when:

• There is no good reason to use a quote to refer to your evidence. If the author’s exact words are not especially important to the point you are trying to make, you are usually better off paraphrasing the evidence.
• You are trying to explain a particular a piece of evidence in order to explain or interpret it in more detail. This might be particularly true in writing projects like critiques.
• You need to balance a direct quote in your writing. You need to be careful about directly quoting your research too much because it can sometimes make for awkward and difficult to read prose. So, one of the reasons to use a paraphrase instead of a quote is to create balance within your writing.

Tips for Quoting and Paraphrasing
• Introduce your quotes and paraphrases to your reader, especially on first reference.
• Explain the significance of the quote or paraphrase to your reader.
• Cite your quote or paraphrase properly according to the rules of style you are following in your essay.
• Quote when the exact words are important, when you want to highlight your agreement or your disagreement.
• Paraphrase when the exact words aren’t important, when you want to explain the point of your evidence, or when you need to balance the direct quotes in your writing.

Four Examples of Quotes and Paraphrases

Here are four examples of what I mean about properly quoting and paraphrasing evidence in your research essays. In each case, I begin with a BAD example, or the way NOT to quote or paraphrase.

Quoting in MLA Style

Here’s the first BAD example, where the writer is trying to follow the rules of MLA style:

“...effects for advertising prescription drugs on television. “African-American physicians regard direct-to-consumer advertising of prescription medicines as one way to educate minority patients about needed treatment and healthcare options” (Wechsler, Internet).

This is a potentially good piece of information to support a research writer’s claim, but the researcher hasn’t done any of the necessary work to explain where this quote comes from or to explain why it is important for supporting her point. Rather, she has simply “dropped in” the quote, leaving the interpretation of its significance up to the reader.

Now consider this revised GOOD (or at least BETTER) example of how this quote might be better introduced into the essay:

In her Pharmaceutical Executive article available through the Wilson Select Internet database, Jill Wechsler writes about one of the positive effects of advertising prescription drugs on television. “African-American physicians regard direct-to-consumer advertising of prescription medicines as one way to educate minority patients about needed treatment and healthcare options.”

In this revision, it’s much more clear what point the writer is trying to make with this evidence and where this evidence comes from.

In this particular example, the passage is from a traditional print journal called Pharmaceutical Executive. However, the writer needs to indicate that she actually found and read this article through Wilson Select, an Internet database which reproduces the “full text” of articles from periodicals without any graphics, charts, or page numbers.

When you use a direct quote in your research, you need to the indicate page number of that direct quote or you need to indicate that the evidence has no specific page numbers. While it can be a bit awkward to indicate within the text how the writer found this information if it’s from the Internet, it’s important to do so on the first reference of a piece of evidence in your writing. On references to this piece of evidence after the first reference, you can use just the last name of the writer. For example:

Wechsler also reports on the positive effects of advertising prescription drugs on television. She writes...

Paraphrasing in MLA Style

In this example, the writer is using MLA style to write a research essay for a Literature class. Here is a BAD example of a paraphrase:

While Gatsby is deeply in love with Daisy in The Great Gatsby, his love for her is indistinguishable from his love of his possessions (Callahan).

There are two problems with this paraphrase. First, if this is the first or only reference to this particular piece of evidence in the research essay, the writer should include more information about the source of this paraphrase in order to properly introduce it. Second, this paraphrase is actually not of the entire article but rather of a specific passage. The writer has neglected to note the page number within the parenthetical citation.

A GOOD or at least BETTER revision of this paraphrase might look like this:

John F. Callahan suggests in his article “F. Scott Fitzgerald’s Evolving American Dream” that while Gatsby is deeply in love with Daisy in The Great Gatsby, his love for her is indistinguishable from his love of his possessions (381).

By incorporating the name of the author of the evidence the research writer is referring to here, the source of this paraphrase is now clear to the reader. Furthermore, because there is a page number at the end of this sentence,
the reader understands that this passage is a paraphrase of a particular part of Callahan’s essay and not a summary of the entire essay. Again, if the research writer had introduced this source to his readers earlier, he could have started with a phrase like “Callahan suggests...” and then continued on with his paraphrase. If the research writer were offering a brief summary of the entire essay following MLA style, he wouldn’t include a page number in parentheses. For example:

John F. Callahan’s article “F. Scott Fitzgerald’s Evolving American Dream” examines Fitzgerald’s fascination with the elusiveness of the American Dream in the novels *The Great Gatsby*, *Tender is the Night*, and *The Last Tycoon*.

Quoting in APA Style

Consider this **BAD** example in APA style, of what NOT to do when quoting evidence:

> “If the U.S. scallop fishery were a business, its management would surely be fired, because its revenues could readily be increased by at least 50 percent while its costs were being reduced by an equal percentage.” (Repetto, 2001, p. 84).

Again, this is a potentially valuable piece of evidence, but it simply isn’t clear what point the research writer is trying to make with it. Further, it doesn’t follow the preferred method of citation with APA style. Here is a revision that is a **GOOD** or at least **BETTER** example:

Repetto (2001) concludes that in the case of the scallop industry, those running the industry should be held responsible for not considering methods that would curtail the problems of over-fishing. “If the U.S. scallop fishery were a business, its management would surely be fired, because its revenues could readily be increased by at least 50 percent while its costs were being reduced by an equal percentage” (p. 84).

This revision is improved because the research writer has introduced and explained the point of the evidence with the addition of a clarifying sentence. It also follows the rules of APA style. Generally, APA style prefers that the research writer refer to the author only by last name followed immediately by the year of publication. Whenever possible, you should begin your citation with the author’s last name and the year of publication, and, in the case of a direct quote like this passage, the page number (including the “p.”) in parentheses at the end.

Paraphrasing in APA Style

Paraphrasing in APA style is slightly different from MLA style as well. Consider first this **BAD** example of what NOT to do in paraphrasing from a source in APA style:

> Computer criminals have lots of ways to get away with credit card fraud (Cameron, 2002).

The main problem with this paraphrase is there isn’t enough here to adequately explain to the reader what the point of the evidence really is. Remember: your readers have no way of automatically knowing why you as a research writer think that a particular piece of evidence is useful in supporting your point. This is why it is key that you introduce and explain your evidence. Here is a revision that is **GOOD** or at least **BETTER**:

Cameron (2002) points out that computer criminals intent on committing credit card fraud are able to take advantage of the fact that there aren’t enough officials working to enforce computer crimes. Criminals are also able to use the technology to their advantage by communicating via email and chat rooms with other criminals.

Again, this revision is better because the additional information introduces and explains the point of the evidence. In this particular example, the author’s name is also incorporated into the explanation of the evidence as well. In APA, it is preferable to weave in the author’s name into your essay, usually at the beginning of a sentence. However, it would also have been acceptable to end an improved paraphrase with just the author’s last name and the date of publication in parentheses.

How to Avoid Plagiarism in the Research Process

Plagiarism is the unauthorized or uncited use of the writings or ideas of another in your writing. While it might not be as tangible as auto theft or burglary, plagiarism is still a form of theft. In the academic world, plagiarism is a serious matter because ideas in the forms of research, creative work, and original thought are highly valued. Chances are, your school has strict rules about what happens when someone is caught plagiarizing. The penalty for plagiarism is severe, everything from a failing grade for the plagiarized work, a failing grade for the class, or expulsion from the institution.
You might not be aware that plagiarism can take several different forms. The most well known, **purposeful plagiarism**, is handing in an essay written by someone else and representing it as your own, copying your essay word for word from a magazine or journal, or downloading an essay from the Internet.

A much more common and less understood phenomenon is what I call **accidental plagiarism**. Accidental plagiarism is the result of improperly paraphrasing, summarizing, quoting, or citing your evidence in your academic writing. Generally, writers accidentally plagiarize because they simply don't know or they fail to follow the rules for giving credit to the ideas of others in their writing.

Both purposeful and accidental plagiarism are wrong, against the rules, and can result in harsh punishments. Ignoring or not knowing the rules of how to not plagiarize and properly cite evidence might be an explanation, but it is not an excuse.

To exemplify what I'm getting at, consider the examples below that use quotations and paraphrases from this brief passage:

> Those who denounce cyberculture today strangely resemble those who criticized rock music during the fifties and sixties. Rock started out as an Anglo-American phenomenon and has become an industry. Nonetheless, it was able to capture the hopes of young people around the world and provided enjoyment to those of us who listened to or played rock. Sixties pop was the conscience of one or two generations that helped bring the war in Vietnam to a close. Obviously, neither rock nor pop has solved global poverty or hunger. But is this a reason to be “against” them? (ix).

And just to make it clear that I'm not plagiarizing this passage, here is the citation in MLA style:


Here's an obvious example of plagiarism:

> Those who denounce cyberculture today strangely resemble those who criticized rock music during the fifties and sixties.

In this case, the writer has literally taken one of Lévy's sentences and represented it as her own. That's clearly against the rules.

Here's another example of plagiarism, perhaps less obvious:

> The same kind of people who criticize cyberculture are the same kind of people who criticized rock and roll music back in the fifties and sixties. But both cyberculture and rock music inspire and entertain young people.

While these aren't Lévy's exact words, they are certainly close enough to constitute a form of plagiarism. And again, even though you might think that this is a “lesser” form of plagiarism, it's still plagiarism.

Both of these passages can easily be corrected to make them acceptable quotations or paraphrases.

> In the introduction of his book Cyberculture, Pierre Lévy observes that “Those who denounce cyberculture today strangely resemble those who criticized rock music during the fifties and sixties” (ix).

> Pierre Lévy suggests that the same kind of people who criticize cyberculture are the same kind of people who criticized rock and roll music back in the fifties and sixties. But both cyberculture and rock music inspire and entertain young people (ix).

Note that changing these passages from examples of plagiarism to acceptable examples of a quotation and a paraphrase is extremely easy: properly cite your sources.

This leads to the “golden rule” of avoiding plagiarism:

> Always cite your sources. If you are unsure as to whether you should or should not cite a particular claim or reference, you should probably cite your source.

Often, students are unclear as to whether or not they need to cite a piece of evidence because they believe it to be “common knowledge” or because they are not sure about the source of information. When in doubt about whether or not to cite evidence in order to give credit to a source (“common knowledge” or not), you should cite the evidence.

**Plagiarism and the Internet**

Sometimes, I think the ease of finding and retrieving information on the World Wide Web makes readers think that this information does not need to be cited. After all, it isn’t a traditional source like a book or a journal; it is available for “free.” All a research writer needs to do with a web site is “cut and paste” whatever he needs into his essay, right? Wrong!

*You need to cite the evidence you find from the Internet or the World Wide Web the same way you cite evidence from other sources.* To not do this is plagiarism, or, more bluntly, cheating. Just because the information is “freely” available on the Internet does not mean you can use this information in your academic writing without
properly citing it, much in the same way that the information from library journals and books “freely” available to you needs to be cited in order to give credit where credit is due. It is also not acceptable to simply download graphics from the World Wide Web. Images found on the Internet are protected by copyright laws. Quite literally, taking images from the Web (particularly from commercial sources) is an offense that could lead to legal action. There are places where you can find graphics and clip art that Web publishers have made publicly available for anyone to use, but be sure that the Web site where you find the graphics makes this explicit before you take graphics as your own. In short, you can use evidence from the Web as long as you don’t plagiarize and as long as you properly cite it; don’t take graphics from the Web unless you know the images are in the public domain.

READ: ACKNOWLEDGING SOURCES AND AVOIDING PLAGIARISM

Acknowledgment of Sources is a Rhetorical Act

To an inexperienced writer, citing and documenting sources may seem like busywork. Yet, when you cite your external sources in the text of your paper and when you document them at the end of your piece in a list of works cited or a bibliography, you are performing a rhetorical act. Complete and accurate citing and documenting of all external sources help writers achieve three very important goals:

1. It enhances your credibility as a writer. By carefully and accurately citing your external sources in the text and by documenting them at the end of your paper you show your readers that you are serious about your subject, your research, and the argument which you are making in your paper. You demonstrate that you have studied your subject in sufficient depth, and by reading credible and authoritative sources.
2. It helps you to avoid plagiarism. Plagiarism is trying to pass someone else’s ideas or writing as your own. It is a serious offense that can damage the reputation of a writer forever and lead to very serious consequences if committed in an academic or professional setting. Later on in the chapter, we will discuss plagiarism and ways to avoid it in detail.
3. The presence of complete citations of sources in your paper will help you demonstrate to your readers that you are an active participant in the community of readers, writers, researchers, and learners. It shows that you are aware of the conversations that are going on among writers and researchers in your field and that you are willing to enter those conversations by researching and writing about the subjects that interest you. By providing enough information about the sources which you used in you own research and writing, you give other interested readers the opportunity to find out more about your subject and, thus, to enter in a conversation with you.

The Logic and Structure of a Source Citation

Every time writers cite and document their sources, they do it in two places in the paper—in the text itself and at the end of the paper, in a list of works cited or bibliography. A citation is incomplete and, by and large, useless to the readers, if either of the parts is missing. Consider the following example, in which I cite an academic journal article using the Modern Language Association citation system. Please note that I give this example at this point in the chapter only to demonstrate the two parts of a citation. Later on, we will discuss how to cite and document different kinds of sources using different documentation systems, in full detail.
In-text citations

In-text citations are also known as parenthetical citations or parenthetical references because, at the end of the citation, parentheses are used. In her essay “If Winston Weather Would Just Write to Me on E-mail,” published in the journal College Composition and Communication, writer and teacher Wendy Bishop shares her thoughts on the nature of writing: “[I see…writing as a mixture of mess and self-discipline, of self-history [and] cultural history.” (101).

The Citation in the List of Works Cited


The reason why each citation, regardless of the type of source and the documentation system being used, has two parts is simple. Writers acknowledge and document external sources for several reasons. One of these reasons is to give their readers enough information and enable them, if necessary, to find the same source which the paper mentions. Therefore, if we look at the kinds of information provided in the citation (page numbers, titles, authors, publishers, and publication dates), it becomes clear that this information is sufficient to locate the source in the library, bookstore, or online.

When to Cite and Document Sources

The brief answer to this question is “always.” Every time you use someone else’s ideas, arguments, opinions, or data, you need to carefully acknowledge their author and source. Keep in mind that you are not just borrowing others’ words when you use sources in your writing. You are borrowing ideas. Therefore, even if you are not directly citing the source, but paraphrase or summarize it, you still need to cite it both in the text and at the end of the paper in a list of works cited or in a list of references.

The only exception is when you are dealing with what is known as “common knowledge.” Common knowledge consists of facts that are so widely known that they do not require a source reference. For instance, if you say in your writing that the Earth rotates around the Sun or that Ronald Reagan was a US President, you do not need to cite the sources of this common knowledge formally.

Avoiding Plagiarism

Plagiarism is a problem that exists not only on college, university, and high school campuses. In recent years, several high profile cases, some involving famous writers and journalists have surfaced, in which the these writers were accused of either presenting someone else work as their own or fabricating works based on fictitious or unreliable research. With the advent of the Internet, it has become relatively easy to download complete papers. Various people and organizations, sometimes masquerading as “writing consultants” promise students that they would write a paper on any subject and of any level of complexity for a hefty fee. Clearly, the use of such services by student writers is dishonest and dishonorable. If your college or university is like mine, it probably has adopted strict policies for dealing with plagiarizing writers. Punishments for intentional plagiarism are severe and may include not only a failing grade for the class but even an expulsion from the university.

In addition to intentional plagiarism, there is also the unintentional kind. Experience shows that beginning writers' work sometimes include passages which could be called plagiarized because such writers often do not know how to cite and document external sources properly or do not understand that importance of following proper citation practices.

Observing the following practices will help you avoid plagiarism:
As you research, keep careful notes of your sources. As you take notes for your research project, keep track of what materials in those notes comes from external sources and what material is yours. Keep track of all your sources, including interviews and surveys, photographs and drawings, personal e-mails and conversations. Be sure to record the following information:

- Author
- Title
- Date of publication
- Publisher

Remember that when you use external sources, you are borrowing not the words of another writer, but his or her ideas, theories, and opinions. Therefore, even if you summarize or paraphrase a source, be sure to give it full credit. Writers used to have to record this information on separate note cards. However, with the proliferation of online and other electronic tools which allow us to keep track of our research, the task of recording and reflecting on source-related information has become easier.

Anti-Plagiarism Activity

Read the following four paragraphs. They are from a research source, an article in *The New Yorker* magazine. The other three are from student papers which attempt to use the article as an external source. As you read consider the following questions:

- Would you call the student’s passage or its parts plagiarized from the original? Why or why not?
- If any parts of the student’s passages are plagiarized what needs to be changed in order to avoid plagiarism? Keep in mind that you may need to rewrite the whole Paragraph and not just make changes in separate sentences.
- Which of the student passages will require more significant rewriting than others and why?

Source Paragraph (from the article “Personality Plus,” by Malcolm Gladwell. *New Yorker*, Sept 20, 2004). One of the most popular personality tests in the world is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), a psychological assessment system based on Carl Jung’s notion that people make sense of the world through a series or psychological frames. Some people are extraverts, some are introverts. Some process information through logical thought. Some are directed by their feelings. Some make sense of the world through intuitive leaps. Others collect data through their senses.

Student Paragraph 1

The Myers-Briggs Test is a very popular way to assess someone’s personality type. Philosopher Carl Jung believed that people make sense of the world in different ways. Some are extraverts and some and introverts. According to this idea, people process information either by logical reasoning or through intuition or feelings.

Student Paragraph 2

According to writer Malcolm Gladwell, One of the most popular personality tests in the world is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), a psychological-assessment system based on Carl Jung's notion that people make sense of the world through a series or psychological frames. Gladwell states that the test is based on the idea by Carl Jung that people make sense of the world through a series of psychological frames. According to Jung, some people are extroverts and some are introverts. Some process information through logical input, and some through feelings. Some make sense of the world through intuitive leaps. Others collect data through their senses.

Student Paragraph 3

One of the most popular personality tests in the world is the Myers-Briggs Type Indicator (MBTI), a psychological assessment system based on Carl Jung's notion that people make sense of the world through a series or psychological frames (Gladwell 43). The test is based on Jung’s theory that people understand the world differently. This is why we have extroverts and introverts and people who act either based on reasoning or feelings (Gladwell).
Major Citation Systems

In this part of the chapter, I will explain the major citation and documentation systems which you are likely to encounter in your writing for college classes and beyond. The information in this section is not meant to be memorized. Instead, I encourage you to use this material as a reference source, when you are writing a paper and need to cite and document sources correctly, using one of the systems described below, refer to this chapter.

Please note that the following sections include only the basic information about each of the citation styles. There are plenty of excellent sources explaining and illustrating the differences between citation systems. I recommend the cite of the Online Writing Center at Purdue University.

Conclusion

Avoiding plagiarism and acknowledging your external sources completely and accurately are vital parts of the writing process. Your credibility as a writer and the reception that you work will receive from readers may depend on how well you acknowledge your sources. By following the guidelines presented in this chapter and by seeking out more knowledge about the rules of citing and documenting from the publications listed in this chapter, you will become a more competent, more professional, and more credible writer. This chapter covers only the basics of source citing and documenting. For more resources this topic and the various styles of documentation, see the Appendix to this book.

BASIC GUIDELINES FOR CITING RESOURCES

Sources are cited in the body of the text as well as at the end of the document. The APA and MLA styles differ in how to format these citations.

- In-text citations must clearly show what information the citation is referring to, which is why they must be put in parenthesis and written inside the period.
  - Example: On November 8, 2009, the world’s largest cookie was made (Smith, 2009).
- To clearly show that a citation is for multiple sentences, it should be put at the end of the first sentence (inside the period). This clearly introduces the citation at the same time the information is introduced.
  - Example: The topic of cookies and their origins has been studied by John Smith (2009). Cookies are thought to have come from… They were originally used for…
- Citations at the end of a writing should be well organized, and follow all the rules of the citation style. For example, APA style requires citations to be in alphabetical order.
- If information is not available for a complete citation, just skip the part of the citation that you can’t find, filling in all areas of information that are available. You should try your hardest to find all information, however, to make your writing most credible.
  - Example: Author’s name is missing and there is not an organization name mentioned, write citation as follows: “The Preparation of Bacterial and Oral Smears, and the Use of Simple Stains.” Microbiology Laboratory. New Jersey: Pearson Education Inc, 2003. 21-30.
INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY

“Intellectual Property” was written by Joseph M. Moxley

Identify the ethical responsibilities of authors. Understand intellectual property and copyright.

In order to avoid inadvertent plagiarism or academic dishonesty, you must understand intellectual property and copyright. In our digital age, where users can easily download information, we must consider these issues from an ethical perspective as well.

Intellectual Property

“The ease of saving images off of the web has caused a very real problem for artists and content providers alike. If you have placed your intellectual property on the web chances are that sooner or later someone is going to ‘borrow’ a little bit of it… without your permission.” -Linda Cole

Intellectual Property (IP) refers to a document or ideas owned by authors, publishers, and corporations. IP is anything that reflects an original thought that is written down or expressed in any media, such as word-processed documents, emails, Web sites, and music. Simply put, what you create is your “intellectual property.” Graphics, songs, poems, pictures, and essays are examples of “properties” that are owned by their creators, properties that are subject to U.S. and international copyright laws.

Intellectual Property Resources

Copyright

Copyright refers to the laws that protect your ownership of property (whether or not you file a formal copyright application). Plagiarism refers to the theft of someone’s intellectual property. According to the U.S. Copyright Office,

Copyright is a form of protection provided by the laws of the United States (title 17, U.S.Code) to the authors of “original works of authorship” including literary, dramatic, musical, artistic, and certain other intellectual works. (U.S. Copyright Office, Copyright Basics, Circular 1).

Copyright refers to the laws that protect the creator’s intellectual property. Copyright laws allow you (as the creator) certain rights. You can:

1. Reproduce the work in copies such as books or CDs.
2. Prepare a derivative work. For example, if you write a book or short story, only you can create a play or movie from that story. (Of course, you can sell these rights if you so desire.)
3. Distribute copies of your work to the public by sales or other methods. You get to perform or display the work publicly (e.g., plays, music, or dance performances).

Copyright Resources

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/TzV8GAtK0A0
• **iCopyright**: “Our goal is to put the iCopyright icon on every Web page—and give it intelligence. It will “know” about the content it sits on. It will help publishers protect, license, and track their intellectual property. It will give credit to the people who created it. It will help Internet users obtain the proper license to reprint or reuse copyrighted works in the format they desire.”

• **Privacy in the Online Classroom**: Article that explores reasons to limit access and restriction methods

• **Chilling Effects Clearinghouse**: Written by students at UC Berkeley’s Boalt Hall School of Law, “These pages will help you understand the protections intellectual property laws and the First Amendment give to your online activities. We are excited about the new opportunities the Internet offers individuals to express their views, parody politicians, celebrate their favorite movie stars, or criticize businesses.”

• **Copyright**: Intellectual Property in the Information Age: A Classroom Guide to Copyright from Janice Walker, University of South Florida, Dept. of English.

• **Intellectual Property Law**: This site “provides information about intellectual property law including patent, trademark and copyright. Resources include comprehensive links, general information, space for professionals to publish articles and forums for discussing related issues.”

• **Gigalaw.com**: Excellent resource for information on intellectual property and copyright.

• **Copyright Myths**: Wonderful, easy-to-understand, rich essay on copyright. If you’re going to read just one essay on copyright, read this one!

---

**ASSESSMENT: MLA & APA GAME RESPONSE**

APA (American Psychological Association) and MLA (Modern Language Association) are two very common types of citation formatting used in higher education. There are others, as well, but we’ll be talking specifically about APA and MLA this quarter.

APA is typically used for science courses, including nursing. MLA, on the other hand, is the usual style for humanities and social science courses. You’ll probably be asked to use both of them during your time in college, so I want you to be prepared to handle each of them when need be.

First, visit the **APA and MLA Citation Game Home Page** by the University of Washington’s TRIO Training program.

Then, complete the writing task below.

For this assignment, I’d like you to write a 2-paragraph (3+ sentences per paragraph) commentary on your familiarity with APA and MLA right now.

• In the first paragraph, describe your reaction to the citation work you’ve done so far in your academic life. Which style have you used more often so far? Which style seems more natural to you? Which style is more likely to be the one used in your degree program?

• In the second paragraph, discuss the mechanics of APA and MLA citation as you understand them right now. Did the questions in this game make sense to you? Do you have questions about why things are formatted in citations the way they are? Do you have comments about what information needs to be included in a citation, and why that information is necessary?

**Extra Credit Opportunity**: While the overall quiz is pretty accurate, it does contain a few minor mistakes in the way it lists authors and dates. You can earn 1 extra credit point for each inaccuracy you find, up to 5 points maximum.
APA DOCUMENTATION OVERVIEW

In this course, we will use the APA style of documentation. Technical writers usually write in the APA style of documentation. See the following APA rules for reporting research:

APA Style of Documentation Guidelines

1. You must document all information that you use from any source regardless of how you report the information.
2. By documenting sources of information, you respect the recorded ideas, or intellectual property, of others.
3. Research writers use a specific format to indicate from where they obtained their information. These formats are called styles of documentation.
4. Two types of documentation styles are MLA, which is the Modern Language Association, and APA, which is the American Psychological Association.
5. Technical writers use the APA style of documentation.
6. The APA style of documentation requires that the entire paper is doubled spaced.
7. The APA style of documentation requires that the page with references is titled as “References,” not “Works Cited.”

Referencing in-text citations

1. Parenthetical documentation for APA requires the author and the date for all information cited. Every sentence in the research section needs a reference to its source, followed by it date of publication.
2. If a direct quotation is cited, APA in-text citation/parenthetical documentation requires the author, the date, and page number or paragraph number must be cited. Paragraph numbers are cited for internet sources. The exception to this rule is citing pdf documents. Page numbers are referenced for sources published as pdf files.
3. When referencing a page number, the number must be identified as a page, for one page (p. 24) or as pp. for multiple pages. (pp. 24–30).
4. When referencing a paragraph number, the number must be identified as a paragraph, for one paragraph (¶ 4) or as (¶ 4–7), for multiple paragraphs.
5. When citing articles with a considerable number of paragraphs, preface the paragraph with the heading of the sub section of the article (Various Models of Reports, ¶ 12).

Citing Sources on the Reference Page

1. APA Does not use quotation marks around titles of articles.
2. APA only capitalizes the initial letter of the first word of a title of an article or book and the initial letter of the first word after a colon in a title of an article or book. And of course, the initial letters of all proper nouns in titles of articles or books are capitalized.
3. APA cites the date (year) after the author’s name.
4. The entries in an APA Reference can be list alphabetically or by location in the paper.

APA STYLE DOCUMENTATION

American Psychological Association Style (APA) is most commonly used to cite sources within the social sciences.

Title page:
- Contains title
- Is double spaced
- Contains author name
  - First name, middle initial(s), last name
  - Do not use titles (Dr.) or degrees (Ph.D.)
- Contains name of institutional affiliation
  - Location author conducted research (if applicable)
- Has a page header with title flush to the left and page number flush to the right
  - Should be no more than 12 words
  - Emit all abbreviation or words that contain no purpose

Essay body:
- Is typed and double spaced on 8.5” by 11” paper
- Has one inch margins
- Is written with 10-12 pt. font
- Is written in Times New Roman font, or a similar style
- Includes a page header containing title of your page in all capital letters
APA CITATION STYLE, 6TH EDITION: GENERAL STYLE GUIDELINES

General Guidelines for Writing a Paper: APA Style

• All sources of information and data, whether quoted directly or paraphrased, are cited with parenthetical references in the text of your paper (p. 170).

Example: (Walker, 2003).

• Double-space your entire paper, including the References list and any block quotes (pp. 171, 180).

Citations In Text

How to Cite a Direct Quote (pp. 170–171)

When you incorporate a direct quotation into a sentence, you must cite the source. Fit quotations within your sentences, enclosed in quotation marks, making sure the sentences are grammatically correct.

Gibaldi (2003, p. 109) indicates that, “Quotations are effective in research papers when used selectively.”

Remember that “[q]uotations are effective in research papers when used selectively” (Gibaldi, 2003, p. 109).

In 2003, Gibaldi wrote that, “Quotations are effective in research papers when used selectively” (p. 109).

If a quotation is 40 words or more, omit quotation marks and use a block format in which the quotation is indented about ½ inch (or 5 spaces) from the left margin.

How to Cite Summaries or Paraphrases

Even if you put information in your own words by summarizing or paraphrasing, you must cite the original author or researcher and the date of publication. You are also encouraged to provide a page or paragraph number; check with your instructor to see if page numbers are required.

For example, a paraphrase of Gibaldi’s earlier quotation might be identified as follows:

Within the research paper, quotations will have more impact when used judiciously (Gibaldi, 2003, p. 109).

You may want to check out The Owl at Purdue for more tips on paraphrasing.

How to Cite Sources when the Primary Authors have the same Surname (p. 176)

If two or more of your sources are written by authors with the same surname, include the first author’s initials with the surname in every in-text reference.

Example: Among studies, we review M. A. Light and Light (2008) and I. Light (2006) …
How to Cite Different Numbers of Authors

When a work has 2 authors, cite both names every time the reference occurs. When a work has 3-5 authors, cite all the names the first time the reference occurs; in subsequent citations, use the surname of the first author followed by et al. When a work has 6+ authors, use the surname of the first author followed by et al. every time the reference occurs in the text (p.175).

Note: There is a helpful chart on how to cite references with different numbers of authors on page 177 of the Manual.

How to Cite Information If No Page Numbers Are Available (pp.171-172)

If a resource contains no page numbers, as can be the case with electronic sources, then you cannot include a page number in the parentheses. However, if the source indicates paragraph numbers, use the abbreviation “para” and the relevant number in the parentheses. If the paragraph number is not visible, cite the heading and the paragraph number following it.

As Myers (2000, para. 5) aptly phrased it…

(Beutler, 2000, Conclusion, para. 1)

How to Cite Information When You Have Not Seen the Original Source (p.178)

Sometimes an author writes about research that someone else has done, but you are unable to track down the original research report. In this case, because you did not read the original report, you will include only the source you did consult in your References. The words “as cited in” in the parenthetical reference indicate you have not read the original research.

Fong’s 1987 study (as cited in Bertram, 1996) found that older students’ memory can be as good as that of young people, but this depends on how memory is tested. [Do not include Fong (1987) in your References; do include Bertram (1996).]

How to Cite when you are Altering a Direct Quote

When you need to leave out part of a quotation to make it fit grammatically or because it contains irrelevant/unnecessary information, insert ellipses (pp.172-173).

If you must add or slightly change words within a quotation for reasons of grammar or clarity, indicate the change with square brackets (p.173).

Creating a Reference List

• Start the Reference list on a new page and include the word “References” in uppercase and lowercase centered. (pp. 180-192)
• The References list should be double-spaced. Each entry should be formatted with a hanging indent (p.180).
• References cited in text must appear in the References list and vice versa. The only exceptions to this rule are personal communications and classical works; they are cited in text only and are not included in the References list (p.174).
• Use ONLY the initial(s) of the author’s given name, NOT the full name (p.184).
• If the References list includes 2 or more entries by the same author(s), list them in chronological order with the earliest first (p. 182).
• If the author’s name is unavailable, use the first few words of the title of the article, book or Web source, including the appropriate capitalization and italics formatting (pp.176-177). E.g. (Scientists Say, 2000).
• Arrange References entries in one alphabetical sequence by the surname of the first author or by title or first word if there is no author (pp.181-183). Ignore the words A, An, and The when alphabetizing by title.
• In titles and subtitles of articles, chapters, and books, capitalize only the first letter of the first word and any proper nouns, except in parenthetical (in text) citations (p.185).
• Italicize book titles, journal titles, and volume numbers. Do NOT italicize issue numbers.
• Do NOT include retrieval dates unless the source of the material may change over time such as a blog entry or wikis, (p.192)
• If a Digital Object Identifier (DOI) is listed on either a print or an electronic source it is included in the reference (pp.188-192). A DOI is a unique alphanumeric string that is used to identify a certain source (typically journal articles). It is often found on the first page of an article. Example: doi:10.1080/14622200410001676305
• When the References entry includes a URL that must be divided between two lines, break it BEFORE a slash or dash or at another logical division point. Do NOT insert a hyphen if you need to break a URL or a period at the end of the URL. (p.192).
• For a helpful list of some of the abbreviations used in References (such as Vols. for Volumes) check out page 180 of the APA Manual.

Subject Guide

Gisela Butera
Email Me

CITING AND REFERENCING TECHNIQUES

Learning Objectives

By the end of this section, you will be able to:

• Apply American Psychological Association (APA) style formatting guidelines for citations.

This section covers the nitty-gritty details of in-text citations. You will learn how to format citations for different types of source materials, whether you are citing brief quotations, paraphrasing ideas, or quoting longer passages. You will also learn techniques you can use to introduce quoted and paraphrased material effectively. Keep this section handy as a reference to consult while writing the body of your paper.
Formatting Cited Material: The Basics

As noted in previous sections of this book, in-text citations usually provide the name of the author(s) and the year the source was published. For direct quotations, the page number must also be included. Use past-tense verbs when introducing a quote—“Smith found…” and not “Smith finds.…”

Formatting Brief Quotations

For brief quotations—fewer than forty words—use quotation marks to indicate where the quoted material begins and ends, and cite the name of the author(s), the year of publication, and the page number where the quotation appears in your source. Remember to include commas to separate elements within the parenthetical citation. Also, avoid redundancy. If you name the author(s) in your sentence, do not repeat the name(s) in your parenthetical citation. Review following the examples of different ways to cite direct quotations.

Chang (2008) emphasized that “engaging in weight-bearing exercise consistently is one of the single best things women can do to maintain good health” (p. 49).

The author’s name can be included in the body of the sentence or in the parenthetical citation. Note that when a parenthetical citation appears at the end of the sentence, it comes after the closing quotation marks and before the period. The elements within parentheses are separated by commas.

Weight Training for Women (Chang, 2008) claimed that “engaging in weight-bearing exercise consistently is one of the single best things women can do to maintain good health” (p. 49).

Weight Training for Women claimed that “engaging in weight-bearing exercise consistently is one of the single best things women can do to maintain good health” (Chang, 2008, p. 49).

Including the title of a source is optional.

In Chang’s 2008 text Weight Training for Women, she asserts, “Engaging in weight-bearing exercise is one of the single best things women can do to maintain good health” (p. 49).

The author’s name, the date, and the title may appear in the body of the text. Include the page number in the parenthetical citation. Also, notice the use of the verb asserts to introduce the direct quotation.

“Engaging in weight-bearing exercise,” Chang asserts, “is one of the single best things women can do to maintain good health” (2008, p. 49).

You may begin a sentence with the direct quotation and add the author’s name and a strong verb before continuing the quotation.

Formatting Paraphrased and Summarized Material

When you paraphrase or summarize ideas from a source, you follow the same guidelines previously provided, except that you are not required to provide the page number where the ideas are located. If you are summing up the main findings of a research article, simply providing the author’s name and publication year may suffice, but if you are paraphrasing a more specific idea, consider including the page number.

Read the following examples.

Chang (2008) pointed out that weight-bearing exercise has many potential benefits for women.

Here, the writer is summarizing a major idea that recurs throughout the source material. No page reference is needed.
Chang (2008) found that weight-bearing exercise could help women maintain or even increase bone density through middle age and beyond, reducing the likelihood that they will develop osteoporosis in later life (p. 86).

Although the writer is not directly quoting the source, this passage paraphrases a specific detail, so the writer chose to include the page number where the information is located.

Tip

Although APA style guidelines do not require writers to provide page numbers for material that is not directly quoted, your instructor may wish you to do so when possible. Check with your instructor about his or her preferences.

Formatting Longer Quotations

When you quote a longer passage from a source—forty words or more—use a different format to set off the quoted material. Instead of using quotation marks, create a block quotation by starting the quotation on a new line and indented five spaces from the margin. Note that in this case, the parenthetical citation comes after the period that ends the sentence. Here is an example:

In recent years, many writers within the fitness industry have emphasized the ways in which women can benefit from weight-bearing exercise, such as weightlifting, karate, dancing, stair climbing, hiking, and jogging. Chang (2008) found that engaging in weight-bearing exercise regularly significantly reduces women’s risk of developing osteoporosis. Additionally, these exercises help women maintain muscle mass and overall strength, and many common forms of weight-bearing exercise, such as brisk walking or stair climbing, also provide noticeable cardiovascular benefits. (p. 93)

If you are quoting a passage that continues into a second paragraph, indent five spaces again in the first line of the second paragraph. Here is an example:

In recent years, many writers within the fitness industry have emphasized the ways in which women can benefit from weight-bearing exercise, such as weightlifting, karate, dancing, stair climbing, hiking, and jogging. Chang (2008) found that engaging in weight-bearing exercise regularly significantly reduces women’s risk of developing osteoporosis. Additionally, these exercises help women maintain muscle mass and overall strength, and many common forms of weight-bearing exercise, such as brisk walking or stair climbing, also provide noticeable cardiovascular benefits.

It is important to note that swimming cannot be considered a weight-bearing exercise, since the water supports and cushions the swimmer. That doesn’t mean swimming isn’t great exercise, but it should be considered one part of an integrated fitness program. (p. 93)

Tip

Be wary of quoting from sources at length. Remember, your ideas should drive the paper, and quotations should be used to support and enhance your points. Make sure any lengthy quotations that you include serve a clear purpose. Generally, no more than 10–15 percent of a paper should consist of quoted material.

Introducing Cited Material Effectively

Including an introductory phrase in your text, such as “Jackson wrote” or “Copeland found,” often helps you integrate source material smoothly. This citation technique also helps convey that you are actively engaged with
your source material. Unfortunately, during the process of writing your research paper, it is easy to fall into a rut and use the same few dull verbs repeatedly, such as “Jones said,” “Smith stated,” and so on.

Punch up your writing by using strong verbs that help your reader understand how the source material presents ideas. There is a world of difference between an author who “suggests” and one who “claims,” one who “questions” and one who “criticizes.” You do not need to consult your thesaurus every time you cite a source, but do think about which verbs will accurately represent the ideas and make your writing more engaging. The following chart shows some possibilities.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Strong Verbs for Introducing Cited Material</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ask</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>explain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>recommend</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>propose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>insist</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>determine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>evaluate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>warn</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Writing at Work

It is important to accurately represent a colleague’s ideas or communications in the workplace. When writing professional or academic papers, be mindful of how the words you use to describe someone’s tone or ideas carry certain connotations. Do not say a source argues a particular point unless an argument is, in fact, presented. Use lively language, but avoid language that is emotionally charged. Doing so will ensure you have represented your colleague’s words in an authentic and accurate way.

Formatting In-Text Citations for Other Source Types

These sections discuss the correct format for various types of in-text citations. Read them through quickly to get a sense of what is covered, and then refer to them again as needed.

Print Sources

This section covers books, articles, and other print sources with one or more authors.

A Work by One Author

For a print work with one author, follow the guidelines provided in “Formatting a Research Paper.” Always include the author’s name and year of publication. Include a page reference whenever you quote a source directly. (See also the guidelines presented earlier in this chapter about when to include a page reference for paraphrased material.)
Chang (2008) emphasized that “engaging in weight-bearing exercise consistently is one of the single best things women can do to maintain good health” (p. 49).

Chang (2008) pointed out that weight-bearing exercise has many potential benefits for women.

Two or More Works by the Same Author

At times, your research may include multiple works by the same author. If the works were published in different years, a standard in-text citation will serve to distinguish them. If you are citing multiple works by the same author published in the same year, include a lowercase letter immediately after the year. Rank the sources in the order they appear in your references section. The source listed first includes an a after the year, the source listed second includes a b, and so on.

Rodriguez (2009a) criticized the nutrition-supplement industry for making unsubstantiated and sometimes misleading claims about the benefits of taking supplements. Additionally, he warned that consumers frequently do not realize the potential harmful effects of some popular supplements (Rodriguez, 2009b).

Tip

If you have not yet created your references section, you may not be sure which source will appear first. See “Creating a References Section” for guidelines—or assign each source a temporary code and highlight the in-text citations so you remember to double-check them later on.

Works by Authors with the Same Last Name

If you are citing works by different authors with the same last name, include each author’s initials in your citation, whether you mention them in the text or in parentheses. Do so even if the publication years are different.

J. S. Williams (2007) believes nutritional supplements can be a useful part of some diet and fitness regimens. C. D. Williams (2008), however, believes these supplements are overrated.

According to two leading researchers, the rate of childhood obesity exceeds the rate of adult obesity (K. Connelley, 2010; O. Connelley, 2010).

Studies from both A. Wright (2007) and C. A. Wright (2008) confirm the benefits of diet and exercise on weight loss.

A Work by Two Authors

When two authors are listed for a given work, include both authors’ names each time you cite the work. If you are citing their names in parentheses, use an ampersand (&) between them. (Use the word and, however, if the names appear in your sentence.)

As Garrison and Gould (2010) pointed out, “It is never too late to quit smoking. The health risks associated with this habit begin to decrease soon after a smoker quits” (p. 101).

As doctors continue to point out, “It is never too late to quit smoking. The health risks associated with this habit begin to decrease soon after a smoker quits” (Garrison & Gould, 2010, p. 101).
A Work by Three to Five Authors

If the work you are citing has three to five authors, list all the authors’ names the first time you cite the source. In subsequent citations, use the first author’s name followed by the abbreviation et al. (Et al. is short for et alia, the Latin phrase for “and others.”)


One survey, conducted among 350 smokers aged 18 to 30, included a detailed questionnaire about participants’ motivations for smoking (Henderson, Davidian, & Degler, 2010).

Note that these examples follow the same ampersand conventions as sources with two authors. Again, use the ampersand only when listing authors’ names in parentheses.

As Henderson et al. (2010) found, some young people, particularly young women, use smoking as a means of appetite suppression.

Disturbingly, some young women use smoking as a means of appetite suppression (Henderson et al., 2010).

Note how the phrase et al. is punctuated. No period comes after et, but al. gets a period because it is an abbreviation for a longer Latin word. In parenthetical references, include a comma after et al. but not before. Remember this rule by mentally translating the citation to English: “Henderson and others, 2010.”

A Work by Six or More Authors

If the work you are citing has six or more authors, list only the first author’s name, followed by et al., in your in-text citations. The other authors’ names will be listed in your references section.

Researchers have found that outreach work with young people has helped reduce tobacco use in some communities (Costello et al., 2007).

A Work Authored by an Organization

When citing a work that has no individual author(s) but is published by an organization, use the organization’s name in place of the author’s name. Lengthy organization names with well-known abbreviations can be abbreviated. In your first citation, use the full name, followed by the abbreviation in square brackets. Subsequent citations may use the abbreviation only.

It is possible for a patient to have a small stroke without even realizing it (American Heart Association [AHA], 2010).

Another cause for concern is that even if patients realize that they have had a stroke and need medical attention, they may not know which nearby facilities are best equipped to treat them (AHA, 2010).

A Work with No Listed Author

If no author is listed and the source cannot be attributed to an organization, use the title in place of the author’s name. You may use the full title in your sentence or use the first few words—enough to convey the key ideas—in a parenthetical reference. Follow standard conventions for using italics or quotations marks with titles:

- Use italics for titles of books or reports.
- Use quotation marks for titles of articles or chapters.

Regular exercise can benefit patients with diabetes (“Living with Diabetes,” 2009).

Rosenhan (1973) had mentally healthy study participants claim to be experiencing hallucinations so they would be admitted to psychiatric hospitals.

A Work Cited within Another Work

To cite a source that is referred to within another secondary source, name the first source in your sentence. Then, in parentheses, use the phrase as cited in and the name of the second source author.

Rosenhan’s study “On Being Sane in Insane Places” (as cited in Spitzer, 1975) found that psychiatrists diagnosed schizophrenia in people who claimed to be experiencing hallucinations and sought treatment—even though these patients were, in fact, imposters.

Two or More Works Cited in One Reference

At times, you may provide more than one citation in a parenthetical reference, such as when you are discussing related works or studies with similar results. List the citations in the same order they appear in your references section, and separate the citations with a semicolon.

Some researchers have found serious flaws in the way Rosenhan’s study was conducted (Dawes, 2001; Spitzer, 1975).

Both of these researchers authored works that support the point being made in this sentence, so it makes sense to include both in the same citation.

A Famous Text Published in Multiple Editions

In some cases, you may need to cite an extremely well-known work that has been repeatedly republished or translated. Many works of literature and sacred texts, as well as some classic nonfiction texts, fall into this category. For these works, the original date of publication may be unavailable. If so, include the year of publication or translation for your edition. Refer to specific parts or chapters if you need to cite a specific section. Discuss with your instructor whether he or she would like you to cite page numbers in this particular instance.

In New Introductory Lectures on Psycho-Analysis, Freud explains that the “manifest content” of a dream—what literally takes place—is separate from its “latent content,” or hidden meaning (trans. 1965, lecture XXIX).

Here, the student is citing a classic work of psychology, originally written in German and later translated to English. Since the book is a collection of Freud’s lectures, the student cites the lecture number rather than a page number.

An Introduction, Foreword, Preface, or Afterword

To cite an introduction, foreword, preface, or afterword, cite the author of the material and the year, following the same format used for other print materials.

Electronic Sources

Whenever possible, cite electronic sources as you would print sources, using the author, the date, and where appropriate, a page number. For some types of electronic sources—for instance, many online articles—this information is easily available. Other times, however, you will need to vary the format to reflect the differences in online media.
Online Sources without Page Numbers

If an online source has no page numbers but you want to refer to a specific portion of the source, try to locate other information you can use to direct your reader to the information cited. Some websites number paragraphs within published articles; if so, include the paragraph number in your citation. Precede the paragraph number with the abbreviation for the word paragraph and the number of the paragraph (e.g., para. 4).

As researchers have explained, “Incorporating fresh fruits and vegetables into one’s diet can be a challenge for residents of areas where there are few or no easily accessible supermarkets” (Smith & Jones, 2006, para. 4).

Even if a source does not have numbered paragraphs, it is likely to have headings that organize the content. In your citation, name the section where your cited information appears, followed by a paragraph number.


This student cited the appropriate section heading within the website and then counted to find the specific paragraph where the cited information was located.

If an online source has no listed author and no date, use the source title and the abbreviation n.d. in your parenthetical reference.

It has been suggested that electromagnetic radiation from cellular telephones may pose a risk for developing certain cancers (“Cell Phones and Cancer," n.d.).

Personal Communication

For personal communications, such as interviews, letters, and e-mails, cite the name of the person involved, clarify that the material is from a personal communication, and provide the specific date the communication took place. Note that while in-text citations correspond to entries in the references section, personal communications are an exception to this rule. They are cited only in the body text of your paper.

J. H. Yardley, M.D., believes that available information on the relationship between cell phone use and cancer is inconclusive (personal communication, May 1, 2009).

Writing at Work

At work, you may sometimes share information resources with your colleagues by photocopying an interesting article or forwarding the URL of a useful website. Your goal in these situations and in formal research citations is the same. The goal is to provide enough information to help your professional peers locate and follow up on potentially useful information. Provide as much specific information as possible to achieve that goal, and consult with your professor as to what specific style he or she may prefer.

Key Takeaway

- In APA papers, in-text citations include the name of the author(s) and the year of publication whenever possible.
- Page numbers are always included when citing quotations. It is optional to include page numbers when citing paraphrased material; however, this should be done when citing a specific portion of a work.
- When citing online sources, provide the same information used for print sources if it is available.
When a source does not provide information that usually appears in a citation, in-text citations should provide readers with alternative information that would help them locate the source material. This may include the title of the source, section headings and paragraph numbers for websites, and so forth.

When writing a paper, discuss with your professor what particular standards he or she would like you to follow.

Exercises

1. Review the places in your paper where you cited, quoted, and paraphrased material from a source with a single author. Edit your citations to ensure that
   - each citation includes the author’s name, the date of publication, and, where appropriate, a page reference;
   - parenthetical citations are correctly formatted;
   - longer quotations use the block-quotaton format.

2. Review the citations in your paper once again. This time, look for places where you introduced source material using a signal phrase in your sentence.
   - Highlight the verbs used in your signal phrases, and make note of any that seem to be overused throughout the paper.
   - Identify at least three places where a stronger verb could be used.
   - Make the edits to your draft.

3. Review the places in your paper where you cited material from a source with multiple authors or with an organization as the author. Edit your citations to ensure that each citation follows APA guidelines for the inclusion of the authors’ names, the use of ampersands and et al., the date of publication, and, where appropriate, a page reference.

APA STYLE REFERENCE LISTS

Types of sources are usually put in the category of printed, electronic, or other. Within these categories are many sub-categories. Each of these sub-categories should be cited slightly differently in the APA format. Below explains the proper ways to list these different sources in the reference list, which should be attached at the end of a document.

The reference list should be formatted as follows:

- Double spaced
- Second and following lines of all citations indented about a half inch
- Times New Roman 12 point font
- In alphabetical order
- If the author’s name is not available, the organization name can be substituted
Printed Sources

• Book, One Author
  ◦ Give the author’s last name followed by a comma and initials (don’t put the author’s full first or middle name).
  ◦ Place the copyright date in parentheses, followed by a period.
  ◦ Italicize or underline the title, and capitalize only the first work of the title, the first word of the subtitle, and any proper nouns.
  ◦ Follow the city of publication with a comma and the two-letter postal abbreviation for the state. You do not have to give the state of large for well known cities such as New York and Boston.
    ◦ Indent the second and subsequent lines by five spaces.

• Book, Two or More Authors—Add as many authors as the publication has using the “&” symbol between.

• Anthology or Essay Collection
  ◦ If there is one editor, use: (Ed.).

• Government Report
  ◦ If the report doesn’t list an author, use the name of the agency that published it as the author. If it is a United States government agency, use “U.S”
  ◦ If the report has an identifying number, place it immediately after the title.

• Corporate Report
  ◦ List the names of the individual authors rather than the corporation if the names are given on the title page.
  ◦ If the names of the authors aren’t given on the title page, list the corporation as the author.
  ◦ When the author and publisher are the same, use the word “Author” as the name of the publisher.

• Essay in a Book

• Pamphlet or Brochure
  ◦ When the author and publisher are the same, use the word “Author” as the name of the publisher.

• Article in Popular Magazine
  ◦ Give the full date of the issue, placing the year first.
  ◦ Provide the volume number but not the issue number.
  ◦ Be sure to italicize the magazine name as well as the issue number.

• Newspaper Article
  ◦ In front of the page number for newspapers, write *p.* if there is one page, and *pp.* for a range of pages.
Electronic Sources

- **Report Available Only Through World Wide Web**
  - Because the site doesn’t give the date this page was published on the web, use “n.d.” meaning “no date”.

- **CD-ROM**
  - Include the title (in italics), the date (in parenthesis), the title of the series in italics, the electronic type and the city, state and manufacturer.

- **Email**
  - References to e-mails are only in parentheses in the text and are not included in the Reference list in APA. The citation in the text includes the author’s initials as well as his or her last name and an exact date.
  - Example: (F. Smith, personal communication, May 8, 2008)

Other Sources

- **Letter**
  - Letters are treated in the same manner as e-mails in APA.

- **Interview**
  - Interviews are treated in the same manner as e-mails in APA.
APA STYLE IN-TEXT CITATIONS

When citing an APA source from your bibliography in the text, the author’s name and publication year are put in parentheses in the normal sentence punctuation. A comma is placed between the name of the author and the date. For the citing of a specific page in the cited publication, p. with the page number following is used. If more than one page is being referred to, use pp. with the referred pages listed afterward.

**Example:** English Springer Spaniels originated in England in the year 1802 (Harris, 1977, p.28).

Harris is the author and the information came from a book he wrote that was published in 1977. The information was found on page 28.

**Example:** English Springer Spaniels were used for hunting (Harris et al., 1977).

Harris and three or more others are the authors of the cited information. “et al” is an abbreviation for the Latin phrase, *et alii,* which means “and others”.

**Example:** English Springer Spaniels come in black and white colors (*AKC Dog Book*, 1977).

The information came from a book call the “AKC Dog Book” that was published in 1977.

If more than one source by the same author published in the same year is used, differentiate the citations as seen in the following example:

**Example:** (Smith, 1989a) and (Smith, 1989b)

Consult publication manual of the *American Psychological Association* for more referencing examples.

**Example:** According to Keith, Snowboarding had progressed enormously in the past 20 years (2010, pp. 25-28).

If the Author’s name is incorporated into the sentence written itself, only the year and the page numbers are necessary in the parentheses.
How should a paraphrased passage be cited?

When paraphrasing a passage, it is essential to express the ideas of the author in your own original words; however, the author's message and meaning should always be preserved.

Charges of plagiarism can be avoided by including the proper citation of the work you are drawing from in your paraphrase. The APA requires a paraphrase to include the author's last name and the work's year of publication, but also suggests that the page number of the original text be included.

Let's look at an example of a cited paraphrase:

**Original text:** “A yellow flower is yellow because it reflects yellow light and absorbs other wavelengths. The red glass of a stained glass window is red because it transmits red light and absorbs other wavelengths. The process by which we perceive the colours of natural objects around us can therefore be described as a 'subtractive' process” (Pender, 1998, p. 14). [1]

**Paraphrase:** Pender explains that through *subtractive process*, humans see the color of objects based on the wavelengths of light that are absorbed by each object (Pender, 1998, p. 14). [1]

*Note:* The paraphrase maintains the ideas of the original passage while expressing the message in a new voice. The original author is also cited properly.

How should a summarized passage or work be cited?

When summarizing a passage or work from another writer, briefly outline in your own original words the major ideas presented in the source material. As brevity is the key feature of a summary, it is essential to express the main concepts of the original passage in as concise a manner as possible. Consider using a summary—rather than a short or block quotation—when preserving the original wording of the source material is not necessary for the reader to understand the ideas under discussion.

Let's look at an example of a cited summary:

**Original text:** “In their everyday life, people generally assume that they see the world around them the way it really is. When camping in Colorado, hikers believe they see the horizon as dotted with snow-covered mountaintops. When laying on the beach in North Carolina, sunbathers believe they see pelicans flying above the breaking waves. And these people would nearly always be right. Indeed, it is difficult to imagine not believing that the sights and sounds delivered to conscious awareness by perceptual systems are accurate renderings of the outside world. It would be difficult to know how to act if one could not trust one's senses to accurately report what the world outside is like” (Balcetis, 2010, p. 77). [2]

**Summary:** In *Social Psychology of Visual Perception*, Balcetis (2010) argues that because humans rely on the sensory information received from their body, they form preconceived beliefs about their surroundings that manifest as imaginary visual occurrences (p. 77). [2]

*Note:* The summary maintains the ideas of the original passage while concisely expressing its main concepts. The original author is also cited properly.
How should multiple sources be cited in a single parenthetical reference?

If multiple works need to be cited in the same set of parentheses, simply arrange them in alphabetical order by the author’s last names, or the order in which they would be listed in the References page. Use a semicolon to separate each work from the next one.

Let’s look at an example of multiple authors being cited:

In the past thirty years, Parkinson’s disease has been written about extensively by recognized figures in the field (Dorros, 1989; Duvoisin, 1991; Hauser & Zesiewicz, 1996). [3][4][5]

Note: This example includes the in-text citations of three works arranged in alphabetical order by authors’ names, separated by semi-colons, and enclosed in parentheses.

See also:

• Formatting In-text Citations (APA)


MLA FORMAT

Watch this video online: https://youtu.be/22CPQoLE4U0

Formatting the Works Cited Page (MLA)

Whenever you incorporate outside sources into your own writing, you must provide both in-text citations (within the body of the paper) and full citations (in the works cited page). The in-text citations point your reader toward the full citations in the works cited page.

That’s why the first bit of information in your in-text citation (generally, the author’s name; if no name is provided, the title of the article/book/webpage) should directly match up with the beginning of your works cited entry for that source. For further information about in-text citations, please read “Formatting In-Text Citations.”

For example, let’s say I have a quote from Benedict Anderson’s Imagined Communities in my research paper. Within the body of the paper, following the quote, I include the following in-text citation: (Anderson 56). This information points to the book’s entry in my works cited page:
Format In-text Citations (MLA)

How might you format your in-text citations so that they're more compliant with MLA guidelines?

You already know why MLA formatting guidelines are an important part of an academic paper, but let’s face it—who can remember all those rules about when and where certain citation information is requisite and when and where particular punctuation is appropriate? Thankfully, memorizing all of MLA’s formatting guidelines is not necessary! MLA style guides can be found easily online or in texts like The MLA Handbook, and writers can refer to these resources when they are unclear about a particular MLA style guideline.

Nonetheless, as you create multiple drafts of your composition papers, there are some MLA conventions that you will need to call on time and time again. In particular, as you integrate source material masterfully into your work, you will be required to call on proper in-text citation guidelines repeatedly. It is therefore important that you take the time to memorize the MLA guidelines for in-text citations.

MLA Checklist

• Is the heading in the upper left-hand corner of the first page?
• Does the heading include:
  ◦ Your name?
  ◦ Your instructor’s name?
  ◦ The course name?
  ◦ The date?
• Does the paper have an original title (other than something like “Final Paper”)?
  ◦ Is the title presented without being bolded, italicized, or placed in quotation marks
• Read more…

MLA Template

Read more…

Exercise: In-text Citations (MLA)

Look at the sentences below, each of which contains an incorrectly formatted in-text citation. Specify the error made in each sentence; then, write a new sentence in which the in-text citation is correctly formatted.

1. The parlor metaphor of writing describes writing as entering into a conversation, as in arriving late and a parlor and talking to guests who have been there long before you have (7).

2. In “Argument as Emergence, Rhetoric as Love,” Jim Corder explains that “Everyone is an argument.” (1)

3. David Sedaris’s Me Talk Pretty One Day takes place at a school in Paris (Sedaris 1).

Read more…
FORMATTING THE WORKS CITED PAGE (MLA)

Although there are still distinct rules you need to follow to create a citation, the rules in MLA 8 are less rigid than before and allow for you to look for the main components of a citation and construct it yourself. This means you will need to think about the source and its information, select the appropriate components, and organize it in a logical and useful manner.

Regardless of the source type, you are now asked to locate the same “core elements” from your sources and place them in a standard order in order to create citations. These core elements are explained in detail below. **Note that you do not need to memorize every step of this process**, but should take this opportunity to understand how citations are created. You can always return to this page, to the MLA handbook, or to online resources to help you create the citations you need for your paper.

Visit this page in your course online to click through the following slides to learn more about each component and to see examples of MLA citations.

You can also download the presentation here.

Watch the video below to walk through the steps of creating a citation for citing an eBook from a database.

**MLA: Citing an eBook (8th edition) from Lawrence W. Tyree Library on Vimeo.**

Practice

Click “Get Started” at the MLA Style Center to practice creating citations.

WHEN & HOW TO USE MLA IN-TEXT CITATION

Download this PDF file to see a Decision Tree for When & How to use MLA in-text citation.
How to Cite a YouTube Video in MLA

As more information is introduced via the Web, students and instructors must come to expect an increase in the number of online citations included in research papers. YouTube videos are among the content one should learn to handle. Continue reading for specific instructions and examples concerning how to cite a YouTube video in MLA format.

Method 1 of 4: In-Text Citation

1. **Type a portion of the title in parentheses.**[1] Follow quoted, paraphrased, or summarized information included in the text with the video’s full title or a shortened version of the title. Enclose the title in parentheses, and place any punctuation marks on the outside of the parentheses.
   - Maru is a famous cat known for a variety of antics (“Maru Greatest Hits”).

2. **Introduce the title in the sentence.** Instead of including the title inside parentheses, you can also introduce the video’s full title or a shortened form directly in the sentence when you write out the borrowed information. Surround the title in quotation marks.
   - As seen in “Maru Greatest Hits,” Maru is a famous cat known for a variety of antics.

3. **Include the creator’s name when applicable.** If you know the name of the director or the person otherwise responsible for creating the content of the video, state the last name of that individual. A YouTube username can be used if no real name is provided. The name can either be included in the parentheses or introduced directly within the sentence containing the cited information.
   - As stated in “3 Women,” the man responsible for holding the three Cleveland women captive has been arrested along with two other suspects (Associated Press).
   - According the the Associated Press, the man responsible for holding the three Cleveland women captive has been arrested along with two other suspects (Associated Press).
   - In “3 Women,” the Associated Press explains that the man responsible for holding the three Cleveland women captive has been arrested along with two other suspects.

Method 2 of 4: Works Cited Page with Creator Name

**Mention the name or username of the creator.**[2] Use the real name of the director, editor, or compiler when available. Write it out in LastName, FirstName format. If citing a video from an organization or if the creator’s real name is not available, cite the name of the organization or the username associated with that YouTube account. Regardless of the name you use, follow it with a period.

- Associated Press.
- Tofield, Simon.
State the full title of the video. Write the title exactly as it is typed online. Never abbreviate it; write the full title out since multiple videos may be abbreviated in similar ways. Type a period after the final word and enclose it all in double quotation marks.

- Associated Press. “3 Women, Missing for Years, Found Alive in Ohio.”
- Tofield, Simon. “Screen Grab – Simon’s Cat.”

Name the website. In this case, the name of the website is simply “YouTube.” Italicize the website name and follow it with a period.


Name the sponsor/publisher. The sponsor refers to the official legal name of the corporation or entity responsible for the website. In this case, it would be “YouTube.” Do not enclose it in quotation marks or italicize it. Instead of following it with a period, use a comma.

- Tofield, Simon. “Screen Grab – Simon’s Cat.” Youtube. YouTube

State when the video was created. The date that the video was posted should be written in Day Month Year format. Follow it with a period.


Mention the publishing medium. For all YouTube videos, the medium should be listed as “Web.” This, too, should be followed with a period.


Include the date of access. The date of access refers to the first date that you went to that video for the sake of using it as a citation source. List the date in Day Month Year format. Conclude with a period.


Type the URL, when requested. The URL is not a standard part of MLA citation style for online videos. Nonetheless, many instructors still request it. If your instructor does request the URL, enclose it in carrot brackets and follow the ending bracket with a period.


Method 3 of 4: Works Cited Page with No Creator Name

Write out the full title of the video. If video footage is reposted by a YouTube user who is not the original creator of the footage, and if the name of the original creator is not listed, the first piece of information is the title of the video. Do not list the name or username of the YouTube channel responsible for reposting the video. Enclose the full title in double quotation marks, and follow the final word of the title with a period.

- “Maru Greatest Hits V1.”

Indicate the name of the website. For all YouTube videos, the name of the website should simply be “YouTube.” Italicize the word and follow it with another period.
Method 4 of 4: Works Cited Page when Citing YouTube Directly

State the creator as “YouTube.” This applies to any video that was uploaded to the official YouTube channel. Write the name out and follow it with a period.

• YouTube.

Include the full title of the video. Make sure to include the full title to minimize the odds of citing a duplicate or similar title. Follow the title with a period and enclose it in parentheses.

• YouTube. “Rewind YouTube Style 2012.”

Specify the name of the website. Even though “YouTube” is already listed once as the creator of the video, you must also list it a second time as the publisher. Note, however, that you do not need to list it a third time as an official corporation. Only italicize the name of the website here, and follow it with another period.


Indicate the date of publication. Specify the date that the video was originally updated in Day Month Year format. Follow the year with a period.


State the publishing medium. The publishing medium for any YouTube video will be “Web.” Type a period after this information.


Include a date of access. Write the day on which you first accessed or viewed the video with the intention of using it as a resource. Type it out in Day Month Year format.

Write the URL if directly requested. Official MLA guidelines do not list the URL as vital information, but if your instructor asks for it, include the URL in carrot brackets and follow the end bracket with a concluding period.


Tips

• Ask your instructor if he or she has a preference regarding the way that YouTube videos are cited. Some instructors prefer students to include the URL of online sources, while many do not. Moreover, since there is no official set of guidelines governing the citation of YouTube videos in MLA format, these details can be considered somewhat subjective.

• Check the MLA citation guidelines to verify that the above information is accurate and complete. These guidelines change periodically.

Sources and Citations


Licensing & Attributions
CC licensed content, Shared previously

• How to Cite a YouTube Video in MLA. Provided by: WikiHow. Located at: http://www.wikihow.com/Cite-a-YouTube-Video-in-MLA. License: CC BY-NC-SA: Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike

APA IN-TEXT CITATIONS

How should a parenthetical in-text citation be formatted?

An essential component of a research paper, in-text citations are a way of acknowledging the ideas of the author(s) of a particular work.

Each source that appears as an in-text citation should have a corresponding detailed entry in the References list at the end of the paper. Including the required elements in every citation allows other researchers to easily track the references used in a paper and locate those resources themselves.

There are three pieces of information that should be included in a citation after quoting another writer’s work: the author’s last name, the year of publication, and the page number(s) of the quoted material, all of which are separated by commas. The page number should follow a lower-case letter ‘p’ and a period.

• Basic structure: (Author, Year of Publication, p. 142)
  ◦ Example: (Kutner, 2003, p. 451) [1]

If the quoted material was taken from more than one page, use two lower-case letter ‘p’s.

• Basic structure: (Author, Year, of Publication, pp. 194-196)
  ◦ Example: (Kutner, 2003, pp. 451-452) [1]
How should multiple authors of a single source be cited?

There are a few guidelines to follow when citing multiple authors for a single source. Separate the names of the source’s authors by using commas. Depending on the location and instance of the citation, an ampersand (&), the word and, or the term et al. may also need to be used.

When should an ampersand be used?

Ampersands (&) should only be used in parenthetical in-text citations. An ampersand separates the last and second to last author of a cited work.

• **Example:** Research has demonstrated that “synesthesia appears quite stable over time, and synesthetes are typically surprised to discover that other people do not share their experiences” (Niccolai, Jennes, Stoerig, & Van Leeuwen, 2012, p. 81). [1]

When should the word and be used?

The word and should only be used in a sentence or paragraph; do not use it in a parenthetical in-text citation. The last and second to last author of a cited work are separated by the word and.

• **Example:** Niccolai, Jennes, Stoerig, and Van Leeuwen (2012) observed that “synesthesia appears quite stable over time, and synesthetes are typically surprised to discover that other people do not share their experiences” (p. 81). [1]

When should the term et al. be used?

When citing a single work with many authors, you may need to substitute some of the authors’ names with the term et al. The term et al. should not be italicized in your paper, and a period should be placed after the word al as it is an abbreviated term. Follow these guidelines regarding the usage of et al.:

**Use et al.:**

• The first time and every time you cite a source with at least six authors.
  • **Example:** The in-text citation of *Zoonoses: Infectious diseases transmissible from animals to humans*, a book authored by Krauss, Weber, Appel, Enders, Isenberg, Schiefer, Slenczka, von Graevenitz, and Zahner, would appear as follows: [2]
    • (Krauss et al., 2003, p. 91)
    • As Krauss et al. (2003) observed, …

• Every following time (after the first instance) that you cite a source with at least three authors.
  • **Example:** Citing the article “Modality and variability of synesthetic experience” by Niccolai, Jennes, Stoerig, & Van Leeuwen would appear as follows: [1]
    • The first instance: (Niccolai, Jennes, Stoerig, & Van Leeuwen, 2012, p. 81)
    • Every following instance: (Niccolai et al., 2012)

**Avoid using et al.:**

• The first time you cite a source with up to five authors.
  • Instead, list all of the authors at their first mentioning.

• To cite a work that only has two authors.
  • Instead, always list the two authors’ names in every citation (separated by either an ampersand or the word and, depending on the location)
CHOOSING A DOCUMENTATION FORMAT

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)

For the purposes of this appendix, we will confine ourselves to the three documentation formats that will be the most common in your undergraduate courses: the style manuals from APA and MLA, as well as CMS. (Other formats are listed at the end of this appendix. Also, note this appendix explains the “Notes-Bibliography” system of CMS, used more often in history, the arts, and humanities, rather than the “Author-Date” system, used in the sciences and social sciences.)

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.

For more information about referencing sources in APA, see also:

- Formatting the References Page (APA)
- References Page Template (APA)


QUOTING, PARAPHRASING, AND SUMMARIZING

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

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Explanation</th>
<th>APA</th>
<th>MLA</th>
<th>CMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>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. #).</td>
<td>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 #)</td>
<td>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, #)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>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. #).</td>
<td>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 #).</td>
<td>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 either in a signal phrase before the quotation or at the end: (name year, #).</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Example #1


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
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.

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.

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).

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.

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 (Rosenfeld, 2008, 159).

Quotation marks (“ ”) set off a group of words from the rest of the text. Use quotation marks to indicate direct quotations of another person’s words or to indicate a title. Quotation marks always appear in pairs.
Direct Quotations

A direct quotation is an exact account of what someone said or wrote. To include a direct quotation in your writing, enclose the words in quotation marks. An indirect quotation is a restatement of what someone said or wrote. An indirect quotation does not use the person’s exact words. You do not need to use quotation marks for indirect quotations.

Direct quotation: Carly said, “I’m not ever going back there again.”
Indirect quotation: Carly said that she would never go back there.

Writing at Work

Most word processing software is designed to catch errors in grammar, spelling, and punctuation. While this can be a useful tool, it is better to be well acquainted with the rules of punctuation than to leave the thinking to the computer. Properly punctuated writing will convey your meaning clearly. Consider the subtle shifts in meaning in the following sentences:

- The client said he thought our manuscript was garbage.
- The client said, “He thought our manuscript was garbage.”

The first sentence reads as an indirect quote in which the client does not like the manuscript. But did he actually use the word “garbage”? (This would be alarming!) Or has the speaker paraphrased (and exaggerated) the client’s words?

The second sentence reads as a direct quote from the client. But who is “he” in this sentence? Is it a third party?

Word processing software would not catch this because the sentences are not grammatically incorrect. However, the meanings of the sentences are not the same. Understanding punctuation will help you write what you mean, and in this case, could save a lot of confusion around the office!

Punctuating Direct Quotations

Quotation marks show readers another person’s exact words. Often, you will want to identify who is speaking. You can do this at the beginning, middle, or end of the quote. Notice the use of commas and capitalized words.

Beginning: Madison said, “Let’s stop at the farmers market to buy some fresh vegetables for dinner.”
Middle: “Let’s stop at the farmers market,” Madison said, “to buy some fresh vegetables for dinner.”
End: “Let’s stop at the farmers market to buy some fresh vegetables for dinner,” Madison said.

Speaker not identified: “Let’s stop at the farmers market to buy some fresh vegetables for dinner.”

Always capitalize the first letter of a quote even if it is not the beginning of the sentence. When using identifying words in the middle of the quote, the beginning of the second part of the quote does not need to be capitalized.

Use commas between identifying words and quotes. Quotation marks must be placed after commas and periods. Place quotation marks after question marks and exclamation points only if the question or exclamation is part of the quoted text.

Question is part of quoted text: The new employee asked, “When is lunch?”
Question is not part of quoted text: Did you hear her say you were “the next Picasso”?

Exclamation is part of quoted text: My supervisor beamed, “Thanks for all of your hard work!”

Exclamation is not part of quoted text: He said I “single-handedly saved the company thousands of dollars”!
Quotations within Quotations

Use single quotation marks (’’) to show a quotation within a quotation.

Theresa said, “I wanted to take my dog to the festival, but the man at the gate said, ‘No dogs allowed.’” “When you say, ‘I can’t help it,’ what exactly does that mean?”

“The instructions say, ‘Tighten the screws one at a time.’”

Titles

Use quotation marks around titles of short works of writing, such as essays, songs, poems, short stories, and chapters in books. Usually, titles of longer works, such as books, magazines, albums, newspapers, and novels, are italicized.

“Annabelle Lee” is one of my favorite romantic poems. The New York Times has been in publication since 1851.

Writing at Work

In many businesses, the difference between exact wording and a paraphrase is extremely important. For legal purposes, or for the purposes of doing a job correctly, it can be important to know exactly what the client, customer, or supervisor said. Sometimes, important details can be lost when instructions are paraphrased. Use quotes to indicate exact words where needed, and let your coworkers know the source of the quotation (client, customer, peer, etc.).

Key Takeaways

- Use quotation marks to enclose direct quotes and titles of short works.
- Use single quotation marks to enclose a quote within a quote.
- Do not use any quotation marks for indirect quotations.

Exercises

1. Copy the following sentences onto your own sheet of paper, and correct them by adding quotation marks where necessary. If the sentence does not need any quotation marks, write OK.

   - Yasmin said, I don’t feel like cooking. Let’s go out to eat.
   - Where should we go? said Russell.
   - Yasmin said it didn’t matter to her.
   - I know, said Russell, let’s go to the Two Roads Juice Bar.
   - Perfect! said Yasmin.
   - Did you know that the name of the Juice Bar is a reference to a poem? asked Russell.
   - I didn’t! exclaimed Yasmin. Which poem?
   - The Road Not Taken, by Robert Frost Russell explained.
   - Oh! said Yasmin, Is that the one that starts with the line, Two roads diverged in a yellow wood?
   - That’s the one said Russell.
QUOTATIONS

What this handout is about

Used effectively, quotations can provide important pieces of evidence and lend fresh voices and perspectives to your narrative. Used ineffectively, however, quotations clutter your text and interrupt the flow of your argument. This handout will help you decide when and how to quote like a pro.

When should I quote?

Use quotations at strategically selected moments. You have probably been told by teachers to provide as much evidence as possible in support of your thesis. But packing your paper with quotations will not necessarily strengthen your argument. The majority of your paper should still be your original ideas in your own words (after all, it’s your paper). And quotations are only one type of evidence: well-balanced papers may also make use of paraphrases, data, and statistics. The types of evidence you use will depend in part on the conventions of the discipline or audience for which you are writing. For example, papers analyzing literature may rely heavily on direct quotations of the text, while papers in the social sciences may have more paraphrasing, data, and statistics than quotations.

1. Discussing specific arguments or ideas.

Sometimes, in order to have a clear, accurate discussion of the ideas of others, you need to quote those ideas word for word. Suppose you want to challenge the following statement made by John Doe, a well-known historian:

“At the beginning of World War Two, almost all Americans assumed the war would end quickly.”

If it is especially important that you formulate a counterargument to this claim, then you might wish to quote the part of the statement that you find questionable and establish a dialogue between yourself and John Doe:

Historian John Doe has argued that in 1941 “almost all Americans assumed the war would end quickly” (Doe 223). Yet during the first six months of U.S. involvement, the wives and mothers of soldiers often noted in their diaries their fear that the war would drag on for years.

2. Giving added emphasis to a particularly authoritative source on your topic.

There will be times when you want to highlight the words of a particularly important and authoritative source on your topic. For example, suppose you were writing an essay about the differences between the lives of male and female slaves in the U.S. South. One of your most provocative sources is a narrative written by a former slave, Harriet Jacobs. It would then be appropriate to quote some of Jacobs’s words:

Harriet Jacobs, a former slave from North Carolina, published an autobiographical slave narrative in 1861. She exposed the hardships of both male and female slaves but ultimately concluded that “slavery is terrible for men; but it is far more terrible for women.”
In this particular example, Jacobs is providing a crucial first-hand perspective on slavery. Thus, her words deserve more exposure than a paraphrase could provide. Jacobs is quoted in Harriet A. Jacobs, Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl, ed. Jean Fagan Yellin (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987).

3. Analyzing how others use language.

This scenario is probably most common in literature and linguistics courses, but you might also find yourself writing about the use of language in history and social science classes. If the use of language is your primary topic, then you will obviously need to quote users of that language.

Examples of topics that might require the frequent use of quotations include:

- Southern colloquial expressions in William Faulkner’s *Light in August*
- Ms. and the creation of a language of female empowerment
- A comparison of three British poets and their use of rhyme

4. Spicing up your prose.

In order to lend variety to your prose, you may wish to quote a source with particularly vivid language. All quotations, however, must closely relate to your topic and arguments. Do not insert a quotation solely for its literary merits.

One example of a quotation that adds flair:

Calvin Coolidge’s tendency to fall asleep became legendary. As H. L. Mencken commented in the American Mercury in 1933, “Nero fiddled, but Coolidge only snored.”

How do I set up and follow up a quotation?

Once you’ve carefully selected the quotations that you want to use, your next job is to weave those quotations into your text. The words that precede and follow a quotation are just as important as the quotation itself. You can think of each quote as the filling in a sandwich: it may be tasty on its own, but it’s messy to eat without some bread on either side of it. Your words can serve as the “bread” that helps readers digest each quote easily. Below are four guidelines for setting up and following up quotations.

In illustrating these four steps, we’ll use as our example, Franklin Roosevelt’s famous quotation, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself.”

1. Provide a context for each quotation.

Do not rely on quotations to tell your story for you. It is your responsibility to provide your reader with a context for the quotation. The context should set the basic scene for when, possibly where, and under what circumstances the quotation was spoken or written. So, in providing a context for our above example, you might write:

When Franklin Roosevelt gave his inaugural speech on March 4, 1933, he addressed a nation weakened and demoralized by economic depression.

2. Attribute each quotation to its source.

Tell your reader who is speaking. Here is a good test: try reading your text aloud. Could your reader determine without looking at your paper where your quotations begin? If not, you need to attribute the quote more noticeably.
Avoid getting into the “he/she said” attribution rut! There are many other ways to attribute quotes besides this construction. Here are a few alternative verbs, usually followed by “that”:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>add</th>
<th>remark</th>
<th>exclaim</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>announce</td>
<td>reply</td>
<td>state</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>comment</td>
<td>respond</td>
<td>estimate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>write</td>
<td>point out</td>
<td>predict</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>argue</td>
<td>suggest</td>
<td>propose</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>declare</td>
<td>criticize</td>
<td>proclaim</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>note</td>
<td>complain</td>
<td>opine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>observe</td>
<td>think</td>
<td>note</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Different reporting verbs are preferred by different disciplines, so pay special attention to these in your disciplinary reading. If you’re unfamiliar with the meanings of any of these words or others you find in your reading, consult a dictionary before using them.

3. Explain the significance of the quotation.

Once you’ve inserted your quotation, along with its context and attribution, don’t stop! Your reader still needs your assessment of why the quotation holds significance for your paper. Using our Roosevelt example, if you were writing a paper on the first one-hundred days of FDR’s administration, you might follow the quotation by linking it to that topic:

With that message of hope and confidence, the new president set the stage for his next one-hundred days in office and helped restore the faith of the American people in their government.

4. Provide a citation for the quotation.

All quotations, just like all paraphrases, require a formal citation. For more details about particular citation formats, see the UNC Library’s citation tutorial. In general, you should remember one rule of thumb: Place the parenthetical reference or footnote/endnote number after—not within—the closed quotation mark.

Roosevelt declared, “The only thing we have to fear is fear itself” (Roosevelt, Public Papers 11).

How much should I quote?

As few words as possible. Remember, your paper should primarily contain your own words, so quote only the most pithy and memorable parts of sources. Here are three guidelines for selecting quoted material judiciously.

1. Excerpt fragments.

Sometimes, you should quote short fragments, rather than whole sentences. Suppose you interviewed Jane Doe about her reaction to John F. Kennedy’s assassination. She commented:
“I couldn’t believe it. It was just unreal and so sad. It was just unbelievable. I had never experienced such denial. I don’t know why I felt so strongly. Perhaps it was because JFK was more to me than a president. He represented the hopes of young people everywhere.”

You could quote all of Jane’s comments, but her first three sentences are fairly redundant. You might instead want to quote Jane when she arrives at the ultimate reason for her strong emotions:

Jane Doe grappled with grief and disbelief. She had viewed JFK, not just as a national figurehead, but as someone who “represented the hopes of young people everywhere.”

2. Excerpt those fragments carefully!

Quoting the words of others carries a big responsibility. Misquoting misrepresents the ideas of others. Here’s a classic example of a misquote:

John Adams has often been quoted as having said: “This would be the best of all possible worlds if there were no religion in it.”

John Adams did, in fact, write the above words. But if you see those words in context, the meaning changes entirely. Here’s the rest of the quotation:

Twenty times, in the course of my late reading, have I been on the point of breaking out, ‘this would be the best of all possible worlds, if there were no religion in it!!!!’ But in this exclamation, I should have been as fanatical as Bryant or Cleverly. Without religion, this world would be something not fit to be mentioned in public company—I mean hell.

As you can see from this example, context matters!

This example is from Paul F. Boller, Jr. and John George, They Never Said It: A Book of Fake Quotes, Misquotes, and Misleading Attributions (Oxford University Press, 1989).

3. Use block quotations sparingly.

There may be times when you need to quote long passages. However, you should use block quotations only when you fear that omitting any words will destroy the integrity of the passage. If that passage exceeds four lines (some sources say five), then set it off as a block quotation.

Here are a few general tips for setting off your block quotation—to be sure you are handling block quotes correctly in papers for different academic disciplines, check the index of the citation style guide you are using:

1. Set up a block quotation with your own words followed by a colon.
2. Indent. You normally indent 4-5 spaces for the start of a paragraph. When setting up a block quotation, indent the entire paragraph once from the left-hand margin.
3. Single space or double space within the block quotation, depending on the style guidelines of your discipline (MLA, CSE, APA, Chicago, etc.).
4. Do not use quotation marks at the beginning or end of the block quote—the indentation is what indicates that it’s a quote.
5. Place parenthetical citation according to your style guide (usually after the period following the last sentence of the quote).
6. Follow up a block quotation with your own words.

So, using the above example from John Adams, here’s how you might include a block quotation:

After reading several doctrinally rigid tracts, John Adams recalled the zealous ranting of his former teacher, Joseph Cleverly, and minister, Lemuel Bryant. He expressed his ambivalence toward religion in an 1817 letter to Thomas Jefferson:

Twenty times, in the course of my late reading, have I been on the point of breaking out, ‘this would be the best of all possible worlds, if there were no religion in it!!!!’ But in this exclamation, I should have been as
fanatical as Bryant or Cleverly. Without religion, this world would be something not fit to be mentioned in public company—I mean hell.

Adams clearly appreciated religion, even if he often questioned its promotion.

How do I combine quotation marks with other punctuation marks?

It can be confusing when you start combining quotation marks with other punctuation marks. You should consult a style manual for complicated situations, but the following two rules apply to most cases:

1) Keep periods and commas within quotation marks.

So, for example:

According to Professor Jones, Lincoln “feared the spread of slavery,” but many of his aides advised him to “watch and wait.”

In the above example, both the comma and period were enclosed in the quotation marks. The main exception to this rule involves the use of internal citations, which always precede the last period of the sentence. For example:

According to Professor Jones, Lincoln “feared the spread of slavery,” but many of his aides advised him to “watch and wait” (Jones 143).

Note, however, that the period remains inside the quotation marks when your citation style involved superscript footnotes or endnotes. For example:

According to Professor Jones, Lincoln “feared the spread of slavery,” but many of his aides advised him to “watch and wait.”

2) Place all other punctuation marks (colons, semicolons, exclamation marks, question marks) outside the quotation marks, except when they were part of the original quotation.

Take a look at the following examples:

The student wrote that the U. S. Civil War “finally ended around 1900”!

The coach yelled, “Run!”

In the first example, the author placed the exclamation point outside the quotation mark because she added it herself to emphasize the absurdity of the student’s comment. The student’s original comment had not included an exclamation mark. In the second example, the exclamation mark remains within the quotation mark because it is indicating the excited tone in which the coach yelled the command. Thus, the exclamation mark is considered to be part of the original quotation.

How do I indicate quotations within quotations?

If you are quoting a passage that contains a quotation, then you use single quotation marks for the internal quotation. Quite rarely, you quote a passage that has a quotation within a quotation. In that rare instance, you would use double quotation marks for the second internal quotation.

Here’s an example of a quotation within a quotation:

In “The Emperor’s New Clothes,” Hans Christian Andersen wrote, “But the Emperor has nothing on at all!” cried a little child.”
Remember to consult your style guide to determine how to properly cite a quote within a quote.

When do I use those three dots ( . . . )?

Whenever you want to leave out material from within a quotation, you need to use an ellipsis, which is a series of three periods, each of which should be preceded and followed by a space. So, an ellipsis in this sentence would look like . . . this. There are a few rules to follow when using ellipses:

1. Be sure that you don’t fundamentally change the meaning of the quotation by omitting material.

Take a look at the following example: “The Writing Center is located on the UNC campus and serves the entire UNC community.”

“The Writing Center . . . serves the entire UNC community.”

The reader’s understanding of the Writing Center’s mission to serve the UNC community is not affected by omitting the information about its location.

2. Do not use ellipses at the beginning or ending of quotations, unless it’s important for the reader to know that the quotation was truncated.

For example, using the above example, you would NOT need an ellipsis in either of these situations:

“The Writing Center is located on the UNC campus . . .”

The Writing Center ” . . . serves the entire UNC community.”

3. Use punctuation marks in combination with ellipses when removing material from the end of sentences or clauses.

For example, if you take material from the end of a sentence, keep the period in as usual.

“The boys ran to school, forgetting their lunches and books. Even though they were out of breath, they made it on time.”

“The boys ran to school. . . . Even though they were out of breath, they made it on time.”

Likewise, if you excerpt material at the end of clause that ends in a comma, retain the comma.

“The red car came to a screeching halt that was heard by nearby pedestrians, but no one was hurt.”

“The red car came to a screeching halt . . . , but no one was hurt.”
Is it ever okay to insert my own words or change words in a quotation?

Sometimes it is necessary for clarity and flow to alter a word or words within a quotation. You should make such changes rarely. In order to alert your reader to the changes you’ve made, you should always bracket the altered words. Here are a few examples of situations when you might need brackets.

1. Changing verb tense or pronouns in order to be consistent with the rest of the sentence.

Suppose you were quoting a woman who, when asked about her experiences immigrating to the United States, commented “nobody understood me.” You might write:

   Esther Hansen felt that when she came to the United States “nobody understood [her].”

In the above example, you’ve changed “me” to “her” in order to keep the entire passage in third person. However, you could avoid the need for this change by simply rephrasing:

   “Nobody understood me,” recalled Danish immigrant Esther Hansen.

2. Including supplemental information that your reader needs in order to understand the quotation.

For example, if you were quoting someone’s nickname, you might want to let your reader know the full name of that person in brackets.

   “The principal of the school told Billy [William Smith] that his contract would be terminated.”

Similarly, if a quotation referenced an event with which the reader might be unfamiliar, you could identify that event in brackets.

   “We completely revised our political strategies after the strike [of 1934].”

3. Indicating the use of nonstandard grammar or spelling.

In rare situations, you may quote from a text that has nonstandard grammar, spelling, or word choice. In such cases, you may want to insert [sic], which means “thus” or “so” in Latin. Using [sic] alerts your reader to the fact that this nonstandard language is not the result of a typo on your part. Always italicize “sic” and enclose it in brackets. There is no need to put a period at the end. Here’s an example of when you might use [sic]:

   Twelve-year-old Betsy Smith wrote in her diary, “Father is afraid that he will be guilty of beach [sic] of contract.”

   Here [sic] indicates that the original author wrote “beach of contract,” not breach of contract, which is the accepted terminology.
4. Do not overuse brackets!

For example, it is not necessary to bracket capitalization changes that you make at the beginning of sentences. For example, suppose you were going to use part of this quotation:

“We never looked back, but the memory of our army days remained with us the rest of our lives.”

If you wanted to begin a sentence with an excerpt from the middle of this quotation, there would be no need to bracket your capitalization changes.

“The memory of our army days remained with us the rest of our lives,” commented Joe Brown, a World War II veteran.

Not

“[T]he memory of our army days remained with us the rest of our lives,” commented Joe Brown, a World War II veteran.

Works consulted

We consulted these works while writing the original version of this handout. This is not a comprehensive list of resources on the handout’s topic, and we encourage you to do your own research to find the latest publications on this topic. Please do not use this list as a model for the format of your own reference list, as it may not match the citation style you are using. For guidance on formatting citations, please see the UNC Library’s citation tutorial.


ASSESSMENT: PRACTICE QUOTING

Responsible academic writing involves a good deal of direct quotation from sources. Let’s practice that now, to make sure that we’ve got the finer points figured out by the time the essay is due.

Find a quote from the original article that you think will serve you well in your Source Evaluation Essay.

• Include an introductory “signal” phrase that cues us in on the context for the quote, and then the quote itself. Follow this quote with a phrase or sentence in your own words that summarizes, interprets, or explains the quote in your own words.
This 3-step process is sometimes referred to as a “quote sandwich” and is useful for every time you’d like to incorporate a quote into an academic essay you’re writing.

If you have any questions at all about using quotations in your writing, please include them in your submission. This work is just a draft— you may choose to use it or not in the final version of your essay at your discretion.

WHEN TO QUOTE & WHEN TO PARAPHRASE

“When to Quote and When to Paraphrase” was written by Brianna Jerman

Academic writing requires authors to connect information from outside sources to their own ideas in order to establish credibility and produce an effective argument.

Sometimes, the rules surrounding source integration and plagiarism may seem confusing, so many new writers err on the side of caution by using the simplest form of integration: direct quotation. However, using direct quotes is not always the best way to use a source. Paraphrasing or summarizing a text is sometimes a more effective means of supporting a writer’s argument than directly quoting. Taking into consideration the purpose of their own writing and the purpose of utilizing the outside source, authors should seek to vary the ways in which they work sources into their own writing.

Paraphrasing and quoting are two of the three ways an author can integrate sources. The two methods are closely related, and therefore, can sometimes be confused with one another. Quoting borrows the exact wording used in a source and is indicated by placing quotes around the borrowed material. Paraphrasing, on the other hand, borrows an idea found in a shorter passage but communicates this idea using different words and word order. While it is acceptable to loosely follow a similar structure, paraphrasing requires more than simply changing a few of the original words to synonyms. Both paraphrasing and directly quoting have their merit, but they should be used at different times for different purposes. An author chooses to use one of these strategies depending on why the source is being used and what information the source provides.

When to Paraphrase

Paraphrasing provides an author the opportunity to tailor the passage for the purpose of his or her own essay, which cannot always be done when using a direct quote. Paraphrasing should be used to

• Further explain or simplify a passage that may be difficult to understand. It could be that the topic, such as the process of extracting stem cells, is particularly difficult to follow, or that the author has used language that further complicates the topic. In such situations, paraphrasing allows an author to clarify or simplify a passage so the audience can better understand the idea.
• Establish the credibility of the author. In connection to the above point, paraphrasing a complicated passage can help the author establish trust with his or her audience. If an author directly quotes a
When to Quote

Direct quotes should be used sparingly, but when they are used, they can be a powerful rhetorical tool. As a rule, avoid using long quotes when possible, especially those longer than three lines. When quotes are employed, they should be used to

- Provide indisputable evidence of an incredible claim. Directly quoting a source can show the audience exactly what the source says so there is not suspicion of misinterpretation on the author’s part.
- Communicate an idea that is stated in a particularly striking or unique way. A passage should be quoted if the source explains an idea in the best way possible or in a way that cannot be reworded. Additionally, quoting should be used when the original passage is particularly moving or striking.
- Serve as a passage for analysis. If an author is going to analyze the quote or passage, the exact words should be included in the essay either before or following the author’s analysis.
- Provide direct evidence for or proof of an author’s own claim. An author can use a direct quote as evidence for a claim he or she makes. The direct quote should follow the author’s claim and a colon, which indicates that the following passage is evidence of the statement that precedes it.
- Support or clarify information you’ve already reported from a source. Similar to the above principle, an author can use a direct quote as further evidence or to emphasize a claim found in the source. This strategy should be used when an idea from a source is particularly important to an author’s own work.
- Provide a definition of a new or unfamiliar term or phrase. When using a term that is used or coined by the source’s author or that is unfamiliar to most people, use direct quotes to show the exact meaning of the phrase or word according to the original source.

When to Quote and When to Paraphrase

Academic writing also involves heavy use of paraphrasing sources. Paraphrasing is actually much more common than quoting, particularly in APA-style writing.

Paraphrasing has several advantages:

- it lets you keep a consistent tone and voice throughout the essay
- it demonstrates your mastery of the concepts coming from outside sources
- it lets you be flexible in wording and vocabulary to best meet the needs of your readers

DISCUSSION: PRACTICE PARAPHRASING

Academic writing also involves heavy use of paraphrasing sources. Paraphrasing is actually much more common than quoting, particularly in APA-style writing.

Paraphrasing has several advantages:
Paraphrasing seems simple on the surface: it’s just putting another author’s ideas into your own original words. In practice, though, this is one of the most challenging aspects of writing academic work.

To help us all feel more comfortable and confident with our paraphrasing skills, let’s practice it here.

In your post, copy and paste the original wording (a direct quote) from the source you’re using for the Source Evaluation Essay. Be sure to include the title of the source and a link to it, if possible, and put the quote inside of quotation marks.

Beneath this quote, draft a paraphrase that states the idea of the quotation in unique language. The paraphrase should include a “signal” phrase, so that we have some context for where it’s coming from. Guidance about how to draft a paraphrase can be found in earlier module contents.

Your post should be about 100-200 words. It doesn’t have to be grammatically perfect, but should use standard English (no text-speak, please) and normal capitalization rules.

You will also need to return to this Discussion to reply to at least two of your classmates’ posts. Content could include, but is not limited to, any of the following: Commenting on the style or quality of your classmate’s paraphrase. Be sure to point out if the paraphrase contains too much borrowed language from the original article that your classmate may not have noticed.

Responses are weighed as heavily as your initial posting, and should be roughly as long (100-200 words) when combined. Responses should indicate you’ve read your classmate’s post carefully. Include specific details from the post you’re responding to in your reply.

---

**ASSESSMENT: SIGNALLING/PARAPHRASING/QUOTING**

**Directions:**

1. Find any 4 pieces of information that you have found from your research. This information should come from at least four different sources that you have found to be credible and useful to your research. Once you have identified these sources, do the following:
2. Copy one paragraph from the source that includes information that you might want to use in your research paper. Type the section out EXACTLY as it is written in the original. (1 point)
3. Take one piece of specific information from the original information and write a direct quote using those exact words. The direct quote needs to contain a signal phrases and use MLA in-text citations. (2 points)
4. Take the same information that you’ve just quoted and write it again, paraphrasing it into your own words. Remember to use MLA in-text citations. (2 points)

**Example (Using MLA In-text citation rules):**

**Original**
About half of the rise in sea level is due to thermal expansion. In addition oceans are rising because ice is melting. So far, most of that water has come from mountain glaciers and ice caps. If the Greenland ice sheet were to melt completely, it would release enough water to raise the sea level by 7 meters. West Antarctica’s melting would raise sea level by over 5 meters and East Antarctica by 50 meters. If the Earth were to lose just 8% of its ice, the consequences would be horrific. New York, London, Shanghai, and other low-lying cities would be submerged.

Direct Quote

According to Lonnie G. Thompson and Gioietta Kuo in the article, “Climate Change” “If the Earth were to lose just 8% of its ice, the consequences would be horrific. New York, London, Shanghai, and other low-lying cities would be submerged.”

Paraphrase

According to Lonnie G. Thompson and Gioetta Kuo in the article, “Climate Change” even if the earth lost only 8% of its frozen waters, many cities below sea level would be engulfed under water.

You will repeat this process 4 times, for a total of 4 sets of quotes & paraphrases.

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. Note: Past tense is used in these examples. You may elect to use present tense ("writes") or past perfect tense ("has written"), but keep your tense use consistent.

Phrases That Signal an Idea Belongs to Another Writer (Shown in APA style)

- According to Starr (2010)...
- Acknowledging that...
- Starr (2010) stated...
- As Starr (2010) noted...
- In 2010, Starr reported...
- In the words of Starr (2010)...
- It is obvious, according to Starr (2010), that...
- Starr (2010) argued that...
- Starr (2010) disagreed when she said...
- Starr (2010) emphasized the importance of...
- Starr (2010) suggested...
- Starr observed in 2010 that...
- Technology specialist, Linda Starr, claimed that...(2010).
- ...indicated Starr (2010).
- ...wrote Starr (2010)
Table 22.3 “Integrating Sources (Summarized or Paraphrased Ideas)” shows some actual examples of integrating sources within the guidelines of the three most common documentation formats. You should weave the cited details in with your ideas.

### Table 22.3 Integrating Sources (Summarized or Paraphrased Ideas)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>APA</th>
<th>MLA</th>
<th>CMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Author's name</strong></td>
<td>Either within a signal phrase or in parentheses before the period at the end of the sentence.</td>
<td>Either within a signal phrase or in parentheses before the period at the end of the sentence.</td>
<td>Either within a signal phrase or in parentheses at the end of the sentence.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Year</strong></td>
<td>Either within parentheses after the name that is used in a signal phrase or after the name and a comma within the parentheses before the period at the end of the sentence (name, year).</td>
<td>Either within parentheses after the name that is used in a signal phrase or at the end of the sentence (name year, #).</td>
<td>Either alone within parentheses before the period at the end of the sentence or after the name and year and a comma within parentheses at the end of the sentence (name year, #).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Page number</strong></td>
<td>Either alone before the period at the end of the sentence or after the name within the parentheses before the period at the end of the sentence (name #).</td>
<td>Either alone before the period at the end of the sentence or after the name within the parentheses before the period at the end of the sentence (name #).</td>
<td>Either alone within parentheses before the period at the end of the sentence or after the name and year and a comma within parentheses at the end of the sentence (name year, #).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Example #1

Many school staffs discuss integrating technology without making significant progress in that direction. Starr (2010) indicated that teachers’ lack of personal understanding of technology could cause roadblocks to integrating technology into classrooms.

Many school staffs discuss integrating technology without making significant progress in that direction. Starr indicated that teachers’ lack of personal understanding of technology can cause roadblocks to integrating technology into classrooms (1).

Many school staffs discuss integrating technology without making significant progress in that direction. Starr (2010) indicated that teachers’ lack of personal understanding of technology could cause roadblocks to integrating technology into classrooms (1).

### Example #2

Many school staffs discuss integrating technology without making significant progress in that direction. Teachers’ lack of personal understanding of technology can cause roadblocks to integrating technology into classrooms (Starr, 2010).

Many school staffs discuss integrating technology without making significant progress in that direction. Teachers’ lack of personal understanding of technology can cause roadblocks to integrating technology into classrooms (Starr 1).

Many school staffs discuss integrating technology without making significant progress in that direction. Teachers’ lack of personal understanding of technology can cause roadblocks to integrating technology into classrooms (Starr 2010, 1).

### Table 22.4 Two Authors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>APA</th>
<th>MLA</th>
<th>CMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example #1</strong></td>
<td>Merriman and Nicoletti (2008) suggest that US</td>
<td>Merriman and Nicoletti suggest that US K–12</td>
<td>Merriman and Nicoletti (2008) suggest that US</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
K–12 education must take on a structure that is globally acceptable.

US K–12 education must take on a structure that is globally acceptable (Merriman & Nicoletti, 2008).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APA</th>
<th>MLA</th>
<th>CMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Example #2</td>
<td>US K–12 education must take on a structure that is globally acceptable (Merriman &amp; Nicoletti, 2008).</td>
<td>US K–12 education must take on a structure that is globally acceptable (Merriman and Nicoletti 2008, 9).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 22.5 Multiple Authors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APA</th>
<th>MLA</th>
<th>CMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Explanation</strong></td>
<td><strong>Three to five Authors:</strong> List all three authors at first reference (name, name, and name) and the first name plus “et al.” for subsequent references (name et al.).</td>
<td><strong>Three authors:</strong> Treat in same manner as two authors: (name, name, and name).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td><strong>Six or more authors:</strong> For all references, list the first name plus “et al.” (name et al.).</td>
<td><strong>Four or more authors:</strong> You can choose to list all authors or to use the first author name plus “et al.” (name et al.).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example #1</td>
<td>Borsheim, Merritt, and Reed (2008) suggest that teachers do not have to give up traditional curricula in order to integrate technology.</td>
<td>Borsheim, Merritt, and Reed (2008) suggest that teachers do not have to give up traditional curricula in order to integrate technology (87).</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Example #2</td>
<td>In fact, it has been argued that technology has become part of education without a great deal of effort from teachers (Borsheim et al., 2008).</td>
<td>In fact, some have argued that technology has been incorporated into education without a great deal of effort from teachers (Borsheim et al. 2008, 87).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Table 22.6 Personal Communication

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>APA</th>
<th>MLA</th>
<th>CMS</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Example #1</strong></td>
<td>Stanforth (personal communication, July 17, 2010) indicated she had been using a computer board in her classroom for three years and could not imagine giving it up.</td>
<td>Sue Stanforth (telephone interview by the author, July 17, 2010) indicated she had been using a computer board in her classroom for three years and could not imagine giving it up.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

---

178
Example #2

Many teachers are angry that they are being pushed to include technology because they like the way their classrooms work without it (Kennedy, personal e-mail, June 25, 2009).

Many teachers are angry that they are being pushed to include technology because they like the way their classrooms work without it (Kennedy).

Many teachers are angry that they are being pushed to include technology because they like the way their classrooms work without it (Greg Kennedy, e-mail to author, June 25, 2009).

### USING OTHER FORMATS

#### Using Other Formats

Although APA, MLA, and Chicago are the most widely used documentation styles, many other styles are used in specific situations. Some of these other styles are listed in Table 22.10 “Other Documentation Formats”. You can find more about them by searching online.

Table 22.10 Other Documentation Formats

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Documentation Format</th>
<th>Typical Use and Website with More Information</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>American Chemical Society (ACS)</td>
<td>Used by researchers in the sciences (<a href="http://chemistry.library.wisc.edu/writing/acs-style-guidelines.html">http://chemistry.library.wisc.edu/writing/acs-style-guidelines.html</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>American Political Science Association (APSA)</td>
<td>Used by researchers in the political sciences (<a href="http://library.stmarytx.edu/acadlib/subject/misc/eldoapsa.htm">http://library.stmarytx.edu/acadlib/subject/misc/eldoapsa.htm</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Columbia Online Style (COS)</td>
<td>Used by researchers in the humanities and the sciences (<a href="http://faculty.ccp.edu/dept/resourceguide/CGuideCOS.html">http://faculty.ccp.edu/dept/resourceguide/CGuideCOS.html</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council of Science Editors (CSE)</td>
<td>Used by researchers in the science and math fields (<a href="http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/researchsources/documentation/cbe_citation">http://writing.colostate.edu/guides/researchsources/documentation/cbe_citation</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers (IEEE)</td>
<td>Used by researchers in the engineering field (<a href="http://www.ieee.org/index.html">http://www.ieee.org/index.html</a>)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Legal Style (The Redbook)</td>
<td>Used by researchers in the legal field (<a href="http://west.thomson.com/productdetail/136164/40045944/productdetail.aspx">http://west.thomson.com/productdetail/136164/40045944/productdetail.aspx</a>)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DEVELOPING A LIST OF SOURCES

Developing a List of Sources

This appendix provides a general overview of some of the most common documentation guidelines for different types of sources. For situations not described in this appendix, such as types of sources not described in this chapter or situations where you elect to use footnotes or endnotes in addition to in-text, parenthetical citations, check the complete guidelines for the style you are using:

- APA: http://www.apastyle.org
- MLA: http://www.mla.org
- CMS: http://www.chicagomanualofstyle.org

Some general online searches, especially those conducted on your library databases, are also likely to generate guidelines for a variety of documentation styles. Look for an opportunity to click on a “citation” or “documentation” icon, or ask a member of your college library staff for guidance. You can even get help through the word processing program you typically use. Microsoft Word, for instance, has an entire tab on the taskbar devoted to managing and documenting sources in all three of the styles featured here. Also, don’t forget the tip from Chapter 7 “Researching” about the free resources that abound on the web from various online writing labs (OWLs) managed by writing programs at colleges and universities across the country.

Each different documentation style has its own set of guidelines for creating a list of references at the end of the essay (called “works cited” in MLA, “references” in APA, and “bibliography” in CMS). This section includes citations for the sources included in other parts of this appendix. For additional citation styles, consult complete citation guidelines for the style you are using.

Source lists should always be in alphabetical order by the first word of each reference, and you should use hanging indentation (with the first line of each reference flush with the margin and subsequent lines indented one-half inch). Here are some of the most common types of entries you will be using for your references at the end of your research essays. These lists are by no means exhaustive, but you will note from the examples some of the most important differences in conventions of punctuation, font, and the exact content of each style.

Table 22.7 APA References
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citation Description</th>
<th>Citation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal communication (email)</td>
<td>[Presented in text, but usually not included in bibliography.] G. Kennedy, personal communication, June 25, 2009.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal communication</td>
<td>[Presented in text, but usually not included in bibliography.] S. Stanforth, personal communication, July 17, 2010.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 22.8 MLA Works Cited
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citation Description</th>
<th>Citation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Personal communication (e-mail)</td>
<td>Kennedy, Greg. “Integrating Technology.” Message to the author. 25 June 2009. E-mail.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal communication</td>
<td>Stanforth, Sue. Personal interview. 17 July 2010.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Table 22.9 CMS Bibliography

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Citation Description</th>
<th>Citation</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Citation Description</td>
<td>Citation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>--------------------------------------------</td>
<td>------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal communication (e-mail)</td>
<td>[Presented in text, but usually not included in bibliography.] Greg Kennedy, e-mail to author, June 25, 2009.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Personal communication</td>
<td>[Presented in text, but usually not included in bibliography.] Sue Stanforth, telephone interview by the author, July 17, 2010.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**HOW TO WRITE A SUMMARY**

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

State the author’s name, the publication title and date, and where you obtained the source. State the author’s credibility and authority to write on the topic at hand.

Based on the source (popular magazine or academic journal; website or published book; personal interview or other direct source), you should be able to identify the intended reader of the source.

You may want to directly quote from the source, providing proper in-text citations. Direct quotes clearly identify the author’s main ideas.

Any information you provide in a summary should relate to the article itself and should not include your opinion.

Analyzing an Article as a Research Source

An analysis looks at other details of your source. In an analysis you should be able to

• Comment on the author’s use of source material
• Identify the author’s use of multiple perspectives
• Determine whether or not the article adds to the body of current knowledge on the topic

Has the author used credible authorities to support his/her ideas? Has the author used the sources fairly and accurately, not twisting source materials to suit the writer’s own ideas?

Has the author pointed out the views of others and use those various viewpoints effectively? An author may disagree with a source perspective and still use it fairly. An example would be, “Dr. H suggests that …… This view is reasonable and acceptable in the situation H describes, but in regard to the problem we are addressing, some revision should be made. We suggest instead that …..”

Finally, you should consider whether or not the source is beneficial overall to the subject being addressed. Does the author merely rehash the words of others for the sake of putting his/her name on the article, or does the author actually contribute sound reasoning for moving the body of knowledge forward? In order to determine this, you must yourself be knowledgeable of the current research. This means you must be willing to research the subject adequately and be able to discuss the current level of knowledge of the topic.

Responding to an Article as a Research Source

When you are able to understand a single source through summarizing it and analyzing it, you can then respond to the article yourself.

• You can point out that the source you are responding to agrees or disagrees with certain other sources at hand.
• You can organize your response by stating, for example, that the author has a strong first point that connects with some other particular sources’ perspectives, but that your source’s second point is the strongest, based on the criteria you may be using for your own research project
• You can identify what parts of the source material you want to use to help develop your own argument.

When you develop a brief response to a source, you are able to organize that source with your other research sources. Your own development of ideas becomes, in the end, more clearly organized and you will discover that your writing is more succinct. Your own readers will benefit by a clear understanding of your writing!
UNIT 7: MASTERING INFORMATIVE WRITING

TEXTUAL RESEARCH

“Textual Research” was written by Joseph M. Moxley

Research is defined by many academic disciplines, such as English or History, as primarily a textual process. In other words, some researchers (commonly called “scholars”) focus on texts—that is, on responding to them, critiquing them, or in rereading them with a particular theory in mind, such as Capitalism, Marxism, Psychoanalysis, Behaviorism, Deconstruction, Modernism, Postmodernism. Additionally, scholars can develop their work in response to everyday experiences, issues in the popular culture, the media, and the Internet. Beyond debate and logic, scholars lack a way to prove one idea or approach is superior to any other.

Trained in the traditions and methods of Western humanism, scholars rely on dialectic, seeking knowledge via the deliberate confrontation of opposing viewpoints. This emphasis on dialectic is sometimes referred to as the ceaseless debate, a cycle of interpretation and reinterpretation. The knowledge scholars generate is often about the meaning of texts, derived from the act of reading, articulated as critical analysis, and refined by dialectic. For example, historians argue about the best ways to interpret a body of texts. Critics argue about which theory provides the most worthwhile reading of the canon—that is, a privileged set of texts. Philosophers argue about a philosopher’s ideas or about a body of texts that advocate a particular philosophical position.

In addition to focusing on texts—what they mean, how they should be read—scholars develop ideas by responding to, and drawing on, their personal experiences as well as ideas found in the media. In other words, scholars can address topics that emerge from their everyday experiences as a member of a culture. Rather than relying on observations of the empirical world and developing or testing hypotheses, scholars are engaged in the great debate—a never-ending dialectic about ideas. Unlike the methodologies informed by Positivism, scholars lack a way to prove or disprove their positions. Ultimately, scholars are more concerned with participating in the great debate, the scholarly exchange of ideas, as opposed to presuming that truth will one day be found so the debate will need to come to an end. Scholars make meaning by discussing texts and by applying theories to create new readings of texts.
At modern research universities, scholars tend to reside in departments in such departments as English, American Studies, Philosophy, and History. However, all disciplines rely on a scholarly methodology when they conduct debates about ideas, texts, and events. Additionally, some of the activities of scholars appear within the methodologies of other research communities that appear within writingcommons.com — especially the ability to summarize and paraphrase the work of others and the ability to dissect and critique the reasoning of other writers.

Across academic disciplines, scholars have developed unique ways to contribute knowledge. Historians, for example, practice a different version of scholarship than philosophers or critics. Historians tend to use a narrative structure, while philosophers and critics prefer an argumentative structure. In contrast to historians and philosophers, critics are concerned with establishing a body of texts (i.e. a canon) for interpretation, interpreting those texts, and generating theories about both of these activities.

QUESTIONS TO EVALUATE THE AUTHORITY OF THE RESEARCHER’S METHODS

“Questions to Evaluate the Authority of the Researcher’s Methods” was written by Joseph M. Moxley

Here are some of the standard questions that academic readers ask when reviewing research reports:

1. Is the source a first-hand or second-hand account? That is, are the authors reporting results of their own research or reviewing someone else’s work?
2. Is the source of publication credible? (For example, an essay in the New England Journal of Medicine would influence most physicians’ opinions about a surgical procedure far more easily than an essay in a biweekly community newspaper.)
3. Do the authors work for research institutes, publications, private companies, or universities? Are they well-known authorities? Can you identify any hidden agendas?
4. Have the authors followed traditional research methods?
CREATING AN ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Creating an Annotated Bibliography

Learning Objectives

1. Know how to deal with a new source by bookmarking it and creating an annotated bibliography for it.
2. Understand the information you need to create a citation and annotated bibliography.
3. Know how to use an annotated bibliography as a tool for probing research questions in more depth.

To make the best use of your research time, thoroughly read each source that is clearly relevant and document all the pieces you might use from it so that you will have a good chance of not having to revisit it. But just in case, take care to bookmark the site (and additionally save it to a folder set up for your research project) so you can easily return to it later and collect the needed information.

Your research log should include an annotated bibliography of the sources you plan to use. Each entry should include the following elements:

- The complete citation information (in the format the assignment requires)
- A summary or paraphrase of the contents of the source in your words
- The direct quotations you may end up using (with page or paragraph numbers)
- Additional strategy notes about how you plan to use the source (For more on quoting, summarizing, and paraphrasing, see Section 7.7 “Making Ethical and Effective Choices”)

For the citation, gather the following components:

- Name of author, editor, sponsoring organization, discussion group, or list
- Title of article or subject line of discussion
- Title of journal or site that has published the article
- Version number or issue number, if applicable
- Date of publication
• Date you accessed the site

If a source does not appear to be as relevant as you initially thought it would be, document the situation in your log and move on. Don’t try to jam it into the essay just because you spent time tracking it down. Good researchers and good writers know they’ll encounter a few dead ends and bad leads.

Here are a couple of entries Antonio makes in his annotated bibliography for an essay he is writing on head injuries in football. Using the same search terms (“helmets,” “NFL,” and “head injuries”), a search of Academic Search Complete in his college library nets him entries 1, 2, and 4, and a search on Google nets him entry 3. Drawing from the color-coding suggestion in Section 7.6 “Taking Notes”, Antonio distinguishes between direct quotation (red), paraphrase (blue) and summary (purple), by using different font colors for each.

Figure 7.3

Gregory suggests four main areas of potential reform in this proposal to solve the crisis of head injuries in the NFL: changes to the game’s rules, to the equipment, to instruction in the youth leagues, and to the culture of football at large. All four are really necessary in concert with each other in what Gregory calls a “game plan to lessen the pain” (par. 18). Gregory closes with some devastating statistics about the different rates of diagnosis of dementia, Alzheimer’s, or memory disease for 30-49 year-old men who are NFL veterans compared to the general population: 1 in 1000 (general population) vs. 1 in 53 (NFL retirees).

McDonell is realistic about the history of violence in the game at all levels, but he also makes the point that casual viewers and fans may give up on football if they believe it is becoming so violent that players are sustaining dangerous, permanent head injuries. He closes on an optimistic note, suggesting that newly instituted regulations, penalties and fines for helmet hits in the NFL are already leading to a reduction in the number of concussions. He suggests in closing “that the game can correct itself and that the players can adjust” (par. 9).

This editorial, written by a six-year veteran of the NFL who played for the Denver Broncos from 2003-08, provides a rebuttal to the arguments being made in favor of stiff penalties for helmet hits. Jackson questions what will happen to the spirit of the game if referees and players are required to make split-second decisions about what constitutes an excessively violent hit. Here, Jackson gives a valuable perspective from his point of view as a former defensive back: “But when a receiver is trying to catch a ball or avoid being tackled, the height of his head is constantly changing, often making it impossible for a defensive player to judge the point of impact” (par. 10).

Like Jackson, Aikman provides some field-level commentary from the point of view of a player. He too believes that excessive regulation will damage the spirit of the game. On the other hand, he admits that if football is deemed by parents to be too violent, they will begin to pull their kids out of youth leagues, shrinking the pool of talent coming up from the next generation. Aikman closes by suggesting that perhaps the game should just do away with helmets entirely, because defenders would be less likely to make these kinds of hits “if their noggin’s weren’t protected” (par. 11).

Key Takeaways

• Create a folder and place a bookmark for each new online source in it so you can easily return to it. Also, create a citation for each source when you first encounter it.
• When citing an online source, find the following pieces of information: name of author, editor, or sponsoring organization; title of article; title of journal or site that has published the article; version or issue number; and date of publication and access date.
Exercises

1. Choose a research topic of interest to you. Find a related website and find the following pieces of information: name of author, editor, or sponsoring organization; title of article; title of journal or site that has published the article; version or issue number; date of publication or access date.

2. Choose a research topic of interest to you. Find a related online blog.

3. Choose a research topic of interest to you and set up a related RSS feed.

4. Choose a research topic of interest to you. Find a related government site.

5. Choose a research topic of interest to you. Online, find a related photo, video, and table.

6. With your writing group sharing a couple of computers, amass several sources for Jacoba’s essay on Social Security and write up an annotated bibliography.

7. Using Antonio’s essay idea on helmet hits in the NFL, draw up two statements of purpose that differ from each other in at least three of the six concerns (voice, audience, message, tone, attitude, or reception).

Sample Annotated Bibliography


Alina Tugend is a popular columnist for the New York Times and other U.S. newspapers and magazines. She argues that multitasking makes people less effective at completing tasks rather than more effective. For example, while pairing some activities, such as listening to music while exercising or working on a project, may help improve a person’s creativity, dividing our attention between tasks that all require clear focus can harm our ability to do that work well. Tugend cites research from neuroscientists, psychologists, and psychiatrists to support her argument that multitasking not only harms us personally, but harms us socially in regard to our family, our relationships, and our work environments. She tells readers to stop multitasking and instead order our lives in such a way that we can focus on the successful completion of single tasks. I like this article because it encourages me to slow down and focus, but I think it relates to my research issue, which deals with the question “How is technology making us dumber?” Tugend points out that electronic devices that should be making our life easier instead cause us to try to handle too many things at once, so we lose focus and don’t concentrate on anything. It seems to me that a shift has happened in our communication skills: nothing matters deeply to us if we can’t figure it out right away. We don’t try to understand something if we can’t Google it.

Right now my research is focusing on arguments neuroscientists are making about the effects of too much computer use on our brains. It appears that our hardwires are getting fried from technology – we watch a tv/movie/computer screen rather than take a walk; we listen to electronic music rather than sing our own songs or play our own instruments; we text rather than talk. I’d like to read Tugend’s Miller source to investigate the neuroscience angle further, but I’d also like to summarize her argument that by setting boundaries we can be more successful.
OVERVIEW

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.”

In this module, you will create an argument paper.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Learning Objectives</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>After successfully completing this module, you should be able to:</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Identify the elements of an argument writing.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Create an argument writing using the writing process.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

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
other types of evidence

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. Also, it’s a good idea to highlight what you plan to cover. Highlights allow your reader to know what direction you will be taking with your argument.

You can also mention the points or arguments in support of your claim, which you will be further discussing in the body. This part comes at the end of the thesis and can be named as the guide. 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.

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.

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 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.

ARGUMENT WRITING PROMPTS

2. Select a prompt that interests you.
3. Use the prompt to develop your argument writing.

ASSIGNMENT: ARGUMENT WRITING

For this assignment demonstrate your process of Prewriting, Organizing, and Drafting of an Argument Writing.

Directions

1. Review the grading rubric as listed on this page.
2. Review the Argument Writing Prompts.
3. Develop your process of moving through the stages of the writing process.
4. Post your prewriting, organizing, drafting, and final version or your argument writing at your WordPress blog site.
5. Submit the URL of your blog to your instructor.
Grading

Points: 100

Submitting: a website URL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Criteria</th>
<th>Proficient</th>
<th>Developing</th>
<th>No marks</th>
<th>Points</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Ideas: focused, original perspective on the topic</td>
<td>25 pts</td>
<td>13 pts</td>
<td>0 pts</td>
<td>25 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Organization: structure enhances ideas and aids in understanding</td>
<td>15 pts</td>
<td>8 pts</td>
<td>0 pts</td>
<td>15 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Voice: appropriate, engages the reader, and compelling</td>
<td>10 pts</td>
<td>5 pts</td>
<td>0 pts</td>
<td>10 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word Choice: creates vivid pictures, powerful, energizing</td>
<td>10 pts</td>
<td>5 pts</td>
<td>0 pts</td>
<td>10 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Sentence Fluency: words and phrases flow together when read aloud</td>
<td>10 pts</td>
<td>5 pts</td>
<td>0 pts</td>
<td>10 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Conventions: standard writing conventions used, few errors</td>
<td>10 pts</td>
<td>5 pts</td>
<td>0 pts</td>
<td>10 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Presentation: finished piece is easy to read, polished</td>
<td>5 pts</td>
<td>3 pts</td>
<td>0 pts</td>
<td>5 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>700–1000 Word Count</td>
<td>5 pts</td>
<td>3 pts</td>
<td>0 pts</td>
<td>5 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Submitted on Time using WordPress URL</td>
<td>10 pts</td>
<td>5 pts</td>
<td>0 pts</td>
<td>10 pts</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Create an argument writing using the writing process</td>
<td>Exceeds expectations 0 pts</td>
<td>Meets expectations 0 pts</td>
<td>Does not meet expectations 0 pts</td>
<td>0 pts</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

TOTAL POINTS 100 pts

Licensing & Attributions
CC licensed content, Shared previously
ROGERIAN ARGUMENT

The Rogerian argument, inspired by the influential psychologist Carl Rogers, aims to find compromise on a controversial issue.

If you are using the Rogerian approach your introduction to the argument should accomplish three objectives:

1. **Introduce the author and work.** Usually, you will introduce the author and work in the first sentence, as in this example: *In Dwight Okita’s “In Response to Executive Order 9066,” the narrator addresses an inevitable by-product of war – racism.* The first time you refer to the author, refer to him or her by his or her full name. After that, refer to the author by last name only. Never refer to an author by his or her first name only.

2. **Provide the audience a short but concise summary of the work to which you are responding.** Remember, your audience has already read the work you are responding to. Therefore, you do not need to provide a lengthy summary. Focus on the main points of the work to which you are responding and use direct quotations sparingly. Direct quotations work best when they are powerful and compelling.

3. **State the main issue addressed in the work.** Your thesis, or claim, will come after you summarize the two sides of the issue.

The Introduction

The following is an example of how the introduction of a Rogerian argument can be written. The topic is racial profiling.

*In Dwight Okita’s “In Response to Executive Order 9066,” the narrator — a young Japanese-American — writes a letter to the government, who has ordered her family into a relocation camp after Pearl Harbor. In the letter, the narrator details the people in her life, from her father to her best friend at school. Since the narrator is of Japanese descent, her best friend accuses her of “trying to start a war” (18). The narrator is seemingly too naïve to realize the ignorance of this statement, and tells the government that she asked this friend to plant tomato seeds in her honor. Though Okita’s poem deals specifically with World War II, the issue of race relations during wartime is still relevant. Recently, with the outbreaks of terrorism in the United States, Spain, and England, many are calling for racial profiling to stifle terrorism. The issue has sparked debate, with one side calling it racism and the other calling it common sense.*

Once you have written your introduction, you must now show the two sides to the debate you are addressing. Though there are always more than two sides to a debate, Rogerian arguments put two in stark opposition to one another. Summarize each side, then provide a middle path. Your summary of the two sides will be your first two body paragraphs. Use quotations from outside sources to effectively illustrate the position of each side.

An outline for a Rogerian argument might look like this:

- Introduction
- Side A
- Side B
- Claim
- Conclusion
The Claim

Since the goal of Rogerian argument is to find a common ground between two opposing positions, you must identify the shared beliefs or assumptions of each side. In the example above, both sides of the racial profiling issue want the U.S. A solid Rogerian argument acknowledges the desires of each side, and tries to accommodate both. Again, using the racial profiling example above, both sides desire a safer society, perhaps a better solution would focus on more objective measures than race; an effective start would be to use more screening technology on public transportation. Once you have a claim that disarms the central dispute, you should support the claim with evidence, and quotations when appropriate.

Quoting Effectively

Remember, you should quote to illustrate a point you are making. You should not, however, quote to simply take up space. Make sure all quotations are compelling and intriguing: Consider the following example. In "The Danger of Political Correctness," author Richard Stein asserts that, “the desire to not offend has now become more important than protecting national security” (52). This statement sums up the beliefs of those in favor of profiling in public places.

The Conclusion

Your conclusion should:

- Bring the essay back to what is discussed in the introduction
- Tie up loose ends
- End on a thought-provoking note

The following is a sample conclusion:

Though the debate over racial profiling is sure to continue, each side desires to make the United States a safer place. With that goal in mind, our society deserves better security measures than merely searching a person who appears a bit dark. We cannot waste time with such subjective matters, especially when we have technology that could more effectively locate potential terrorists. Sure, installing metal detectors and cameras on public transportation is costly, but feeling safe in public is priceless.

Sources

Taken from Michael Franco’s PowerPoint Presentation Writing Essay 4: Rogerian Argument

TOULMIN'S ARGUMENT MODEL

Stephen Toulmin, an English philosopher and logician, identified elements of a persuasive argument. These give useful categories by which an argument may be analyzed.
Claim

A claim is a statement that you are asking the other person to accept. This includes information you are asking them to accept as true or actions you want them to accept and enact.

For example:
You should use a hearing aid.

Many people start with a claim, but then find that it is challenged. If you just ask me to do something, I will not simply agree with what you want. I will ask why I should agree with you. I will ask you to prove your claim. This is where grounds become important.

Grounds

The grounds (or data) is the basis of real persuasion and is made up of data and hard facts, plus the reasoning behind the claim. It is the ‘truth’ on which the claim is based. Grounds may also include proof of expertise and the basic premises on which the rest of the argument is built.
The actual truth of the data may be less than 100%, as much data are ultimately based on perception. We assume what we measure is true, but there may be problems in this measurement, ranging from a faulty measurement instrument to biased sampling.

It is critical to the argument that the grounds are not challenged because, if they are, they may become a claim, which you will need to prove with even deeper information and further argument.

For example:

Over 70% of all people over 65 years have a hearing difficulty.

Information is usually a very powerful element of persuasion, although it does affect people differently. Those who are dogmatic, logical or rational will more likely to be persuaded by factual data. Those who argue emotionally and who are highly invested in their own position will challenge it or otherwise try to ignore it. It is often a useful test to give something factual to the other person that disproves their argument, and watch how they handle it. Some will accept it without question. Some will dismiss it out of hand. Others will dig deeper, requiring more explanation. This is where the warrant comes into its own.

Warrant

A warrant links data and other grounds to a claim, legitimizing the claim by showing the grounds to be relevant. The warrant may be explicit or unspoken and implicit. It answers the question ‘Why does that data mean your claim is true?’

For example:

A hearing aid helps most people to hear better.

The warrant may be simple and it may also be a longer argument, with additional sub-elements including those described below.

Warrants may be based on logos, ethos or pathos, or values that are assumed to be shared with the listener.

In many arguments, warrants are often implicit and hence unstated. This gives space for the other person to question and expose the warrant, perhaps to show it is weak or unfounded.

Backing

The backing (or support) for an argument gives additional support to the warrant by answering different questions.

For example:

Hearing aids are available locally.

Qualifier

The qualifier (or modal qualifier) indicates the strength of the leap from the data to the warrant and may limit how universally the claim applies. They include words such as ‘most’, ‘usually’, ‘always’ or ‘sometimes’. Arguments may hence range from strong assertions to generally quite floppy with vague and often rather uncertain kinds of statement.

For example:

Hearing aids help most people.

Another variant is the reservation, which may give the possibility of the claim being incorrect. Unless there is evidence to the contrary, hearing aids do no harm to ears.
Qualifiers and reservations are much used by advertisers who are constrained not to lie. Thus they slip ‘usually’, ‘virtually’, ‘unless’ and so on into their claims.

Rebuttal

Despite the careful construction of the argument, there may still be counter-arguments that can be used. These may be rebutted either through a continued dialogue, or by pre-empting the counter-argument by giving the rebuttal during the initial presentation of the argument.

For example:

There is a support desk that deals with technical problems.

Any rebuttal is an argument in itself, and thus may include a claim, warrant, backing and so on. It also, of course can have a rebuttal. Thus if you are presenting an argument, you can seek to understand both possible rebuttals and also rebuttals to the rebuttals.

See also:

Arrangement, Use of Language


See more at: http://www.designmethodsandprocesses.co.uk/2011/03/toulmins-argument-model/#sthash.dwkAUTvh.dpuf

TOULMIN'S SCHEMA

Stephen Edelston Toulmin (born March 25, 1922) is a British philosopher, author, and educator. Influenced by the Austrian philosopher Ludwig Wittgenstein, Toulmin devoted his works to the analysis of moral reasoning. Throughout his writings, he seeks to develop practical arguments which can be used effectively in evaluating the ethics behind moral issues. The Toulmin Model of Argumentation, a diagram containing six interrelated components used for analyzing arguments, was considered his most influential work, particularly in the field of rhetoric and communication, and in computer science.
Stephen Toulmin is a British philosopher and educator who devoted to analyzing moral reasoning. Throughout his writings, he seeks to develop practical arguments which can be used effectively in evaluating the ethics behind moral issues. His most famous work was his Model of Argumentation(sometimes called “Toulmin’s Schema,” which is a method of analyzing an argument by breaking it down into six parts. Once an argument is broken down and examined, weaknesses in the argument can be found and addressed.

Toulmin’s Schema:

1. Claim: conclusions whose merit must be established. For example, if a person tries to convince a listener that he is a British citizen, the claim would be “I am a British citizen.”
2. Data: the facts appealed to as a foundation for the claim. For example, the person introduced in 1 can support his claim with the supporting data “I was born in Bermuda.”
3. Warrant: the statement authorizing the movement from the data to the claim. In order to move from the data established in 2, “I was born in Bermuda,” to the claim in 1, “I am a British citizen,” the person must supply a warrant to bridge the gap between 1 & 2 with the statement “A man born in Bermuda will legally be a British Citizen.” Toulmin stated that an argument is only as strong as its weakest warrant and if a warrant isn't valid, then the whole argument collapses. Therefore, it is important to have strong, valid warrants.
4. Backing: facts that give credibility to the statement expressed in the warrant; backing must be introduced when the warrant itself is not convincing enough to the readers or the listeners. For example, if the listener does not deem the warrant as credible, the speaker would supply legal documents as backing statement to show that it is true that “A man born in Bermuda will legally be a British Citizen.”
5. Rebuttal: statements recognizing the restrictions to which the claim may legitimately be applied. The rebuttal is exemplified as follows, “A man born in Bermuda will legally be a British citizen, unless he has betrayed Britain and become a spy of another country.”
6. Qualifier: words or phrases expressing how certain the author/speaker is concerning the claim. Such words or phrases include “possible,” “probably,” “impossible,” “certainly,” “presumably,” “as far as the evidence goes,” or “necessarily.” The claim “I am definitely a British citizen” has a greater degree of force than the claim “I am a British citizen, presumably.”
7. The first three elements “claim,” “data,” and “warrant” are considered as the essential components of practical arguments, while the 4-6 “Qualifier,” “Backing,” and “Rebuttal” may not be needed in some arguments. When first proposed, this layout of argumentation is based on legal arguments and intended to be used to analyze arguments typically found in the courtroom; in fact, Toulmin did not realize that this layout would be applicable to the field of rhetoric and communication until later. 1

Here are a few more examples of Toulmin’s Schema:
Suppose you see a one of those commercials for a product that promises to give you whiter teeth. Here are the basic parts of the argument behind the commercial:

1. Claim: You should buy our tooth-whitening product.
2. Data: Studies show that teeth are 50% whiter after using the product for a specified time.
3. Warrant: People want whiter teeth.
5. Rebuttal: Commercial says "unless you don’t want to attract guys."
6. Qualifier: Fine print says “product must be used six weeks for results.”

Notice that those commercials don’t usually bother trying to convince you that you want whiter teeth; instead, they assume that you have bought into the value our culture places on whiter teeth. When an assumption—a warrant in Toulmin’s terms—is unstated, it’s called an implicit warrant. Sometimes, however, the warrant may need to be stated because it is a powerful part of the argument. When the warrant is stated, it’s called an explicit warrant.

Another example:

1. Claim: People should probably own a gun.
2. Data: Studies show that people who own a gun are less likely to be mugged.
3. Warrant: People want to be safe.
4. Backing: May not be necessary. In this case, it is common sense that people want to be safe.
5. Rebuttal: Not everyone should own a gun. Children and those with mental disorders/problems should not own a gun.
6. Qualifier: The word “probably” in the claim.

1. Claim: Flag burning should be unconstitutional in most cases.
2. Data: A national poll says that 60% of Americans want flag burning unconstitutional.
3. Warrant: People want to respect the flag.
5. Rebuttal: Not everyone in the U.S. respects the flag.
6. Qualifier: The phrase “in most cases”

Toulmin says that the weakest part of any argument is its weakest warrant. Remember that the warrant is the link between the data and the claim. If the warrant isn’t valid, the argument collapses.

Sources

1. Stephen Toulmin
2. Toulmin’s Analysis
PERSUASION

LEARNING OBJECTIVES

• Determine the purpose and structure of persuasion in writing.
• Identify bias in writing.
• Assess various rhetorical devices.
• Distinguish between fact and opinion.
• Understand the importance of visuals to strengthen arguments.
• Write a persuasive essay.

The Purpose of Persuasive Writing

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

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

Tip

Most of us feel inclined to try to win the arguments we engage in. On some level, we all want to be right, and we want others to see the error of their ways. More times than not, however, arguments in which both sides try to win end up producing losers all around. The more productive approach is to persuade your audience to consider your opinion as a valid one, not simply the right one.

The Structure of a Persuasive Essay

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

1. Introduction and thesis
2. Opposing and qualifying ideas
3. Strong evidence in support of claim
4. Style and tone of language
5. A compelling conclusion

Creating an Introduction and Thesis

The persuasive essay begins with an engaging introduction that presents the general topic. The thesis typically appears somewhere in the introduction and states the writer’s point of view.
Tip

Avoid forming a thesis based on a negative claim. For example, “The hourly minimum wage is not high enough for the average worker to live on.” This is probably a true statement, but persuasive arguments should make a positive case. That is, the thesis statement should focus on how the hourly minimum wage is low or insufficient.

Acknowledging Opposing Ideas and Limits to Your Argument

Because an argument implies differing points of view on the subject, you must be sure to acknowledge those opposing ideas. Avoiding ideas that conflict with your own gives the reader the impression that you may be uncertain, fearful, or unaware of opposing ideas. Thus it is essential that you not only address counterarguments but also do so respectfully.

Try to address opposing arguments earlier rather than later in your essay. Rhetorically speaking, ordering your positive arguments last allows you to better address ideas that conflict with your own, so you can spend the rest of the essay countering those arguments. This way, you leave your reader thinking about your argument rather than someone else’s. You have the last word.

Acknowledging points of view different from your own also has the effect of fostering more credibility between you and the audience. They know from the outset that you are aware of opposing ideas and that you are not afraid to give them space.

It is also helpful to establish the limits of your argument and what you are trying to accomplish. In effect, you are conceding early on that your argument is not the ultimate authority on a given topic. Such humility can go a long way toward earning credibility and trust with an audience. Audience members will know from the beginning that you are a reasonable writer, and audience members will trust your argument as a result. For example, in the following concessionary statement, the writer advocates for stricter gun control laws, but she admits it will not solve all of our problems with crime:

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

Such a concession will be welcome by those who might disagree with this writer’s argument in the first place. To effectively persuade their readers, writers need to be modest in their goals and humble in their approach to get readers to listen to the ideas. See Table 10.5 “Phrases of Concession” for some useful phrases of concession.

Table 10.5 Phrases of Concession

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>although</th>
<th>granted that</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>of course</td>
<td>still</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>though</td>
<td>yet</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Exercise 1

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

Everyone has various biases on any number of topics. For example, you might have a bias toward wearing black instead of brightly colored clothes or wearing jeans rather than formal wear. You might have a bias toward working at night rather than in the morning, or working by deadlines rather than getting tasks done in advance. These examples identify minor biases, of course, but they still indicate preferences and opinions.

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

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

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

The Use of I in Writing

The use of I in writing is often a topic of debate, and the acceptance of its usage varies from instructor to instructor. It is difficult to predict the preferences for all your present and future instructors, but consider the effects it can potentially have on your writing.

Be mindful of the use of I in your writing because it can make your argument sound overly biased. There are two primary reasons:

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

   Smoking is bad.

   I think smoking is bad.

   In the first sentence, the rightful subject, smoking, is in the subject position in the sentence. In the second sentence, the insertion of I and think replaces smoking as the subject, which draws attention to I and away from the topic that is supposed to be discussed. Remember to keep the message (the subject) and the messenger (the writer) separate.
Checklist

Developing Sound Arguments

Does my essay contain the following elements?

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

Fact and Opinion

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

Opinions are personal views, or judgments. An opinion is what an individual believes about a particular subject. However, an opinion in argumentation must have legitimate backing; adequate evidence and credibility should support the opinion. Consider the credibility of expert opinions. Experts in a given field have the knowledge and credentials to make their opinion meaningful to a larger audience.

For example, you seek the opinion of your dentist when it comes to the health of your gums, and you seek the opinion of your mechanic when it comes to the maintenance of your car. Both have knowledge and credentials in those respective fields, which is why their opinions matter to you. But the authority of your dentist may be greatly diminished should he or she offer an opinion about your car, and vice versa.

In writing, you want to strike a balance between credible facts and authoritative opinions. Relying on one or the other will likely lose more of your audience than it gains.

Tip

The word prove is frequently used in the discussion of persuasive writing. Writers may claim that one piece of evidence or another proves the argument, but proving an argument is often not possible. No evidence proves a debatable topic one way or the other; that is why the topic is debatable. Facts can be proved, but opinions can only be supported, explained, and persuaded.

Exercise 2

On a separate sheet of paper, take three of the theses you formed in Note 10.94 “Exercise 1”, and list the types of evidence you might use in support of that thesis.

Exercise 3

Using the evidence you provided in support of the three theses in Note 10.100 “Exercise 2”, come up with at least one counterargument to each. Then write a concession statement, expressing the limits to each of your three arguments.
Using Visual Elements to Strengthen Arguments

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

Quantitative visuals present data graphically. They allow the audience to see statistics spatially. The purpose of using quantitative visuals is to make logical appeals to the audience. For example, sometimes it is easier to understand the disparity in certain statistics if you can see how the disparity looks graphically. Bar graphs, pie charts, Venn diagrams, histograms, and line graphs are all ways of presenting quantitative data in spatial dimensions.

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

Writing at Work

When making a business presentation, you typically have limited time to get across your idea. Providing visual elements for your audience can be an effective timesaving tool. Quantitative visuals in business presentations serve the same purpose as they do in persuasive writing. They should make logical appeals by showing numerical data in a spatial design. Quantitative visuals should be pictures that might appeal to your audience’s emotions. You will find that many of the rhetorical devices used in writing are the same ones used in the workplace. For more information about visuals in presentations, see Chapter 14 “Creating Presentations: Sharing Your Ideas.”

Writing a Persuasive Essay

Choose a topic that you feel passionate about. If your instructor requires you to write about a specific topic, approach the subject from an angle that interests you. Begin your essay with an engaging introduction. Your thesis should typically appear somewhere in your introduction.

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

Make your appeals in support of your thesis by using sound, credible evidence. Use a balance of facts and opinions from a wide range of sources, such as scientific studies, expert testimony, statistics, and personal anecdotes. Each piece of evidence should be fully explained and clearly stated.

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

Finally, write a conclusion that effectively summarizes the main argument and reinforces your thesis. See Chapter 15 “Readings: Examples of Essays” to read a sample persuasive essay.
Exercise 4

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

Key Takeaways

- The purpose of persuasion in writing is to convince or move readers toward a certain point of view, or opinion.
- An argument is a reasoned opinion supported and explained by evidence. To argue, in writing, is to advance knowledge and ideas in a positive way.
- A thesis that expresses the opinion of the writer in more specific terms is better than one that is vague.
- It is essential that you not only address counterarguments but also do so respectfully.
- It is also helpful to establish the limits of your argument and what you are trying to accomplish through a concession statement.
- To persuade a skeptical audience, you will need to use a wide range of evidence. Scientific studies, opinions from experts, historical precedent, statistics, personal anecdotes, and current events are all types of evidence that you might use in explaining your point.
- Make sure that your word choice and writing style is appropriate for both your subject and your audience.
- You should let your reader know your bias, but do not let that bias blind you to the primary components of good argumentation: sound, thoughtful evidence and respectfully and reasonably addressing opposing ideas.
- You should be mindful of the use of \textit{I} in your writing because it can make your argument sound more biased than it needs to.
- Facts are statements that can be proven using objective data.
- Opinions are personal views, or judgments, that cannot be proven.
- In writing, you want to strike a balance between credible facts and authoritative opinions.
- Quantitative visuals present data graphically. The purpose of using quantitative visuals is to make logical appeals to the audience.
- Qualitative visuals present images that appeal to the audience’s emotions.

DISCUSSION: ARGUMENT/COUNTERARGUMENT

This will be a small group discussion—you’ll only see posts from a smaller group of people.

Previously you did some great work identifying your target audience for your research project. The whole fun of writing a persuasive paper is to pick an audience who disagrees with you, or at least is undecided about the matter. Then you use charm, wit, and raw intelligence to prove that they’re absolutely silly for thinking what they do, and that they better come over to your side or else the world will end.
In being persuasive and winning the fight, it helps a lot to remember that your target audience has reasons for their position on the issue. Those reasons may not be GOOD ones, of course, but they have some motivation for thinking or feeling the way they do.

For example, I still don’t like eating at Jack in the Box because a friend of mine had a really bad experience there years ago, in another state. Not a very rational reason, I admit, but it does shape my behavior when it comes to fast food.

In order to be truly persuasive, you have to understand what people’s motivations are, and acknowledge those in your essay. If you don’t, then readers will think one of two things:

• You don’t know what the other side thinks and are therefore ignorant.
• You know what they think, but you just don’t have any good response for it and are avoiding it.

I’d like you to visit POWA’s “Anticipating Opposition” article and read the content there. Then, return to this discussion and build your own pro/con chart, using your thesis as the “proposition.” It’ll be easier to create a list, rather than a chart, given our constraints in the discussion forum platform.

Then look at one or two of your “con” statements in more detail. How will you acknowledge these arguments in your own essay, and what will you say to your reader to counter them? For instance, if I were trying to talk myself into eating at Jack in the Box again, I’d acknowledge that finding a bug in your food is yes, a traumatic event. But it was an isolated incident, and in no way reflects the standards of the chain overall. I’d go into food safety data and possibly relate the health scores of the local franchises recently. Maybe I’d even embark on a smear campaign and talk about similar events that have occurred at other fast food chains, to show it’s not particular to one brand.

Your post should be at least 150–200 words. It doesn’t have to be grammatically perfect, but should use standard English (no text-speak, please) and normal capitalization rules.

You will also need to return to this Discussion to reply to at least one of your group members’ posts. Content could include, but is not limited to, any of the following: Suggest further elements that could be added either to the Pro or Con side of their chart. Indicate what it would take for you to be convinced, if you were on the con side of the argument.

Responses are weighed as heavily as your initial posting, and should be roughly as long (150–200 words). Responses should indicate you’ve read your classmate’s post carefully. Include specific details from the post you’re responding to in your reply.

FALLACIES

WHAT THIS HANDBOOK IS ABOUT

This handout discusses common logical fallacies that you may encounter in your own writing or the writing of others. The handout provides definitions, examples, and tips on avoiding these fallacies.
ARGUMENTS

Most academic writing tasks require you to make an argument—that is, to present reasons for a particular claim or interpretation you are putting forward. You may have been told that you need to make your arguments more logical or stronger. And you may have worried that you simply aren’t a logical person or wondered what it means for an argument to be strong. Learning to make the best arguments you can is an ongoing process, but it isn’t impossible: “Being logical” is something anyone can do, with practice.

Each argument you make is composed of premises (this is a term for statements that express your reasons or evidence) that are arranged in the right way to support your conclusion (the main claim or interpretation you are offering). You can make your arguments stronger by

1. using good premises (ones you have good reason to believe are both true and relevant to the issue at hand),
2. making sure your premises provide good support for your conclusion (and not some other conclusion, or no conclusion at all),
3. checking that you have addressed the most important or relevant aspects of the issue (that is, that your premises and conclusion focus on what is really important to the issue), and
4. not making claims that are so strong or sweeping that you can’t really support them.

You also need to be sure that you present all of your ideas in an orderly fashion that readers can follow. See our handouts on argument and organization for some tips that will improve your arguments.

This handout describes some ways in which arguments often fail to do the things listed above; these failings are called fallacies. If you’re having trouble developing your argument, check to see if a fallacy is part of the problem.

It is particularly easy to slip up and commit a fallacy when you have strong feelings about your topic—if a conclusion seems obvious to you, you’re more likely to just assume that it is true and to be careless with your evidence. To help you see how people commonly make this mistake, this handout uses a number of controversial political examples—arguments about subjects like abortion, gun control, the death penalty, gay marriage, euthanasia, and pornography. The purpose of this handout, though, is not to argue for any particular position on any of these issues; rather, it is to illustrate weak reasoning, which can happen in pretty much any kind of argument. Please be aware that the claims in these examples are just made-up illustrations—they haven’t been researched, and you shouldn’t use them as evidence in your own writing.

WHAT ARE FALLACIES?

Fallacies are defects that weaken arguments. By learning to look for them in your own and others’ writing, you can strengthen your ability to evaluate the arguments you make, read, and hear. It is important to realize two things about fallacies: first, fallacious arguments are very, very common and can be quite persuasive, at least to the casual reader or listener. You can find dozens of examples of fallacious reasoning in newspapers, advertisements, and other sources. Second, it is sometimes hard to evaluate whether an argument is fallacious. An argument might be very weak, somewhat weak, somewhat strong, or very strong. An argument that has several stages or parts might have some strong sections and some weak ones. The goal of this handout, then, is not to teach you how to label arguments as fallacious or fallacy-free, but to help you look critically at your own arguments and move them away from the “weak” and toward the “strong” end of the continuum.

SO WHAT DO FALLACIES LOOK LIKE?

For each fallacy listed, there is a definition or explanation, an example, and a tip on how to avoid committing the fallacy in your own arguments.
Hasty generalization

**Definition**: Making assumptions about a whole group or range of cases based on a sample that is inadequate (usually because it is atypical or too small). Stereotypes about people ("librarians are shy and smart," "wealthy people are snobs," etc.) are a common example of the principle underlying hasty generalization.

**Example**: "My roommate said her philosophy class was hard, and the one I’m in is hard, too. All philosophy classes must be hard!" Two people’s experiences are, in this case, not enough on which to base a conclusion.

**Tip**: Ask yourself what kind of “sample” you’re using: Are you relying on the opinions or experiences of just a few people, or your own experience in just a few situations? If so, consider whether you need more evidence, or perhaps a less sweeping conclusion. (Notice that in the example, the more modest conclusion “Some philosophy classes are hard for some students” would not be a hasty generalization.)

Missing the point

**Definition**: The premises of an argument do support a particular conclusion—but not the conclusion that the arguer actually draws.

**Example**: “The seriousness of a punishment should match the seriousness of the crime. Right now, the punishment for drunk driving may simply be a fine. But drunk driving is a very serious crime that can kill innocent people. So the death penalty should be the punishment for drunk driving.” The argument actually supports several conclusions—"The punishment for drunk driving should be very serious," in particular—but it doesn’t support the claim that the death penalty, specifically, is warranted.

**Tip**: Separate your premises from your conclusion. Looking at the premises, ask yourself what conclusion an objective person would reach after reading them. Looking at your conclusion, ask yourself what kind of evidence would be required to support such a conclusion, and then see if you’ve actually given that evidence. Missing the point often occurs when a sweeping or extreme conclusion is being drawn, so be especially careful if you know you’re claiming something big.

*Post hoc* (also called false cause)

This fallacy gets its name from the Latin phrase “*post hoc, ergo propter hoc,*” which translates as “after this, therefore because of this.”

**Definition**: Assuming that because B comes after A, A caused B. Of course, sometimes one event really does cause another one that comes later—for example, if I register for a class, and my name later appears on the roll, it’s true that the first event caused the one that came later. But sometimes two events that seem related in time aren’t really related as cause and event. That is, correlation isn’t the same thing as causation.

**Examples**: “President Jones raised taxes, and then the rate of violent crime went up. Jones is responsible for the rise in crime.” The increase in taxes might or might not be one factor in the rising crime rates, but the argument hasn’t shown us that one caused the other.

**Tip**: To avoid the *post hoc* fallacy, the arguer would need to give us some explanation of the process by which the tax increase is supposed to have produced higher crime rates. And that’s what you should do to avoid committing this fallacy: If you say that A causes B, you should have something more to say about how A caused B than just that A came first and B came later.

Slippery slope

**Definition**: The arguer claims that a sort of chain reaction, usually ending in some dire consequence, will take place, but there’s really not enough evidence for that assumption. The arguer asserts that if we take even one step onto the “slippery slope,” we will end up sliding all the way to the bottom; he or she assumes we can’t stop partway down the hill.
Example: “Animal experimentation reduces our respect for life. If we don’t respect life, we are likely to be more and more tolerant of violent acts like war and murder. Soon our society will become a battlefield in which everyone constantly fears for their lives. It will be the end of civilization. To prevent this terrible consequence, we should make animal experimentation illegal right now.” Since animal experimentation has been legal for some time and civilization has not yet ended, it seems particularly clear that this chain of events won’t necessarily take place. Even if we believe that experimenting on animals reduces respect for life, and loss of respect for life makes us more tolerant of violence, that may be the spot on the hillside at which things stop—we may not slide all the way down to the end of civilization. And so we have not yet been given sufficient reason to accept the arguer’s conclusion that we must make animal experimentation illegal right now.

Like post hoc, slippery slope can be a tricky fallacy to identify, since sometimes a chain of events really can be predicted to follow from a certain action. Here’s an example that doesn’t seem fallacious: “If I fail English 101, I won’t be able to graduate. If I don’t graduate, I probably won’t be able to get a good job, and I may very well end up doing temp work or flipping burgers for the next year.”

Tip: Check your argument for chains of consequences, where you say “if A, then B, and if B, then C,” and so forth. Make sure these chains are reasonable.

Weak analogy

Definition: Many arguments rely on an analogy between two or more objects, ideas, or situations. If the two things that are being compared aren’t really alike in the relevant respects, the analogy is a weak one, and the argument that relies on it commits the fallacy of weak analogy.

Example: “Guns are like hammers—they’re both tools with metal parts that could be used to kill someone. And yet it would be ridiculous to restrict the purchase of hammers—so restrictions on purchasing guns are equally ridiculous.” While guns and hammers do share certain features, these features (having metal parts, being tools, and being potentially useful for violence) are not the ones at stake in deciding whether to restrict guns. Rather, we restrict guns because they can easily be used to kill large numbers of people at a distance. This is a feature hammers do not share—it would be hard to kill a crowd with a hammer. Thus, the analogy is weak, and so is the argument based on it.

If you think about it, you can make an analogy of some kind between almost any two things in the world: “My paper is like a mud puddle because they both get bigger when it rains (I work more when I’m stuck inside) and they’re both kind of murky.” So the mere fact that you can draw an analogy between two things doesn’t prove much, by itself.

Arguments by analogy are often used in discussing abortion—arguers frequently compare fetuses with adult human beings, and then argue that treatment that would violate the rights of an adult human being also violates the rights of fetuses. Whether these arguments are good or not depends on the strength of the analogy: do adult humans and fetuses share the properties that give adult humans rights? If the property that matters is having a human genetic code or the potential for a life full of human experiences, adult humans and fetuses do share that property, so the argument and the analogy are strong; if the property is being self-aware, rational, or able to survive on one’s own, adult humans and fetuses don’t share it, and the analogy is weak.

Tip: Identify what properties are important to the claim you’re making, and see whether the two things you’re comparing both share those properties.

Appeal to authority

Definition: Often we add strength to our arguments by referring to respected sources or authorities and explaining their positions on the issues we’re discussing. If, however, we try to get readers to agree with us simply by impressing them with a famous name or by appealing to a supposed authority who really isn’t much of an expert, we commit the fallacy of appeal to authority.

Example: “We should abolish the death penalty. Many respected people, such as actor Guy Handsome, have publicly stated their opposition to it.” While Guy Handsome may be an authority on matters having to do with acting, there’s no particular reason why anyone should be moved by his political opinions—he is probably no more of an authority on the death penalty than the person writing the paper.
**Tip:** There are two easy ways to avoid committing appeal to authority: First, make sure that the authorities you cite are experts on the subject you’re discussing. Second, rather than just saying “Dr. Authority believes X, so we should believe it, too,” try to explain the reasoning or evidence that the authority used to arrive at his or her opinion. That way, your readers have more to go on than a person’s reputation. It also helps to choose authorities who are perceived as fairly neutral or reasonable, rather than people who will be perceived as biased.

**Ad populum**

**Definition:** The Latin name of this fallacy means “to the people.” There are several versions of the *ad populum* fallacy, but in all of them, the arguer takes advantage of the desire most people have to be liked and to fit in with others and uses that desire to try to get the audience to accept his or her argument. One of the most common versions is the bandwagon fallacy, in which the arguer tries to convince the audience to do or believe something because everyone else (supposedly) does.

**Example:** “Gay marriages are just immoral. 70% of Americans think so!” While the opinion of most Americans might be relevant in determining what laws we should have, it certainly doesn’t determine what is moral or immoral: there was a time where a substantial number of Americans were in favor of segregation, but their opinion was not evidence that segregation was moral. The arguer is trying to get us to agree with the conclusion by appealing to our desire to fit in with other Americans.

**Tip:** Make sure that you aren’t recommending that your readers believe your conclusion because everyone else believes it, all the cool people believe it, people will like you better if you believe it, and so forth. Keep in mind that the popular opinion is not always the right one.

**Ad hominem and tu quoque**

**Definitions:** Like the appeal to authority and *ad populum* fallacies, the *ad hominem* (“against the person”) and *tu quoque* (“you, too!”) fallacies focus our attention on people rather than on arguments or evidence. In both of these arguments, the conclusion is usually “You shouldn’t believe So-and-So’s argument.” The reason for not believing So-and-So is that So-and-So is either a bad person (*ad hominem*) or a hypocrite (*tu quoque*). In an *ad hominem* argument, the arguer attacks his or her opponent instead of the opponent’s argument.

**Examples:** “Andrea Dworkin has written several books arguing that pornography harms women. But Dworkin is just ugly and bitter, so why should we listen to her?” Dworkin’s appearance and character, which the arguer has characterized so ungenerously, have nothing to do with the strength of her argument, so using them as evidence is fallacious.

In a *tu quoque* argument, the arguer points out that the opponent has actually done the thing he or she is arguing against, and so the opponent’s argument shouldn’t be listened to. Here’s an example: imagine that your parents have explained to you why you shouldn’t smoke, and they’ve given a lot of good reasons—the damage to your health, the cost, and so forth. You reply, “I won’t accept your argument, because you used to smoke when you were my age. You did it, too!” The fact that your parents have done the thing they are condemning has no bearing on the premises they put forward in their argument (smoking harms your health and is very expensive), so your response is fallacious.

**Tip:** Be sure to stay focused on your opponents’ reasoning, rather than on their personal character. (The exception to this is, of course, if you are making an argument about someone’s character—if your conclusion is “President Jones is an untrustworthy person,” premises about her untrustworthy acts are relevant, not fallacious.)

**Appeal to pity**

**Definition:** The appeal to pity takes place when an arguer tries to get people to accept a conclusion by making them feel sorry for someone.

**Examples:** “I know the exam is graded based on performance, but you should give me an A. My cat has been sick, my car broke down, and I’ve had a cold, so it was really hard for me to study!” The conclusion here is “You should give me an A.” But the criteria for getting an A have to do with learning and applying the material from the course; the principle the arguer wants us to accept (people who have a hard week deserve A’s) is clearly
unacceptable. The information the arguer has given might feel relevant and might even get the audience to consider the conclusion—but the information isn’t logically relevant, and so the argument is fallacious. Here’s another example: “It’s wrong to tax corporations—think of all the money they give to charity, and of the costs they already pay to run their businesses!”

Tip: Make sure that you aren’t simply trying to get your audience to agree with you by making them feel sorry for someone.

### Appeal to ignorance

**Definition:** In the appeal to ignorance, the arguer basically says, “Look, there’s no conclusive evidence on the issue at hand. Therefore, you should accept my conclusion on this issue.”

**Example:** “People have been trying for centuries to prove that God exists. But no one has yet been able to prove it. Therefore, God does not exist.” Here’s an opposing argument that commits the same fallacy: “People have been trying for years to prove that God does not exist. But no one has yet been able to prove it. Therefore, God exists.” In each case, the arguer tries to use the lack of evidence as support for a positive claim about the truth of a conclusion. There is one situation in which doing this is not fallacious: if qualified researchers have used well-thought-out methods to search for something for a long time, they haven’t found it, and it’s the kind of thing people ought to be able to find, then the fact that they haven’t found it constitutes some evidence that it doesn’t exist.

Tip: Look closely at arguments where you point out a lack of evidence and then draw a conclusion from that lack of evidence.

### Straw man

**Definition:** One way of making our own arguments stronger is to anticipate and respond in advance to the arguments that an opponent might make. In the straw man fallacy, the arguer sets up a weak version of the opponent’s position and tries to score points by knocking it down. But just as being able to knock down a straw man (like a scarecrow) isn’t very impressive, defeating a watered-down version of your opponent’s argument isn’t very impressive either.

**Example:** “Feminists want to ban all pornography and punish everyone who looks at it! But such harsh measures are surely inappropriate, so the feminists are wrong: porn and its fans should be left in peace.” The feminist argument is made weak by being overstated. In fact, most feminists do not propose an outright “ban” on porn or any punishment for those who merely view it or approve of it; often, they propose some restrictions on particular things like child porn, or propose to allow people who are hurt by porn to sue publishers and producers—not viewers—for damages. So the arguer hasn’t really scored any points; he or she has just committed a fallacy.

Tip: Be charitable to your opponents. State their arguments as strongly, accurately, and sympathetically as possible. If you can knock down even the best version of an opponent’s argument, then you’ve really accomplished something.

### Red herring

**Definition:** Partway through an argument, the arguer goes off on a tangent, raising a side issue that distracts the audience from what’s really at stake. Often, the arguer never returns to the original issue.

**Example:** “Grading this exam on a curve would be the most fair thing to do. After all, classes go more smoothly when the students and the professor are getting along well.” Let’s try our premise-conclusion outlining to see what’s wrong with this argument:

**Premise:** Classes go more smoothly when the students and the professor are getting along well.

**Conclusion:** Grading this exam on a curve would be the most fair thing to do.

When we lay it out this way, it’s pretty obvious that the arguer went off on a tangent—the fact that something helps people get along doesn’t necessarily make it more fair; fairness and justice sometimes require us to do
things that cause conflict. But the audience may feel like the issue of teachers and students agreeing is important and be distracted from the fact that the arguer has not given any evidence as to why a curve would be fair.

**Tip:** Try laying your premises and conclusion out in an outline-like form. How many issues do you see being raised in your argument? Can you explain how each premise supports the conclusion?

### False dichotomy

**Definition:** In false dichotomy, the arguer sets up the situation so it looks like there are only two choices. The arguer then eliminates one of the choices, so it seems that we are left with only one option: the one the arguer wanted us to pick in the first place. But often there are really many different options, not just two—and if we thought about them all, we might not be so quick to pick the one the arguer recommends.

**Example:** “Caldwell Hall is in bad shape. Either we tear it down and put up a new building, or we continue to risk students’ safety. Obviously we shouldn’t risk anyone’s safety, so we must tear the building down.” The argument neglects to mention the possibility that we might repair the building or find some way to protect students from the risks in question—for example, if only a few rooms are in bad shape, perhaps we shouldn’t hold classes in those rooms.

**Tip:** Examine your own arguments: if you’re saying that we have to choose between just two options, is that really so? Or are there other alternatives you haven’t mentioned? If there are other alternatives, don’t just ignore them—explain why they, too, should be ruled out. Although there’s no formal name for it, assuming that there are only three options, four options, etc. when really there are more is similar to false dichotomy and should also be avoided.

### Begging the question

**Definition:** A complicated fallacy; it comes in several forms and can be harder to detect than many of the other fallacies we’ve discussed. Basically, an argument that begs the question asks the reader to simply accept the conclusion without providing real evidence; the argument either relies on a premise that says the same thing as the conclusion (which you might hear referred to as “being circular” or “circular reasoning”), or simply ignores an important (but questionable) assumption that the argument rests on. Sometimes people use the phrase “beg the question” as a sort of general criticism of arguments, to mean that an arguer hasn’t given very good reasons for a conclusion, but that’s not the meaning we’re going to discuss here.

**Examples:** “Active euthanasia is morally acceptable. It is a decent, ethical thing to help another human being escape suffering through death.” Let’s lay this out in premise-conclusion form:

**Premise:** It is a decent, ethical thing to help another human being escape suffering through death.

**Conclusion:** Active euthanasia is morally acceptable.

If we “translate” the premise, we’ll see that the arguer has really just said the same thing twice: “decent, ethical” means pretty much the same thing as “morally acceptable,” and “help another human being escape suffering through death” means something pretty similar to “active euthanasia.” So the premise basically says, “active euthanasia is morally acceptable,” just like the conclusion does. The arguer hasn’t yet given us any real reasons why euthanasia is acceptable; instead, she has left us asking “well, really, why do you think active euthanasia is acceptable?” Her argument “begs” (that is, evades) the real question.

Here’s a second example of begging the question, in which a dubious premise which is needed to make the argument valid is completely ignored: “Murder is morally wrong. So active euthanasia is morally wrong.” The premise that gets left out is “active euthanasia is murder.” And that is a debatable premise—again, the argument “begs” or evades the question of whether active euthanasia is murder by simply not stating the premise. The arguer is hoping we’ll just focus on the uncontroversial premise, “Murder is morally wrong,” and not notice what is being assumed.

**Tip:** One way to try to avoid begging the question is to write out your premises and conclusion in a short, outline-like form. See if you notice any gaps, any steps that are required to move from one premise to the next or from the premises to the conclusion. Write down the statements that would fill those gaps. If the statements are
controversial and you’ve just glossed over them, you might be begging the question. Next, check to see whether any of your premises basically says the same thing as the conclusion (but in different words). If so, you’re probably begging the question. The moral of the story: you can’t just assume or use as uncontroversial evidence the very thing you’re trying to prove.

Equivocation

**Definition:** Equivocation is sliding between two or more different meanings of a single word or phrase that is important to the argument.

**Example:** “Giving money to charity is the right thing to do. So charities have a right to our money.” The equivocation here is on the word “right”: “right” can mean both something that is correct or good (as in “I got the right answers on the test”) and something to which someone has a claim (as in “everyone has a right to life”). Sometimes an arguer will deliberately, sneakily equivocate, often on words like “freedom,” “justice,” “rights,” and so forth; other times, the equivocation is a mistake or misunderstanding. Either way, it’s important that you use the main terms of your argument consistently.

**Tip:** Identify the most important words and phrases in your argument and ask yourself whether they could have more than one meaning. If they could, be sure you aren’t slipping and sliding between those meanings.

SO HOW DO I FIND FALLACIES IN MY OWN WRITING?

Here are some general tips for finding fallacies in your own arguments:

- **Pretend you disagree with the conclusion you’re defending.** What parts of the argument would now seem fishy to you? What parts would seem easiest to attack? Give special attention to strengthening those parts.
- **List your main points; under each one, list the evidence** you have for it. Seeing your claims and evidence laid out this way may make you realize that you have no good evidence for a particular claim, or it may help you look more critically at the evidence you’re using.
- **Learn which types of fallacies you’re especially prone to,** and be careful to check for them in your work. Some writers make lots of appeals to authority; others are more likely to rely on weak analogies or set up straw men. Read over some of your old papers to see if there’s a particular kind of fallacy you need to watch out for.
- **Be aware that broad claims need more proof than narrow ones.** Claims that use sweeping words like “all,” “no,” “none,” “every,” “always,” “never,” “no one,” and “everyone” are sometimes appropriate—but they require a lot more proof than less-sweeping claims that use words like “some,” “many,” “few,” “sometimes,” “usually,” and so forth.
- **Double check your characterizations of others,** especially your opponents, to be sure they are accurate and fair.

CAN I GET SOME PRACTICE WITH THIS?

Yes, you can. Follow this link to see a sample argument that’s full of fallacies (and then you can follow another link to get an explanation of each one). Then there’s a more well-constructed argument on the same topic.

WORKS CONSULTED

We consulted these works while writing the original version of this handout. This is not a comprehensive list of resources on the handout’s topic, and we encourage you to do your own research to find the latest publications on this topic. Please do not use this list as a model for the format of your own reference list, as it may not match the citation style you are using. For guidance on formatting citations, please see the UNC Libraries citation tutorial.

Hurley, Patrick J. A Concise Introduction to Logic. Thomson Learning, 2000


VIDEO: RECOGNIZING FALLACIES IN LOGIC

An entertaining list of logical fallacies to look out for.

https://youtu.be/w1rZAMsDcj8