Writing as Inquiry

WRITING AS INQUIRY

A Guide to WR 121 at the University of Oregon

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PREFACE: WRITING FOR COLLEGE

Welcome to our creative commons OER (open educational resource) for Writing 121 at the University of Oregon. This resource is designed for students to be a zero-cost, high-quality guide to academic writing, with the goal of preparing you for success in college and beyond.

Audience, Purpose, Context

Four key elements will shape much of the writing you are asked to do in college. Students, professional writers, editors, and publishers all consider these elements when they begin a new writing project:

1. **Purpose:** The reason the writer composes a piece of writing.
2. **Tone:** The attitude the writer conveys about the topic and the intended audience.
3. **Audience:** The individual or group the writer intends to address.
4. **Content:** The subject matter and ideas contained in a

piece of writing.

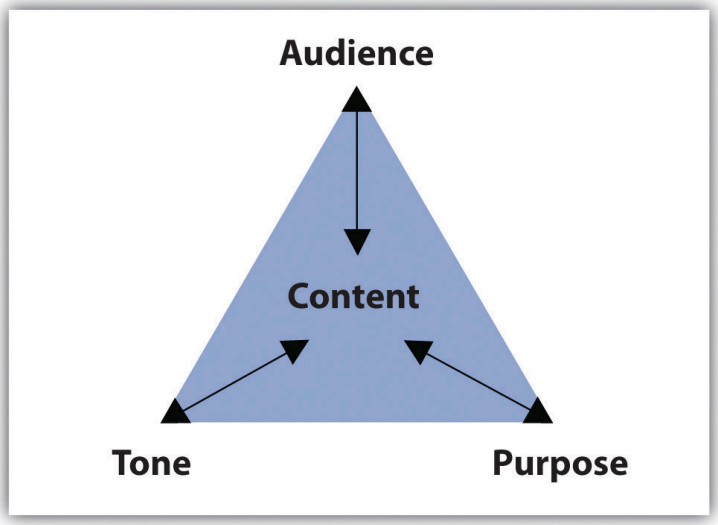

Figure 1 Purpose, Audience, Tone, and Content Triangle

Your purpose, audience, and tone shape the content of each new writing task you will complete during college. These might include essays, research reports, scholarship applications, cover letters, and more.

The **purpose** for a piece of writing identifies what a writer is trying to accomplish with their writing and the reasons motivating them to write. Basically, the purpose of a piece of writing answers the question "Why write it?" For example, why write a play? To entertain a packed theater. Why write

an email to your employees? To inform them of changes in policies or procedures. Why write a letter to your Senator? To persuade her to address your community's needs. Why keep a diary? To keep a record of your journey through life. Knowing your purpose for any given writing task will help you remain focused and coherent.

The **audience** for your writing is the expected reader or readers. An audience may be a certain professor, a group of classmates, people who research a subject you are writing about, or a wider community. Consider the specific traits of your audience members and what might be appealing or interesting to them. Use your imagination to anticipate your potential readers' demographics, education, prior knowledge, and expectations. This will ensure that you are as detailed as you need to be in your writing.

Tone identifies a writer or speaker's attitude toward their topic. You may pick up a person's tone of voice fairly easily in conversation, and the same is often true of writing. Just as speakers transmit emotion through voice and signers through body language, writers can create a range of attitudes, from excited and humorous to dry and critical. Tone creates intentional and unintentional emotional responses from readers. Ultimately, a good writer strives to build a relationship between the audience and their text using tone. To stimulate these connections, writers reflect attitudes and feelings with useful devices, such as sentence structure, word choice,

punctuation, and formal or informal language. Keep in mind that the attitude of your writing should always appropriately match the audience and the purpose.

Keep the big picture elements of purpose, audience, and tone in mind while reading this resource and engaging in your own writing process. We hope the ideas and lessons provided here give you a useful starting place to write with greater confidence and skill in college as you encounter the demands and expectations of academic coursework. First-year writing courses are required at nearly every college and university in the world, so nearly every college student encounters these common ideas about writing. Students of various ages, identities, backgrounds, academic backgrounds all take first-year writing courses at various points in their journey through college, and we hope after engaging with these materials that you find a sense of belonging with other writers and feel ready to take on any writing challenge. *Writing as Inquiry* is informed by our combined 30+ years of teaching experience, our engagement with current research and best practices in the field of Composition and Rhetoric, and a keen sense of developments in writing instruction and assessment across Oregon.

Territorial Acknowledgment

The University of Oregon is located on Kalapuya ilihi, the

traditional indigenous homeland of the Kalapuya people. Following treaties between 1851 and 1855, Kalapuya people were dispossessed of their indigenous homeland by the United States government and forcibly removed to the Coast Reservation in Western Oregon. Today, Kalapuya descendants are primarily citizens of the Confederated Tribes of Grand Ronde and the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, and they continue to make important contributions to their communities, to the UO, to Oregon, and to the world.

In following the Indigenous protocol of acknowledging the original people of the land we occupy, we also extend our respect to the nine federally recognized Indigenous nations of Oregon: the Burns Paiute Tribe, the Confederated Tribes of the Coos, Lower Umpqua and Siuslaw Indians, the Confederated Tribes of the Grand Ronde, the Confederated Tribes of Siletz Indians, the Confederated Tribes of the Umatilla Indian Reservation, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs, the Coquille Indian Tribe, the Cow Creek Band of Umpqua Tribe of Indians, and the Klamath Tribes. We express our respect to the many more tribes who have ancestral connections to this territory, as well as to all other displaced Indigenous peoples who call Oregon home. Hayu masi.

THANKS, ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS, AND ATTRIBUTION

Thanks and Acknowledgments

We began this project to provide our students and colleagues a high-quality, zero-cost alternative to well-liked but expensive publishing company textbooks like *They Say / I Say* for use in first-year writing courses at the University of Oregon. We – the authors, Kara Clevinger and Stephen Rust – hope the project carries forward the University of Oregon's proud tradition of first-year writing for a new generation. We are particularly indebted to the scholarly works of UO faculty members John Gage, including *The Shape of Reason* (1986) and James Crosswhite, including *Reading, Reasoning, and Writing* (2015), and the mentorship of former program directors Anne Laskaya and Carolyn Bergquist.

The scholarly field of Composition and Rhetoric studies remains rife with debate over what counts as "good writing" in college, who gets to decide what counts as "good writing" in college, and how much agency students and teachers should

each have in those decisions. While we follow these arguments and current research in the field attentively and they inform many aspects of this project, please keep in mind that this project is a learning resource and not a research monograph, so citations have necessarily been kept to a minimum to focus readers' attention on the task at hand – gaining the foundational skills to write with curiosity, precision, rigor, and charm and developing the self-efficacy to tackle any writing task in college with success.

The project was funded by a University of Oregon Knight Libraries Digital Scholarship Award. Our thanks to Director of Digital Scholarship Services Franny Gaede and Open Educational Resources Librarian Rayne Vieger for their commitment to our project and for providing intellectual, technical, and fair use advice and organizational support. Our thanks also to the 2020-2021 UO Composition program administrators, Spike Gildea, Nick Recktenwald, and Emily Simnitt for supporting our digital scholarship award application and every step of the project. And a huge thank you to Ryan Davies for a keen eye in helping us edit and polish this resource.

Our project includes approximately 50+% original writing and a blend of creative commons Open Educational Resources. The principal source of upcycled creative commons licensed material is the open-access resource, *Writing for Success* published by the University of Minnesota. Our thanks to

Nick Recktenwald for co-writing Chapters 2a, 2b, and 3b, Sarah Preston for contributing the rhetorical précis template for "Summarizing Sources" in 2b, Eleanor Wakefield for contributing the "Organizing a Counterargument" table in 4c, and June Manuel for sharing a handout on ethos, logos, and pathos adapted for the "Reasoning" section of Chapter 4c. All images inserted throughout the text come from public domain sources or are used under fair use guidelines with contexts transformed for educational purposes. The authors have conducted a fair use analysis for all images/figures and text adapted for this resource, guided by the Code of Best Practices in Fair Use for Open Educational Resources.

The Preface includes information on audience, tone, and purpose adapted from Chapter 6 of *Writing for Success* and large portions of Chapters 3c, 4, and 5 are adapted from Chapters 8 and 9 of *Writing for Success* by University of Minnesota, which is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. The six types of stasis questions identified in Chapter 3b are adapted from pages xviii-xix of "Reading, Reasoning, and Writing about Science," by James Crosswhite published with the author's permission in *The Culture of Science*, 2nd Edition (2019) by University of Oregon Composition Program, which is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License. The Transitions section of Chapter 5b is used courtesy of the University of North Carolina Writing Center

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Figure Acknowledgment

Figure 1 is repurposed from *Chapter 6.1* of Writing for Success by University of Minnesota, which is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

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CHAPTER ONE: INTRODUCTION TO WRITING AS A PROCESS OF INQUIRY

Learning Objectives

- Understand the goals the Composition Program and your instructor have for your writing this term and set your own goals for your writing practice
- Consider what makes compelling college writing
- Agree on a shared language to develop and

discuss your writing this term

1A. LEARNING OUTCOMES FOR WR 121

WR 121: Writing as a Process of Inquiry

Image: CC BY-SA 3.0 by Alpha Stock Images

Learning Outcomes	But What Do These *Really* Mean?
Describe and practice writing as a multi-faceted **process of inquiry**, learning, and expression.	Writing is a process that involves asking questions in order to explore and learn more about a topic so that you can formulate and express your own ideas—you are part of the production of knowledge at the university.
Practice writing as a **social process** through compassionate and critical response to your peers' work and revision of your writing in response to peer and instructor feedback.	Writing is not merely a solitary activity done in the dark corner of a library or hunched over the desk of your room; it involves engaging other perspectives—those you read and those of your peers—as well as giving and getting feedback.
Compose **arguments** in discussion and writing through open and curious engagement with multiple perspectives.	College writing is about discovering and expressing your point of view, but you must also be open to other points of view. Learning is pushing the boundaries of what you know and believe.
Develop **audience awareness** and practice respectful treatment of audience.	Successful writing is purposeful and clear, and keeping your reader in mind will ignite your purpose and clarify your ideas.

Identify and critically apply **style** requirements for writing in an academic context.	You'll learn MLA style to format your essays, and you'll work on improving your vocabulary and sentences as you develop your distinct voice and style.

How does the writing and work you do in WR 121 transfer to your classes and career?

You'll practice critical thinking and analytical writing skills, as well as cultivate deep reading and cognitive patience with the texts we read. These are valuable skills on the job market and in life, and they are becoming increasingly rare in the age of fast-paced internet reading and posting. We hope you're willing—maybe excited—to develop your critical reading and writing practice. By reading this creative commons resource and practicing the skills and methods explored, we hope you will feel more confident in your ability to handle a variety of writing situations.

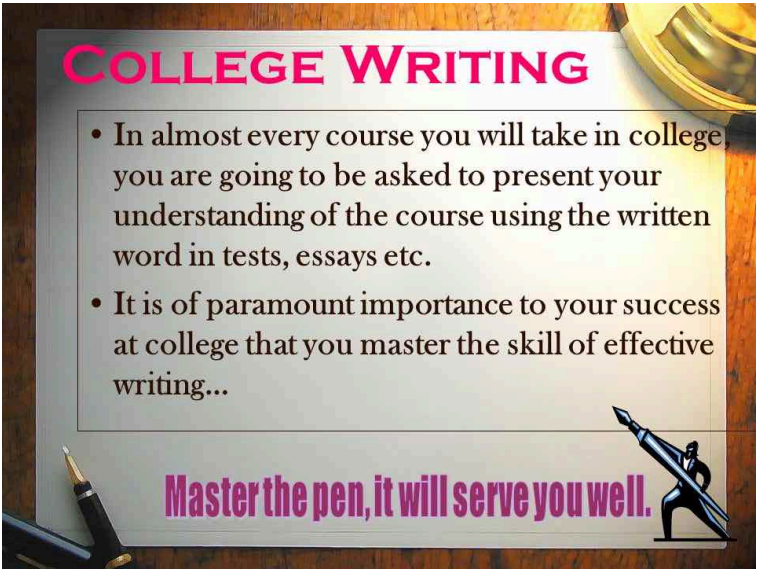


Image: Master the pen, it will serve you well; source

1B. DISCOURSE COMMUNITIES

Overview + Objectives

Image: Saying hello in different languages; 1940162 Hari chandana C, CC BY 4.0, via Wikimedia Commons

The first major concept we discuss that will be the foundation of your reading and writing in Writing 121 is *discourse*

community. Considering your discourse community can give your writing its audience, context, and purpose, which are crucial for motivating your writing. In this chapter, we will:

- Define *discourse community*
- Identify the various discourse communities of which you are a part
- Understand how a discourse community shapes your writing
- Consider ways to craft a unique voice within a discourse community
- Reflect on how knowledge of discourse community can improve your writing

What is a discourse community?

To define this concept, let's break it down into its separate parts: ***discourse*** and ***community***. We'll start with the simpler word, ***community***. A community is simply a group of people who are joined together by something they have in common. It could be a shared interest, such as a gaming community, a set of beliefs, such as a religious community, a similar geographical location, such as a local community, or a profession, such as the academic community. A family is a type of community. Your friends also form a community. Take a moment and

think of the various communities to which you belong. What binds individuals together in these communities? Do members of these communities engage with each other virtually or in real life?

Next let's look at the other word in this term, ***discourse***. The word in its original usage meant reasoned argument or thought. However, in contemporary usage we sometimes think of it generally as any written or spoken communication, a conversation. We more often use it to refer to written or spoken communication related to a particular intellectual or social activity, such as scientific discourse or political discourse. In this sense, a synonym for discourse might be *language*. A discourse is defined by its unique language, vocabulary, themes, ideas, values, and beliefs. Think about your major. What are the unique characteristics of the discourse in your disciplinary or professional field?

Now let's put our two words together, ***discourse community***. Any guesses on what it means? If you are thinking that it is a group of people—real, imaginary, virtual, or otherwise—with shared interests, goals, language, and ways of communicating, then, yes, you've got it!

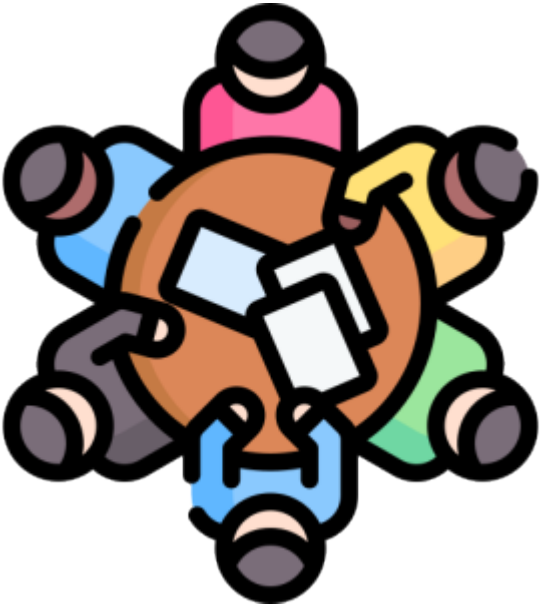


Image: Your WR 121 discourse community; Discussion icons created by Freepik – Flaticon

What does a discourse community look like?

Let's work through a few examples. The following are five lists of words. Do you recognize any of the groups of words and what they have in common?

1. CPA, general ledger, liabilities, return on investment, owner's equity, net income, expenses (fixed, variable, accrued, operation)

2. ISO, aperture, depth of field, autofocus, exposure, shutter speed
3. gracias, de nada, salud, buen provecho, estadounidense, te quiero
4. wingardium leviosa, alohomora, stupefy, avada kedavra, oculus reparo, expelliarmus
5. once a Duck always a Duck, show your "O," Carson, EMU, it never rains in Autzen Stadium, Arts and Letters, Social Science, and Science groups

If you are a business major and have taken an accounting class, you've likely learned about the set of words in #1. If you are a photographer, you probably know the terminology in #2. If you speak Spanish, then you understand the words in #3. If you're a Harry Potter fan, then you recognize the words in #4 as spells. And if you are a UO student, then the words in #5 should seem familiar to you. Sco Ducks!

So you can see that discourse, or language, is one way that a community is bound together. It shapes it, strengthens it, and even defines it. The members of the community generally agree on what the terms mean; however, that is not always the case, as we will explore later in the course.

But what if you didn't know a group of words? Let's say you are in a conversation with a group of people using the technical terms in #2, but your only camera is your iPhone. Or perhaps you are reading an article that is in Spanish, but you don't know that language. How would you feel? You would probably feel confused, frustrated, and excluded.

Because language and modes of communication differ among various groups, a discourse community can exclude others as much as it brings people together. Think about one of the communities to which you belong. What is the discourse of that group? What is the shared language and terminology? What are the primary ways of communicating between members of the community? How do members communicate their ideas or activities with those outside of the community?

What is a discourse community to which you belong and. . .

- What are the unique characteristics of communicating within this community?
- How has it shaped the way you think and write?

- Is it possible to assert your unique voice within that community? How so or why not?

Images (above, from left to right):

- Balance sheet: RODNAE Productionsfrom Pexels
- Photography: Pxhere
- Wand: Pexels
- Puddles the Duck: Wikimedia Commons

How does the discourse community shape your writing?

In his book on academic writing, *The Shape of Reason*, John Gage defines a *discourse community* as "any kind of community in which the members attempt to achieve cooperation and assert their individuality through the use of

language. We are all members of discourse communities, each of which uses language in different ways" (2).

What keywords can you pull out of this definition? I identify the following keywords: *cooperation*, *individuality*, and *language*. A community generally assumes members who *cooperate* with each other. The group has a common goal or set of goals and its members want to work or live together to achieve those goals. They use *a common language and mode of communication* to maintain and strengthen the community. For an individual to thrive within this community, understanding and being able to use that common language and mode of communication are essential. When we as individuals have thoughts, ideas, or actions we would like to share with others in the community, we want to convey those thoughts, ideas, or actions in a way that others can understand and engage with them. No one likes to feel misunderstood. In this way, a discourse community influences how we communicate our *individuality* to the group.

We can illustrate how discourse community shapes your writing with a few examples. It is probably easy and fun for you to write and send texts to your friends. What kind of language do you use when texting? If your friend's primary language is English, then you'll probably use English in your texts. You'll probably also use textspeak abbreviations like "lol" and "idk." You might even use some visual language, such as emoji or gifs. If your friend does not speak English, does not know what

the abbreviations stand for, or is unfamiliar with emoji, then they will not understand your message. Now, let's say you are sending an email to your professor. Would you use the same discourse that you use when texting your friend? Probably not. In other words: an awareness of discourse community probably already shapes how you communicate your ideas.

This is all well and good when you feel confident about your membership in a community. But what about when you are new to a community? How do you learn that community's discourse? Or what if you struggle to feel like you truly belong in a community? How do these things affect how you communicate and interact with the group? As you become more familiar with a community's discourse, your written communication with the group will also improve. However, do you think it is possible to assert *your unique voice and identity* within the limits of a community's discourse?

Let's consider the university as a discourse community. The university comprises intellectuals (including you!) in various academic disciplines. Each academic discipline has its own discourse, but for the most part all academic disciplines communicate and share knowledge, as well as debate theories and ideas, through discussion and writing. What characterizes *academic discourse*? What is *academic writing*? Who gets to speak and write in this community?

Once you have read the sections on discourse community and

thought about the various communities of which you are a part and the discourses used in these communities, you're ready to get to know your WR 121 discourse community. What can you learn about your peers and instructor? What languages do they speak? What common goals do you all share? Do you agree on what effective writing looks like? What support will you offer each other as you work on your writing this term?

Acknowledgment:

Gage, John. *The Shape of Reason*, 4th Edition. New York: Pearson, 2006: 2.

Image: Writers' workshop; source.

1C. SETTING GOALS FOR YOUR WRITING PRACTICE

What, How, and Why We Write

WHAT will you write?

In WR 121, you practice academic writing and produce college essays.

Consider: What are the elements of successful and interesting writing?

HOW will you get the writing done?

You'll learn a process for drafting, sharing, and revising your writing, which will help you build habits for success in any writing situation you encounter.

Consider: What is an effective writing process for producing interesting writing?

WHY do you write?

You write in a particular context for a specific audience.

Consider: What is the purpose for a particular piece of writing? Why do you value writing? What inspires you to write? (Or, if you struggle with writing, what do you think you *would* find inspiring?)

Setting an Intention for Your Writing Practice

Image: The struggle is real; Pixabay.

What are the biggest challenges for *all* writers?

- Getting started or finding a topic
- Constructing a clear, specific thesis
- Finding compelling evidence to support the thesis
- Organizing an essay effectively
- Reading and comprehending difficult texts
- Sharing your writing with others

How do successful writers meet these challenges?

Writing doesn't stop being challenging, even to the best writers. Successful writers have cultivated habits that help them meet the challenges of writing and the writing process with more confidence, but it doesn't make the challenges less difficult; it just makes them (slightly) more manageable. Producing a "perfect" paper isn't–and shouldn't–be the goal for this class. But knowing what successful writing is and does, practicing the skills that give you confidence to engage any writing situation, and cultivating habits to grind through any challenge–these are realistic goals for your work in a first-year college writing course.

A climber stands atop a spire on Ancient Art at Fisher Towers. (c) 2012 Tom Kelly

You can do it!; by Tom Kelly CC BY NC ND 2.0.

What is your *why*?>

Setting an intention for your writing practice this term will give you focus and purpose in your writing. Just like knowing your destination helps you plan your route, an intention is a goal that gives you direction so you don't feel so lost and aimless. When you get stuck in your writing–and you will! we all do!–you can return to your intention to help motivate your writing.

To help set *your* writing goal(s), you'll want to consider the following questions:

- What are the components of a college essay or other writing assignment?
- What makes a piece of writing, even academic writing, interesting?
- What are the habits of successful writers?
- What do you accomplish by writing your ideas in college (or other settings)?

CHAPTER TWO: CONTEXTS FOR WRITING

Learning Objectives

- Practice a method for reading comprehension of college-level texts
- Identify the functions for using sources in your writing
- Determine how to incorporate sources in your writing and distinguish them from your own voice

2A. CRITICAL READING

An Introduction to Reading in College

While the best way to develop your skills as a writer is to actually practice by writing, practicing critical reading skills is crucial to becoming a better college writer. Careful and skilled readers develop a stronger understanding of topics, learn to better anticipate the needs of the audience, and pick up sophisticated writing "maneuvers" and strategies from professional writing. A good reading practice requires reading text and context, which you'll learn more about in the next section. Writing a successful academic essay also begins with critical reading as you explore ideas and consider how to make use of sources to provide support for your writing.

Questions to ask as you read

If you consider yourself a particularly strong reader or want to improve your reading comprehension skills, writing out notes about a text—even if it's in shorthand—helps you to commit the answers to memory more easily. Even if you don't write

out all these notes, answering these basic questions about any text or reading you encounter in college will help you get the most out of the time you put into your reading. It will also give you more confidence to understand and question the text while you read.

- Is there **context** provided about the author and/or essay? If so, what stands out as important?

Context in this instance means things like dates of publication, where the piece was originally published, and any biographical information about the author. All of that information will be important for developing a critical reading of the piece, so track what's available as you read.

- If you had to guess, who is the author's intended **audience**? Describe them in as much detail as possible.

Sometimes the author will state who the audience is, but sometimes you have to figure it out by context clues, such as those you tracked above. For instance, the audience for a writer on Buzzfeed *is very different from the audience for a writer for the* Wall Street Journal*—and both writers know that, which means they're more effective at reaching their readers. Learning how to identify your audience is a crucial writing skill for all genres of writing.*

- In your own words, what is the **question** the author is trying to answer in this piece? What seems to have caused them to write in the first place?

In nonfiction writing of the kind we read in Writing 121, writers set out to answer a question. Their thesis/main argument is usually the answer to the question, so sometimes you can "reverse engineer" the question from that. Often, the question is asked in the title of the piece.

- In your own words, what's the author's **main idea or argument**? If you had to distill it down to one or two sentences, what does the author want you, the reader, to agree with?

If you've ever had to write a paper for a class, you're probably familiar with a thesis or main argument. Published writers also have a thesis (or else they don't get published!), but sometimes it can be tricky to find in a more sophisticated piece of writing. Trying to put the main argument into your own words can help.

- How many **examples** and types of **evidence** did the author provide to support the main argument? Which examples/evidence stood out to you as persuasive?

It's never enough to just make a claim and expect people to believe it—we have to support that claim with evidence. The types of

evidence and examples that will be persuasive to readers depends on the audience, though, which is why it's important to have some idea of your readers and their expectations.

- Did the author raise any **points of skepticism** (also known as counterarguments)? Can you identify exactly what page or paragraph where the author does this?

As we'll see later when the writing process, respectfully engaging with points of skepticism and counterarguments builds trust with the reader because it shows that the writer has thought about the issue from multiple perspectives before arriving at the main argument. Raising a counterargument is not enough, though. Pay careful attention to how the writer responds to that counterargument—is it an effective and persuasive response? If not, perhaps the counterargument has more merit for you than the author's main argument.

- In your own words, how does the essay **conclude**? What does the author "want" from us, the readers?

A conclusion usually offers a brief summary of the main argument and some kind of "what's next?" appeal from the writer to the audience. The "what's next?" appeal can take many forms, but it's usually a question for readers to ponder, actions the author thinks people should take, or areas related to the main topic that need more investigation or research. When you read

the conclusion, ask yourself, "What does the author want from me now that I've read their essay?"

Reading Like Writers: Critical Reading

Reading as a Creative Act

"The theory of books is noble. The scholar of the first age received into him the world around; brooded thereon; gave it the new arrangement of his own mind, and uttered it again. It came into him life; it went out from him truth. It came to him short-lived actions; it went out from him immortal thoughts. It came to him business; it went from him poetry. It was dead fact; now, it is quick thought. It can stand, and it can go. It now endures, it now flies, it now inspires. Precisely in proportion to the depth of mind from which it issued, so high does it soar, so long does it sing." ~Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar"

Objectives

- Consider the **discourse community** when you read and write in your college classes
- Analyze any reading for **text and context**
- Read like a writer so you can write for your readers

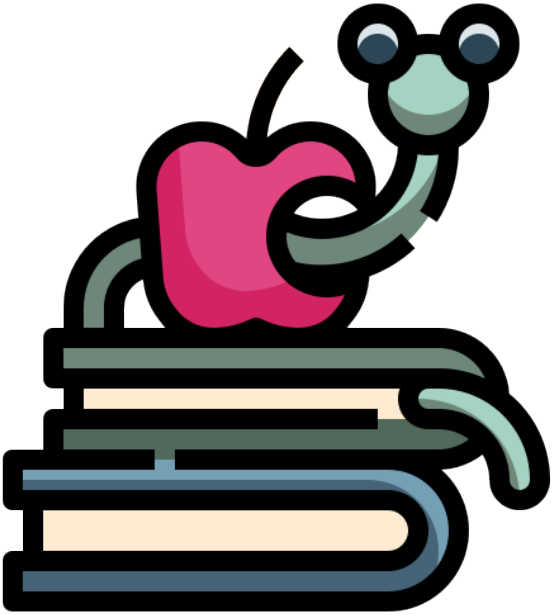


Image: Bookworms are cool! Bookworm icons created by – Flaticon

By the end of this lesson, you'll be able to apply the concept of discourse community to honing your college-level critical reading skills.

Good writers are good readers, so let's start there. When you can confidently identify the **audience, context, and purpose of a text**—position it within its discourse community—you'll be a stronger, savvier reader.

Strong, savvy readers are more effective writers because they consider their own audience, context, and purpose when they

write and communicate, which makes their writing clearer and to the point.

So the goal of this lesson is to help you read like a writer!

The Savvy Reader

Good writers are good readers! And good readers. . .

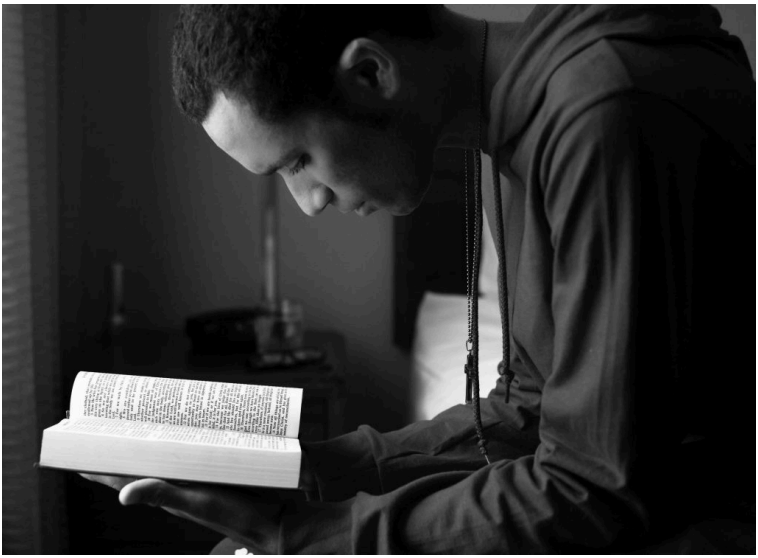


Image: Man reading a book by Joel Brown on Pixabay

- get to know the author
- get to know the author's community + audience
- accurately summarize the author's argument
- look up terms you don't know
- "listen" respectfully to the author's point of view
- have a sense of the larger conversation
- think about other issues related to the conversation
- put it in current context
- analyze and assess the author's reasoning, evidence, and assumptions

Why read critically? While the best way to develop your skills as a writer is to actually practice by writing, practicing critical reading skills is crucial to becoming a better writer. Careful and skilled readers develop a stronger understanding of topics, learn to better anticipate the needs of the audience, and pick up writing "maneuvers" and strategies from professional writing.

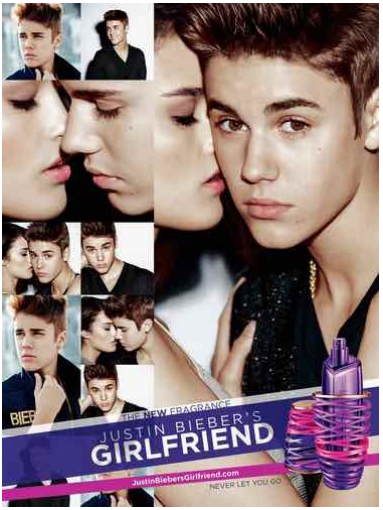
Reading Like Writers

How do you read like a writer? When you read like a writer, you are practicing deeper reading comprehension. In order to understand a text, you are reading not just what's *in* it but what's *around* it, too: text and context.

TEXT	CONTEXT
• What is the main point of the text? • What is a key point, example, or passage that stood out to you? • What is one thing you need more information about? Or, what is one question you have about the content of the text?	• Who is the author? Why should you trust them on this topic/issue? • When and where was the text first published? Who will read/see it? • How does the author address or appeal to their audience? • Why do you think the author wrote this piece?

Practice: Reading Like Writers

In-class discussion: Advertisements are helpful for practicing reading like writers because advertisers make deliberate choices with text and images based on audience (target consumer), context (where they are reaching them), and purpose (buy this product).



2012 print ad for Justin Bieber's Girlfriend perfume

2018 Nike ad featuring Colin Kaepernick

- How does this text—print ad—consider **audience, context, and purpose**?
- Whom does it appeal to and how does it appeal to them?
- What **assumptions or stereotypes** does the ad rely on the viewer sharing?

- Do you know who Colin Kaepernick is?
- What is the "sacrifice" that's referred to here?
- How do you interpret Kaepernick's facial expression?
- Why do you think the advertisers chose a close-up portrait?
- Why use this image and messaging to sell Nike products?
- Whom would this ad appeal to?

- *But I'm not trying to sell a product! How can I use my newfound understanding of audience, context, and purpose to improve my writing?*

It's true! You aren't selling a product. You aren't (I hope) trying to manipulate your audience. You aren't relying on discriminatory assumptions or stereotypes to appeal to your audience. But when you write, let's say, an essay, you are asking readers to "buy into" your point of view. The goal doesn't have to be for them to agree with you; it can be for your readers to respectfully consider, understand, or sympathize with your point of view or analysis of an issue. **The point is you're thinking of your reader when you write, and that will**

make your writing process smoother and your writing clearer.

Writing for Your Readers

When you write for your readers, you. . .

- Learn from your reading and communication experience: **What makes texts work? How are ideas conveyed clearly?**
- Analyze the writing situation: **What are the goals and purpose for a writing project? Who is your audience?**
- Explore and play as you draft: **What are different ways to respond? Can you use a better word or phrase?**
- Consider your audience: **What might a reader expect to see? What does your reader need to understand your point of view? What questions might a reader have?**

Image: Ask more questions; by Jonathan Simcoe , CC0

Writing as a process of inquiry

Just as you want your readers to take you seriously, you want to approach texts with an open and curious mind. Whatever the topic, it was important enough for this person to want to write on it. While we don't have to agree with the point someone is making, we can respect their opinion and appreciate reading a different perspective.

Approach reading and writing in college in a learning zone. **Be open, be curious, ask questions, seek answers. Share, stretch, experiment.**

Guides and Worksheets

- Critical Reading Guide (download here and view below)
  - Use this guide for any of your college reading!
- Mark-up Assignment (download here and view below)
  - Learn a basic study skill–annotating or taking notes on your readings

Critical Reading Guide: Text + Context

Title of the text:
Author:

Reading the text: Comprehension

Main idea. In one sentence, summarize the *main* point or argument of the text.

Claim. Identify one claim in the text.

Key points. Paraphrase a key point, example, or passage that interested you.

Evidence. In your own words, describe 1-2 compelling examples or pieces of evidence that support the point/argument of the text.

Conclusion. What is the ultimate takeaway the text gives us on the topic/issue?

Personal experience. What is your experience of the topic? Have you had problems related to it?

Vocabulary. What is a word or phrase in the text you didn't know? Look it up. What does it mean?

Inquiry. What is one thing you need more information about? Or, what is one question you have about the content of the text?

Reading for context: Rhetorical analysis

The author. Do an internet search on the author. What did you find out?

Ethos. Do you trust the author on the topic/issue? Why or why not?

Container. When and where was the text first published? Who will read/see it?

Audience. How does the author address or appeal to their readers? What tone does the author use in the text?

Bias. What knowledge, values, or beliefs does the author assume the reader shares?

Types of evidence. What *types* of evidence does the author use? Types of evidence include facts, examples, statistics, statements by authorities (references to or quotes from other

sources), interviews, observations, logical reasoning, and personal experience

Structure. How does the author organize the text?

Purpose. What question does the author seek to answer in the text? In other words, why do you think they wrote this piece?

Mark-up Assignment: The Savvy Reader Practice

Purpose

The object is to fill the empty space of the margins with your thoughts and questions to the text. By reading sympathetically (reading to understand what the writer is saying) and critically (reading to analyze and critique what the writer is saying), you are reading mindfully and creatively. You are finding those passages that *you* are drawn to, asking questions that *you* have, and beginning to develop *your* reaction, response, and ideas about a topic or issue. It's a useful tool in the "getting started" phase of the writing process. Learning how to read effectively will be an invaluable skill in your college career and beyond

because it means engaging in a task actively rather than passively.

Task

Choose 1-2 paragraphs from READING X to fully annotate. This passage should be one that interests you, i.e. seems important, confusing, and/or prompted agreement, disagreement, or questions for you.

- **Circle** any word you think is crucial for the passage, including ones you cannot easily define.
- **Underline** phrases or images you think crucial for the meaning of the passage/essay.
- Put a **bracket** around ideas or assertions you find puzzling or questionable.
- Then **write notes around the margins** of the passage defining these terms, identifying the important ideas, or raising questions with the bracketed phrases. **For each item you have circled, underlined, or bracketed, there should be a margin note.** For this assignment, your margin notes should be substantive: they should meaty statements and full questions.

Format

Photocopy or clear, legible photograph of paragraphs with your annotations or type up the paragraphs and annotate.

2B. READING ANALYSIS: SUMMARIZING, PARAPHRASING, AND QUOTING

Summarizing Sources

Writing with other voices

In most of your college writing, which is evidence-based writing, you'll need to incorporate sources. In some writing assignments, you'll be asked to interpret and analyze a text or texts. The text is the subject of your writing, and your interpretation of the text will need to be supported with evidence from the text. In other writing assignments, you'll need to support a thesis with evidence from texts and sources. When you incorporate a text or source should generally be performing one of four functions:

- Helping to provide context for your inquiry or argument
- Supporting a claim you are making

- Illustrating a claim you are making
- Providing a different perspective or counterargument to a claim you are making

When you incorporate other voices–texts and sources–into your writing, you will either summarize, paraphrase, or quote them in order to distinguish them for your voice and ideas.

Overview of Summarizing, Paraphrasing, and Quoting Texts and Sources

Quotations must be identical to the original, using a narrow segment of the source. They must match the source document word for word and must be attributed to the original author.

Paraphrasing involves putting a passage from source material into your own words. A paraphrase must also be attributed to the original source. Paraphrased material is usually shorter than the original passage, taking a somewhat broader segment of the source and condensing it slightly.

Summarizing involves putting the main idea(s) into your own words, including only the main point(s). Once again, it is necessary to attribute summarized ideas to the original source.

Summaries are significantly shorter than the original and take a broad overview of the source material.

Writers frequently intertwine summaries, paraphrases, and quotations. As part of a summary of an article, a chapter, or a book, a writer might include paraphrases of various key points blended with quotations of striking or suggestive phrases as in the following example:

In his article "What's The Matter With College?," Rick Perlstein argues that college, in American society and individual lives, is not as significant as it was in the 1960s, because colleges are no longer sites of radical protest, heated intellectual debate, or freedom from parental authority for students. Perlstein waxes nostalgic over the 1966 California gubernatorial race between Ronald Reagan and Pat Brown when the University of California's Berkeley campus—a locus for "building takeovers, antiwar demonstrations and sexual orgies"—became a key campaign issue. These days, "[c]ollege campuses seem to have lost their centrality," according to Perlstein, and do not offer a "democratic and diverse culture" that stood apart from the rest of society and constituted "the most liberating moment" in a student's life (par. 1).

Use the following pro tips as you read texts and sources so when it comes time to write you have quotations, paraphrases, and summaries ready!

- Read the entire text, noting the key points and main ideas.
- Summarize in your own words what the single main idea of the text is.
- Paraphrase important supporting points that come up in the text.
- Consider any words, phrases, or brief passages that you believe should be quoted directly.

Summarizing Texts and Sources in Your Writing

Generally speaking, a summary must at once be true to what the original author says while also emphasizing those aspects of what the author says that interest you, the writer. You need to summarize the work of other authors in light of your own topic and argument. Writers who summarize without regard to their own interests often create "list summaries" that simply inventory the original author's main points (signaled by words like "first," "second," "and then," "also," and "in addition"), but fail to focus those points around any larger overall claim. Writing a good summary means not just representing an author's view accurately but doing so in a way that fits the larger agenda of your own piece of writing.

The following is a two-sentence template* for a summary adapted from the work of writing scholar Katherine

Woodworth that captures 1) info on the author/text and the text's main point; and 2) the point or example that relates to the point you're making:

[Author's credentials] [author's first and last name] **in his/her** [type of text] [title of text], **published in** [publishing info] **addresses the topic of** [topic of text] **and argues/reports that** [argument/general point]. [Author's surname] **claims/asserts/makes the point/suggests/describes/explains** that _____.

See the two-sentence summary template in action:

Example. English professor and textbook author Sheridan Baker, in his essay "Attitudes" (1966), asserts that writers' attitudes toward their subjects, audiences, and themselves determine to a large extent the quality of their prose. Baker gives examples of how negative attitudes can make writing unclear, pompous, or boring, concluding that a good writer "will be respectful toward his audience, considerate toward his readers, and somehow amiable toward human failings" (58).

NOTE that the **first** sentence identifies the author (Baker), the genre (essay), the title and date, and uses an active verb (asserts) and the relative pronoun *that* to explain what exactly Baker asserts. The **second** sentence gives more specific detail on a relevant point Baker makes.

More examples!

Example. In his essay "On Nature" (1850), British philosopher John Stuart Mill argues that using nature as a standard for ethical behavior is illogical. He defines nature as "all that exists or all that exists without the intervention of man."

Example. In his essay "Panopticism," French philosopher Michel Foucault argues that the "panopticon" is how institutions enforce discipline and conformity by making every subject feel like they are being watched by a central authority with the capability of punishing wrongdoing. He concludes that it should not be "surprising that prisons resemble factories, schools, barracks, hospitals, which all resemble prisons" (249).

Example. Independent scholar Indur M. Goklancy, in a policy analysis for the Cato Institute, argues that globalization has created benefits in overall "human well-being." He provides statistics that show how factors such as mortality rates, child labor, lack of education, and hunger have all decreased under globalization.

NOTE that the above examples prompt the writer to develop a more detailed interpretation and explanation of the point/example made in the second sentence. That's the work of developing a paragraph with a text or source! You can see what that looks like more fully in Integrating Quotes and Paraphrases into Your Writing.

Acknowledgments:

The summary template is adapted from Woodworth, Margaret K. "The Rhetorical Précis." *Rhetoric Review* 7 (1988): 156-164.

Integrating Quotes and Paraphrases into Writing

Image: Sculpting from raw material; Piqsels

"Integrating" means to combine two or more separate elements or things into a cohesive whole. Obviously, as you bring other perspectives (readings and texts) into your writing, you're combining the work and words of others with your own original ideas. However, you should be strategic in the choices that you make–not every author needs to be quoted directly, not every passage of text needs to have every word or phrase quoted directly, and not every source will contribute multiple quotes or paraphrases to your essay. That's why we like the analogy of a sculptor at this point in the writing process. Now that you've collected the raw material you need to support your argument through thorough research, it's time to shape it carefully and deliberately so that it combines with your own writing to create an appealing experience for your reader. On to the sculpting!

When to Paraphrase:

- When you need to communicate the main idea of a source, but the details are not relevant/important
- When the source isn't important enough to take up significant space
- Any time you feel like you can state what the source claims more concisely or clearly
- Any time you think you can state what the source claims

in a way that's more appealing to the reader

When to quote directly:

- When incorporating an influential or significant voice into your essay
- The words themselves clearly back up your claims, and come from a good authority
- The words are unique/original, and already clearly express your key concepts in a compelling or interesting way
- There's no better way to present those main ideas to the reader than how the original author has stated them
- When engaging with a source that disagrees with you, so you can state the argument fairly

A note on "cherry-picking": Cherry-picking is a pejorative term that refers to writers using quotes or paraphrases to support their own argument, even though the source would likely disagree with how their words or ideas are being used. Responsible academic writing means presenting evidence in a context that's consistent and appropriate with the source's original use of the quote or paraphrase.

Placing Direct Quotes in Your Essay

Here's a helpful acronym that will remind you of the steps to take to most effectively incorporate direct quotations into your argument: I.C.E (Introduce, Cite, Explain). I'll use it as a verb to remind myself when constructing a paragraph: "Did I make sure to ICE my quotes?"

Image: Ice, Ice, baby; Pexels, CC0

Introduce:

Introduce the quote before providing it. Sometimes this is as simple as "Author X states" or some variation of that phrase. If it's the first time you're quoting an author, it's a good idea to give the author's full name, but you can rely on the surname in subsequent quotations. If there is context you'd like the reader to know about source, it's generally wise to provide that before the quote, as part of its introduction. Avoid using "says" when introducing quotations unless you are citing a speech, interview, or other spoken text; "writes," "states," "explains," "argues," etc. are better options.

Cite:

Every style (MLA, APA, Chicago) has different formats for citations, but anything that isn't common knowledge–whether you're directly quoting or paraphrasing, must come with a citation. We're using MLA format in this class, so make sure you understand the rules of MLA Citations and Formatting.

> **Example:** In the "Higher Laws" chapter of *Walden*, Henry David Thoreau seems to become despondent

> over his inability to overcome what he calls "this slimy beastly life" **(148).**

(For reference, the introduction of the quote is underlined, while the citation is bolded; you won't do this when you actually cite. If you introduce a quote by using the author's name, you only need to provide the page number where the quote can be found. Otherwise, their last name will also need to appear in the citation.)

Explain:

You should always take time to explain quotations, paraphrases, and other types of evidence that you include. Readers look for your analysis of evidence in academic writing, and without it, a reader may draw different conclusions about the relationship between evidence and claim than you do. This is why the basic format for making an argument in academic writing is *claim –> evidence to support claim –> reasons why you think the evidence supports the claim.*

The Explanation of a quote or paraphrase is where you're showing the reader your critical thinking, analytical skills, and ability to present your original ideas clearly and concisely. It is the part of the essay where you're

really presenting your original ideas and perspectives on a topic–that makes it very important!

Template for a Paragraph with Direct Quotes

As you read the following example, note where we are Introducing, Citing, and Explaining the quote.

> **Example**: As I argue above, Thoreau is burdened by the implications of his animal appetites, of the intrinsic sensuality of living in the material world. However, Thoreau's own language may be creating a heavier burden than he realizes. In *Philosophy of Literary Form*, Kenneth Burke writes: ". . .if you look for a man's *burden*, you will find the principle that reveals the structure of his unburdening; or, in attenuated form, if you look for his problem, you find the lead that explains the structure of his solution" (92, emphasis in original). As this quote suggests, Burke believes that the answer to the problem often lies in the way that the problem is presented by the author or poet. His description of life as "beastly" and "slimy" is an ironic reframing of similar natural elements as those that brought him to Walden

> Pond in the first place. Thoreau's choice of terminology to describe something results in the shifting of his attention and priorities.

To think about how I'm structuring this body paragraph, let's break it down into its constituent parts:

1) Topic sentence: As I argued above, Thoreau is burdened by the implications of his animal appetites, of the intrinsic sensuality of living in the material world. **This is what the paragraph will be about–Thoreau's burdens–and I'm telling the reader in one quick phrase how this connects to another part of the essay.**

2) Paragraph's Main Claim: However, Thoreau's own language may be creating a heavier burden than he realizes. **This is the main claim I'm making to my reader and is what the rest of the paragraph needs to focus on supporting with evidence and my own analysis. Each paragraph should generally only have one main claim so the reader can stay focused on the argument at hand.**

3) The Evidence: In *Philosophy of Literary Form*, Kenneth Burke writes: ". . .if you look for a man's *burden*, you will find the principle that reveals the structure of his unburdening; or, in attenuated form, if you look for his problem, you find the lead that explains the structure of his solution" (92, emphasis his). **Whether a direct quote or a paraphrase or both, there should be evidence of some sort in all of your body**

paragraphs (and sometimes in your intro and conclusion, too). It should clearly support the main claim and be cited, whether a quote or a paraphrase. Note that this evidence has the "I" and the "C" of ICE. The next step has the "E."

4) The Explanation: As this quote suggests, Burke believes that the answer to the problem often lies in the way that the problem is presented by the author or poet. His description of life as "beastly" and "slimy" is an ironic reframing of similar natural elements as those that brought him to Walden Pond in the first place. **As mentioned above, this is arguably the most critical part of the paragraph. Depending on the evidence and your audience, your explanation might need to summarize the quote in your own words (if it's complex), but it absolutely needs to analyze the evidence (quote or paraphrase) and explain its relevance or connection to the main claim of the paragraph. It may take one sentence, it may take several.**

5) The Concluding Sentence: Thoreau's choice of terminology to describe something results in the shifting of his attention and priorities. **Like a conclusion paragraph, this final sentence summarizes the main take-away for the reader of that paragraph its located within.**

These parts of the paragraph should be present in any standard body paragraph, but besides the topic and concluding

sentences, the other elements can actually be re-ordered (evidence can come before the main claim, if it's clear which is which!). Use signal phrases and transitions to help guide the reader so they know the purpose of each of your sentences.

A Note on Direct Quotes and Syntax

Quotes (and this can be tricky!) have to be integrated into the correct syntax of your sentences, which may occasionally mean adding a word or clarifying a pronoun. Syntax refers to the ordering of words and expressions within a sentence. Brackets [ ] are useful for maintaining a smooth flow in the syntax of a sentence while integrating a quotation. Brackets are a signal to the reader that you are inserting a word or phrase into into a quotation for the purposes of clarity and correct syntax.

> **Example**: Buell claims that "[Thoreau's] point was not that we should turn our backs on nature but that we must imagine the ulterior benefits of the original turn *to* nature in the spirit of economy, both fiscal and ethical" (392).

Pro Tip: Here is what happens to your reader's attention and understanding of your argument when you don't match a

direct quote's syntax with the rest of the sentence that you're placing it into:

Image: Going off track; Off the rails 2 by oxyman, CC BY 2.0

CHAPTER THREE: CRITICAL REASONING AND INQUIRY

Learning Objectives

- Understand how to put together diverse sources and perspectives in your writing
- Determine a question worth writing on
- Develop strategies to narrow down your essay topic

3A. SYNTHESIZING MULTIPLE PERSPECTIVES

Synthesis: Putting Together Different Perspectives

Image: Different perspectives; **rawpixel, CC0**

In college writing and in any situation where you have to sift through a lot of information, you will need to critically

evaluate what is useful and relevant to you, as well as separate what is true from what is not true. When you have done extensive reading or research on a topic, you'll need to present your research clearly and concisely to your readers so that they understand all sides or aspects of an issue. Synthesizing your sources into your writing allows you to:

- demonstrate your knowledge of a topic or issue;
- make sense of different perspectives and claims on a topic or issue;
- present the most important claims or points from your sources;
- put your sources into conversation with one another to give context for your point of view and come to new insights and questions;
- and support your claim fully.

"The scholar of the first age received into him the world around; brooded thereon; gave it the new arrangement of his own mind, and uttered it again. It came into him life; it went out from him truth. It came to him short-lived actions; it went out from him immortal thoughts. It came to him business; it went from him poetry."

~Ralph Waldo Emerson, *The American Scholar*

What is synthesis?

When you synthesize in your writing, you are building a relationship between different ideas or sources. Synthesis means that you:

- bring together lots of information in a meaningful way
- show connections between different things
- come to new insights
- draw intriguing conclusions
- take in the world around you, and give back truth

You synthesize multiple perspectives (including your own) in an essay, and you often synthesize two or more perspectives in a paragraph. Thus, synthesis is a creative and interpretive act. How you put together different perspectives and sources will not be the same as how another writer puts them together.

"Make it work!"

Any Project Runway fans? The show has an "unconventional challenge" segment, where the designers

put together a dress from different and unusual sets of materials. For example, for one challenge, they had to put together a dress with materials from a hardware store and a flower shop. In the example below, the designers use different candies to create a dress:

One or more interactive elements has been excluded from this version of the text. You can view them online here:
https://opentext.uoregon.edu/writingasinquiry/?p=73#oembed-1

Synthesis in writing is like winning the unconventional challenge, and your essay is the beautifully finished piece you create by synthesizing various sources to support your overall goal. When facing any writing challenge in college, you can use the skills of critical inquiry and synthesis to meet any deadline and remember Tim Gunn's motto – "Make it work!"

How do I synthesize?

Synthesizing sources into your writing is a juggling act. First, you want to figure out what your paragraph is doing: Is it providing information to the reader about a topic? Is it developing support and evidence for a particular claim you are making? Is it presenting a counterargument? Is it helping you to respond to a counterargument?

- If you are providing information to your reader, then multiple sources will help you to present a complete picture of the topic/issue to your reader by offering different perspectives on this topic/issue or by offering several expert sources that support a single perspective.
- If you are developing support and evidence for a particular claim or point you are making, then your sources should build upon each other. Each one should further the point of the one previously made.
- If you are using multiple sources to develop a counterargument, you can pit your sources against each other. Use one to help acknowledge an opposing viewpoint and use another to help develop your response to that viewpoint.

It is important when you are writing several different voices

into a single paragraph that *your* voice does not get lost in the mix. Remember, an essay is about presenting and supporting *your* claims and ideas. Each paragraph should always make clear where you fit into the conversation.

See the next two pages for examples of synthesis paragraphs and a synthesis table.

Synthesis: Example Paragraphs

From: "What We Talk About When We Talk About Obesity" by Catherine Womack for *The Conversation*

Does reframing the debate help fight obesity? Yes – in fact it's necessary, says series lead author Christina Roberto in "Patchy progress on obesity prevention: emerging examples, entrenched barriers, and new thinking." They suggest a variety of new or retooled strategies ranging from educating health care providers about the dangers of weight stigmatization to mobilizing citizens to demand policy changes to address obesity. Their key insights are locating problems of obesity in

the interactions between individuals and their environments, and breaking the vicious cycle of unhealthy food environments that reinforce preferences for those foods. But reframing is just the first step in the process of reversing the trend of obesity. Researchers also have to ask the questions that health policy makers want to hear and act on, says food and health policy expert Kelly Brownell in a commentary, co-authored with Roberto. Historian of science Naomi Oreskes says that scientists tend to follow a supply-side model of information, assuming their results will somehow naturally reach those who need it. **Brownell and Roberto underscore this error**, and strongly advise obesity researchers to frame questions and convey results in ways that understandable and relevant to policy makers' and the public. Otherwise their work will remain unheard and unused.

From: "The Persistent Myth of the Narcissistic Millennial" by Brooke Lea Foster for *The Atlantic*

Whether it's *Time*'s 2013 cover story "The Me, Me, Me Generation" or Jeffrey Kluger's book *The Narcissist Next Door: Understanding the Monster in Your Family, in Your*

Office, in Your Bed—in Your World, the same statistics are cited as proof of Millennial narcissism. In a 2008 study published in the *Journal of Personality,* San Diego State University psychology professor Jean Twenge found that narcissistic behaviors among college students studied over a 27-year period had increased significantly from the 1970s. A second study published in 2008 by the National Institutes of Health showed that 9.4 percent of 20- to 29-year-olds exhibit extreme narcissism, compared with 3.2 percent of those older than 65. But there's a problem with all of this evidence: The data is unreliable. "It's incredibly unfair to call Millennials narcissistic, or to say they're more so than previous generations," says Jeffrey Jensen Arnett, a professor of psychology at Clark University and author of *Getting to 30: A Parent's Guide to the Twentysomething Years*. **Arnett has devoted a significant amount of time and research to disproving the statistics that San Diego State's Twenge has built a career on**. He says that her assertion that narcissistic behaviors among young people have risen 30 percent is flimsy, since she's basing it around data collected from the 40-question Narcissistic Personality Inventory (NPI), the results of which leave quite a bit up for interpretation. For example, does agreement with statements like "I am assertive" or "I wish I were more assertive" measure narcissism, self-esteem, or leadership?

From: "Working Out the Meaning of 'Meaningful' Work" by Katherine Moos for *Vitae*

Adam Smith believed that work forces the worker to sacrifice "his tranquility, his freedom, and his happiness." **Karl Marx criticized Smith's view** and believed that labor in the form of creative problem solving could indeed provide "self-realization." (To Marx, the problem lay not in labor itself, but in the system of wage labor that exploited workers and alienated them from the creation of the final product.) A history of economic thought shows us that the progressive scorn nowadays of the do-what-you-love motto, is actually switching sides on a very old debate. Arguing that work is inherently unpleasant reinforces one of the more insidious assumptions in mainstream economics and one of the more cynical claims in our culture: that people are merely consumers trying to maximize their pleasure and minimize their pain. That sort of thinking leads managers to assume that workers are bound to shirk responsibility whenever possible, and are only motivated by money. It breeds extremely dysfunctional work environments with high surveillance and competition among co-workers. The polymath Herbert Simon has written about how workers' sense of *identification* with the mission of an organization explains why employees actually perform the duties necessary to promote the institution's goals, and not just pursue their self-interest as economic theory would expect.

Worksheet – Synthesis Table

Worksheet – Synthesis Table (download here)

SYNTHESIS: PUTTING DIFFERENT VOICES AND VIEWPOINTS IN CONVERSATION

	Author 1:	Author 2:
What is the topic of conversation or question they are answering? **Keep in mind that your authors may directly or indirectly address a shared topic/ question*		
What would the authors agree on? **Summarize key points and note passages from the text that provide evidence to support these points*		

What would they disagree about? **Summarize key points and note passages from the text that provide evidence to support these points*		
What aspect of the larger question do they focus on? (i.e. what more specific question do they pose?) * *How does each author develop the topic through sub-questions or different approaches to the shared question?*		

What do they say? (i.e. their main claim or a point they make) **Summarize the overall main point and note the sentence you would call the thesis.*		
What do they conclude or what do they want? (i.e. what is their purpose for writing?) **Consider how each author's final paragraphs drive home their main ideas or answers "So what? Who cares?"*		

Discourse Community: Who are the authors and who (if you can tell) do you think is the primary audience (intended readers) for these texts?		

3B. DEVELOPING QUESTIONS AT ISSUE

Question at Issue (Q@I)

The type of argument we practice at UO is known as ethical argumentation, or argumentation for the sake of inquiry. **Inquiry** is the act of asking questions, of investigating an issue or problem. We teach this type of argumentation at the college level because asking questions is exactly what you're asked to do in your other classes; the modern American university is premised on the idea that its graduates will take the tools and knowledge they gain in their studies and go out into the world to help solve complex problems facing society.

Therefore, we teach argumentative writing that attempts to answer a controversial or debatable question, which is known as a question at issue (or Q@I). A question is at issue when the audience is not in agreement about the answer, so the writer must offer a reasonable answer and support that answer with evidence.

This is an example of a question that is NOT at Issue:

Was the United States founded in 1776?

This question is not at issue because there's no reasonable debate about the answer. Reasonable people–from expert historians to the average person on the street–would agree that "yes" is the only valid answer to that question. An unreasonable person might want to debate that, but there's not much point engaging in reasonable debate with an unreasonable person (though we've all had to do it occasionally).

This is an example of a question that IS at issue on a similar topic:

Did the founding of the US improve living conditions for most people living in the colonies?

Even if you're not a US historian, you can imagine that there might be some reasonable debate about the answer to this question. Some people might assume the answer is "yes," some might assume the answer is "no," while still others

could argue the more cautious position of "it depends." But even those that agree that the answer is "it depends" might disagree on what the answer actually depends on. And importantly, there can be a reasonable debate on all of those positions backed up by evidence: tax records, first-hand accounts, information about slave auctions, etc.

Understand the difference?

Image by Arek Socha. from Pixabay.

Finding good Q@Is is not always an easy task, and depends on your own critical and methodical reading, careful attention to class conversation, and consideration of your own assumptions and experiences in relation to the topic at hand.

You will know you've identified a good question at issue (Q@I) for your class when:

1. **Disagreement** exists about the answer or possible answers to the Q@I.
2. It's an issue that the **discourse community** cares about *(meaning that it's related to class readings and discussion*s).
3. **You** care about this issue and question.
4. It's **specific** enough to answer persuasively in the space allotted for the essay.
5. The question calls for **logical, evidence-based support**, and stakeholders within the discourse community **are capable of being reasonable** about the issue.
6. It's the **type** of question you want to pose.

In WR 121, Q@Is should be formulated as controversial, specific, yes/no questions. To generate yes/no questions (also known as "divided" responses), pay attention to the language used:

- "**Multiple response**" questions tend to start with words like *who, what, why,* and *how*. These types of Q@Is will be covered in WR 122/123 because they often require

much longer answers, which translate to longer essays than what we require in WR 121.

- "**Divided response**" questions use words like *is, are, can, will, do, does, would,* and *should*

Yes no hands by cottonbro on Pexels.

When considering whether or not your Q@I is arguable, consider the following:

- Does the question demand a clear stance? Can your peers quickly take a stand one way or the other?
- Is there reasonable disagreement about the answer to the question? Is it possible that your audience could be persuaded to agree to your answer to the question?
- Does your question use debatable, specific words, like "best," "worst," "most," "least," or "better"?
- Does your question at issue relate to the readings and

discussions of the class?

Remember: While many questions will occur to you, identifying a question does not necessarily mean you're identifying a Q@I. Which of the following questions are NOT effective Q@Is?

Is college good for people to attend?

- ***Not a question at issue.*** *The use of "good" here makes the question much too vague and broad, so there can't be reasonable, evidence-based debate on the answer to the question.*

Should universities pay foreign language teachers more so that we could see if it would increase the quality of foreign language education?

- ***Not a question at issue.*** *But this is a tricky one. The problem here is not one of specificity, but rather that it's asking two questions, not one: (1) Should universities pay foreign language teachers more? AND (2) would paying foreign language teachers more increase the quality of the language education? In truth, either one of those questions alone would be a good starting point for a Q@I, but together they're not focused enough to have a reasonable*

debate in the space allotted for our essays.

Would spending more time on grammar instruction in college writing courses produce college graduates with better writing skills?

- ***This question is at issue.*** *It's debatable, specific, and answering it persuasively would require logic and evidence. It's asking a type of question known as a "Question of Consequence." Framing your question at issue as a type of stasis question can help you find a good question at issue more quickly. For more on Stasis Question Types, click "Next" below.*

Types of Questions at Issue: Stasis Questions

How do you know a question is a *good* question?

- **Disagreement** exists about the answer or possible answers to the question
- It's on an issue that the **discourse community** cares about (meaning that it's related to class readings and discussions)
- **You** care about this issue and question

- It's **specific** enough to answer persuasively in the space allotted for the essay
- The question calls for **logical, evidence-based support**, and stakeholders within the discourse community **are capable of being reasonable** about the issue
- It's the **type** of question you want to pose

Stasis Questions are types of questions that can help you to find more specific, debatable Q@Is.

Some stasis questions lead to better questions at issue than others. For example, questions of fact can be controversial (meaning that people debate the answer), but it depends on the subject. The concept of Stasis Theory was originally developed by the ancient Greek philosophers Aristotle and Hermagores and further enhanced by the contributions of Roman and many later rhetoricians.

Stasis is hitting on that point in an issue where people will have different points of view. Have you found stasis with the question you want to write on? Ask yourself:

- Is it provocative and arguable?
- Is it framed as a yes/no question?
- Is it specific enough to be answered persuasively (with the evidence available!) in an essay of at least

[insert minimum word count here]?

In *The Shape of Reason* (1986), John Gage develops six types of stasis questions that are useful for creating your own questions at issue or identifying questions at issue (aka main ideas) in sources you are reading. Our definitions and examples of these questions are adapted from *The Shape of Reason* and the pamphlet *Reading, Reasoning, and Writing* (2015) by Jim Crosswhite.

Knowing the **type** of Q@I you are asking is important. It tells you the kind of work you need to do in your essay and helps determine the argument you'll need to make to answer it. For example, A question of **policy** (*Should we ban smoking on campus?*) requires a different argument than a question of **consequence** (*Would banning smoking on campus reduce litter on campus?*)

Questions of Fact

These depend on whether something is true, does exist, or has happened. In many cases, as with journalistic or scientific questions, proving these answers might only require looking something up in a textbook or other reliable source. As such, they tend not to be "at issue" as often.

Examples: Are there 24 hours in a day? Do bears hibernate?

Image: Grizzly bear; Wikimedia Commons

Questions of Definition

These questions depend on the specific definition of a word or phrase. A definition might be as simple as looking something up in a dictionary, or comparing the meanings that differ between sources.

Examples: Is flag-burning illegal? Can an exotic animal be a pet?

Image: Tiger King by Trusted Reviews is licensed CC BY-NC-ND 4.0

Questions of Interpretation

These types of questions depend on how an author interprets a word or phrase that is not as simple as a dictionary definition. It might also seek an explanation of something's significance. They often require authors to articulate or defend their point of view.

Examples: Is Batman a true hero? Are mandatory minimum sentences necessary?

Image: *Batman*; 20th Century Studios, CC0

Questions of Value

Value questions add shades of good/bad or right/wrong to a question of interpretation. In these cases, the positive or negative connotations of the language signal the underlying value. Questions of value and Questions of interpretation are very similar types of questions and often result in similar types of arguments.

Examples: Are Disney movies sexist? Is it wrong to ban books?

Image: Walt Disney's Snow White and the Seven Dwarfs, Four Color Comic by Tom Simpson, CC BY-NC 2.0

Questions of Consequence

Questions like this deal with cause and effect: *If* X happens or is true, will Y follow as a result? The best examples of these questions avoid vague verbs like change, affect, and influence, and try to use descriptive or "directional" verbs that add information and make a debate more likely.

Examples: Do anti-smoking campaigns discourage teens from trying cigarettes? Do gender-specific summer camps promote healthier self-images among young girls?

Image: Anti-smoking PSA from Alghanim Industries

Questions of Policy

Policy questions occur when a discourse community might agree on every other aspect of a topic, but the question of "What should we do about it?" is the point that divides them.

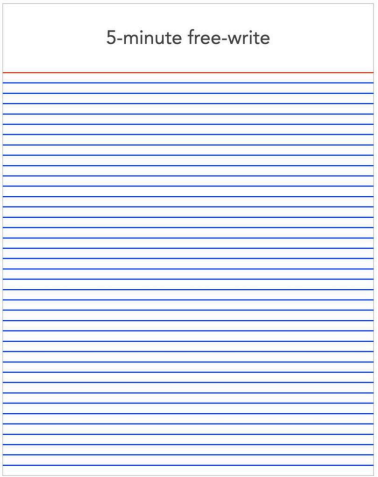
Examples: Should the government lower the legal drinking age? Should schools require students to say the Pledge of Allegiance?

Image: Students pledging allegiance; US Department of Agriculture, CC0

Brainstorming

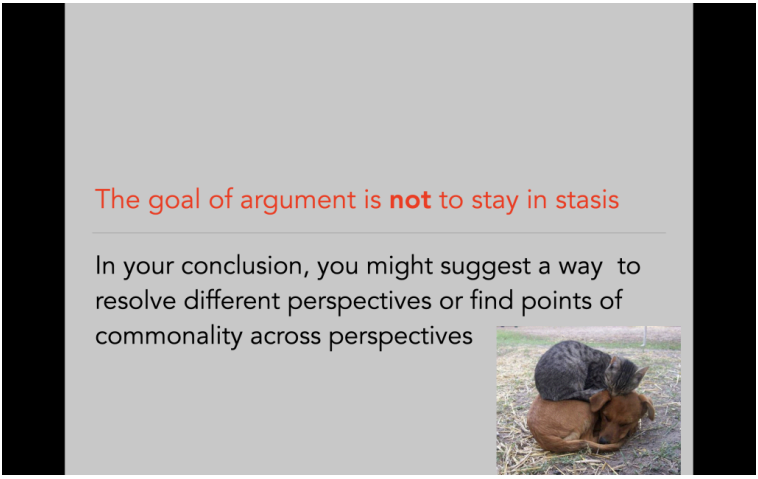
1. Make a list of as many questions you can on an issue you want to address or your essay topic

- What **types** of questions are you asking? What other types of questions are worth asking?



2. Turn these into yes/no **stasis** questions:

- What questions spark the most interesting debate to you?



Acknowledgments:

The six types of stasis questions identified in Chapter 3b are adapted from pages xviii-xix of "Reading, Reasoning, and Writing about Science," by James Crosswhite from *The Culture of Science*, 2nd Edition (2019) by University of Oregon Composition Program, which is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

3C. FROM CURIOSITY TO INQUIRY

Topic Development and Prewriting

Learning Objectives

- Deploy a range of prewriting strategies to choose a topic and narrow the focus of an essay.
- Develop a working thesis statement to help you outline and draft an essay

For most students (and their teachers), the most difficult part

of any writing project is knowing where to begin and how to fill a blank page. The other difficult part, sharing your work with other people who might criticize it, becomes much easier if you have a positive start to a project. When faced with a blank page, it is easy to be overwhelmed, shut off the screen, and procrastinate. Experienced writers do not wake up each day, start typing, and crank out page after page of perfect prose or poetry. They take their time, try to keep a schedule, and follow a common writing process while developing their own style.

Just as you need a recipe, ingredients, and proper tools to cook a delicious meal, you also need a plan, resources, and adequate time to create effective academic essays, presentations, and other writing assignments. Writing is a process that works best when you follow steps and use time-tested strategies to accomplish your goals and meet the rigorous expectations of your professors. Chefs, surgeons, architects, musicians, and athletes do not become professionals overnight; they practice and practice their craft until they become technicians and artists.

Prewriting Techniques

In addition to composing Questions at Issue, a strategy

explored elsewhere in Chapter 3, academic writers use a variety of prewriting techniques to develop a topic and begin their writing projects. These include:

- Task Analysis
- Freewriting
- Idea mapping
- Journalist's questions (5WH)
- Web browsing

If you take the time prewrite while developing your topic, you will feel more prepared to develop a working thesis for your essay and begin outlining and drafting.

Using the strategies in this section can help you begin filling any blank page or screen with your ideas and evidence and confidently begin the writing process. As you try out the various prewriting strategies in this chapter and begin to draft, revise, and edit your essays, the following topic checklist can help you decide if your working thesis is narrow and focused enough for your assignment:

- How can I develop curiosity and interest about an assigned topic?
- How can my curiosity and reading help me develop my own topic?
- Will my topic suit the purpose and audience for my writing task?

- What do I already know about the topic? Is my personal experience related to the topic or task?
- What more do I want to learn about this topic and where I can I learn more about it?
- Do other writers disagree about this topic or have different perspectives than mine?
- Is my topic focused and specific enough to fit the length requirements of the writing task?

Task Analysis

Many writing topics in college and the workplace are assigned as tasks. You may be tasked with answering a question written by your instructor or required to come up with your own topic for an essay with relatively little guidance. When starting any writing processes, being with a task analysis. Read and analyze the task instructions both closely and critically, from the purpose and scope of the task to details about topic, length, deadlines, style, sources, and other requirements.

Writing assignments can vary widely by subject and instructor in college so you may have to ask follow-up questions in class, by email, or during office hours to make sure you understand the expectations of the task. Just as some college writing

begins with an assigned topic, professors and professional writers typically begin new writing projects based on topic suggestions from editors. When given the opportunity to develop your own topic, the following strategies can also be helpful:

- Consider whether you can identify the purpose of the writing task and your audience
- Reflect on what you already know about the topic and any personal experiences with it
- Read the task guidelines critically and sympathetically and ask questions about the expectations
- Annotate the task guidelines and highlight key words or information you need to remember

Freewriting

Freewriting is an exercise in which you handwrite or type without stopping for a set amount of time. During a freewrite, your goal is to fill the page with writing as quickly as possible without worrying about spelling, sentence structure, or punctuation. If you get stuck, you can copy the same word over and over again, insert tangents, and generally do all you can to stay focused on the task – whether you are brainstorming a topic from scratch or developing ideas for an

assigned topic. You can write in full sentences, bullet points, rhyming couplets, or whatever strikes your fancy as you let your mind wander and write down all words that you can think of about your topic. You might try entering these words into a wordcloud generator (for example, Wordclouds or Wordart) to look for patterns that emerge or discover that you have a strong set of keywords to type into library and internet search engines.

Freewriting exercises the muscles we use to produce writing, which makes it easier on our bodies to sit down and compose paragraphs and pages of text required for essays. If you can find a comfortable space to do your freewriting, you can relax and put away distractions like phones and social media. Try to write without doubting your ideas or worrying whether or not they make sense to someone else. Your flow of thoughts may lead you to unexpected or even uncomfortable places, but the exercise will definitely pay off later as you reflect, read, and further develop your topic.

Idea Mapping

Idea mapping is a form of brainstorming that turns the space of the page into a visual canvas. One way to brainstorm visually

is to use your writing and art skills to fill the page with a visual interpretation of your topic or concept. Graphic novelists, advertisers, and web designers are just a few of the people whose work requires the ability to combine text and images on the page. If you are a visual learner or nonlinear thinker, sometimes starting in your comfort zone as you develop a topic or concept can help you prepare for the structured work of developing an outline for a formal academic essay.

Idea mapping is a structured brainstorming exercise that allows you to visualize your ideas and develop connections between keywords using circles, lines, and arrows. This technique is also known as "clustering" because the ideas become clustered across the page and grouped together using lines and arrows. Many writers use larger and smaller circles to signify the scope or importance of certain words and help narrow a topic. Using idea mapping, you might discover interesting connections between topics that you had not thought of before.

To create an idea map, start with a blank sheet of paper and write or draw your main topic in the center and draw a circle or other shape around it. Use lines or arrows to connect ideas and keywords as you fill the space of the page. Create clusters of keywords and ideas across the page as your ideas emerge.

Idea mapping is a great excuse to get some markers, crayons, or anything that helps you think visually and use large sheets of paper. Use a camera to snap a record of your work to review later. You can also create idea maps on using slideshow software or other publication applications.

Figure 1: Idea Map

Journalist's Questions (5WH)

Before narrowing a topic all the way down to a single question

at issue that can be answered in a thesis statement, a general topic or concept can be effectively narrowed down and focused by applying the six journalist's questions:

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

Also know as 5WH, these six questions are a great place to start because they will inevitably lead you to asking secondary questions about how you can locate information in books, articles and other sources. If the sources for an essay have been assigned to you (such a course textbook or set of shared readings), the journalist's questions can help you read those texts sympathetically and critically to gather information and direct quotations that can be used to provide supporting evidence in your essays.

Web Browsing

For thousands of years, students and scholars had to go to a

library, archive, or bookstore to browse encyclopedias, books, academic journals, magazines, government documents, and other kinds of source material to analyze and use as evidence in their essays. Developed by computer scientists, the military, and universities during the second half of the 20th century, the internet became widely available for use schools, libraries, and homes during the 1990s. Since then, students and their professors have been using web browsers, search engines, and online databases to brainstorm topics, read articles, and conduct research.

Your university library website is a great resource for topic development because librarians are highly trained to provide students and researchers access to information. Information literacy is the ability to find, identify, evaluate, and use information effectively. Librarians trained in information literacy pass on those skills by developing research guides and other materials that will be useful guides on your journey. Librarians these days are very welcoming people who are happy to chat about your writing at any stage in the process. Your library website may also have a web page with tips on how to get the most out of your browsing experience.

As you browse, look for three types of useful sources to

develop a broad perspective of your topic: primary, secondary, and tertiary.

Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Sources

When searching for information on a topic, it is important to understand the value of primary, secondary, and tertiary sources.

Primary sources allow researchers to get as close as possible to original ideas, events, and empirical research as possible. Such sources may include creative works, first-hand or contemporary accounts of events, and the publication of the results of empirical observations or research.

Secondary sources analyze, review, or summarize information in primary resources or other secondary resources. Even sources presenting facts or descriptions about events are secondary unless they are based on direct participation or observation. Moreover, secondary sources often rely on other secondary sources and standard disciplinary methods to reach

results, and they provide the principal sources of analysis *about* primary sources.

Tertiary sources provide overviews of topics by synthesizing information gathered from other resources. Tertiary resources often provide data in a convenient form or provide information with context by which to interpret it.

The distinctions between primary, secondary, and tertiary sources can sometimes be ambiguous. An individual document may be a primary source in one context and a secondary source in another. While these definitions are clear, the lines can begin to blur in the different discipline areas.

Sources in the humanities and social sciences

In the humanities and social sciences, primary sources are the direct evidence or first-hand accounts of events without secondary analysis or interpretation. In contrast, secondary sources analyze or interpret historical events or creative works.

Primary sources	Secondary sources	Tertiary sources
A primary source is an *original* document containing firsthand information about a topic. Different fields of study may use different types of primary sources, such as diaries, interviews, letters, original works of art, photographs, speeches, or works of literature.	A secondary source contains commentary on or discussion about a primary source. The most important feature of secondary sources is that they offer an interpretation of information gathered from primary sources: biographies, dissertations, indexes, abstracts, journals, articles, or monographs.	A tertiary source presents summaries or condensed versions of materials, usually with references back to the primary and/or secondary sources. They can be a good place to look up facts or get a general overview of a subject, but they rarely contain original material: dictionaries, encyclopedias, or handbooks.

Examples:

Subject	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Art	Painting	Critical review of the painting	Encyclopedia article on the artist
History	Civil War diary	Book on a Civil War battle	List of battle sites
Literature	Novel or poem	Essay about themes in the work	Biography of the author

Sources in the sciences

In the sciences, primary sources are documents that provide full descriptions of the original research. For example, a primary source would be a journal article where scientists describe their research on the genetics of tobacco plants. A secondary source would be an article commenting on or analyzing the scientists' research on tobacco.

Primary sources	**Secondary sources**	**Tertiary sources**
These are where the results of original research are usually first published in the sciences. This makes them the best source of information on cutting-edge topics. This includes conference proceedings, interviews, journals, lab notebooks, patents, preprints, technical reports, or theses and dissertations.	These tend to summarize the existing state of knowledge in a field at the time of publication. Secondary sources are good to find comparisons of different ideas and theories and to see how they may have changed over time: books, reviews, textbooks, or treatises.	These types of sources present condensed material, generally with references back to the primary and/or secondary literature. They can be a good place to look up data or to get an overview of a subject, but they rarely contain original material. Tertiary sources include compilations, dictionaries, encyclopedias, handbooks, or tables.

Examples:

Subject	Primary	Secondary	Tertiary
Agriculture	Conference paper on tobacco genetics	Review article on the current state of tobacco research	Encyclopedia article on tobacco
Chemistry	Chemical patent	Book on chemical reactions	Table of related reactions
Physics	Einstein's diary	Biography on Einstein	Dictionary of relativity

Developing a Working Thesis

A writer's thesis statement–the main point, idea, or argument–will typically change and develop throughout the writing process. Sometimes, you will feel such passion about topic or have such a clear understanding of the purpose of a writing assignment that a thesis can spring to mind quite early in the process. At other times, the most concise and expressive version of the main idea of an essay does not reveal itself until you have drafted the essay and revised it several times. Before developing a formal outline or composing the

first draft of an academic essay, write out your **working thesis** will help you stay focused on your main point or controlling ideas as you compose the paragraphs of your first draft. Keep in mind that your thesis is quite likely to evolve during the writing process. A working (or preliminary) thesis should be a one or two sentence statement of your perspective, position, or opinion of a topic.

Chapter 3c. Key Takeaways:

- Prewriting strategies can help every writer effectively begin the writing process
- The steps in the writing process are prewriting, outlining, drafting, revising, and editing
- Prewriting is the transfer of ideas from abstract thoughts into words on a page or screen
- A good topic interests the writer, appeals to the audience, and fits the purpose of a writing

task
- Primary, secondary, and tertiary sources can each help a writer develop their topic
- A working thesis that includes both a claim and a reason or evidence helps writers stay focused on their main idea while outlining and drafting

Acknowledgments:

Chapter 3c is, including Figure 1, is adapted from Chapters 8 and 9 of Writing for Success by University of Minnesota, which is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

The Primary, Secondary, and Tertiary Sources section of Chapter 3c, is adapted from a handout created by the Virginia University Libraries, which is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License.

CHAPTER FOUR: COMPOSING ACADEMIC ESSAYS

Learning Objectives

- Identify methods for constructing outlines for prewriting and previsualizing your essays.
- Identify the common elements of academic essays, including body paragraphs that deploy topic sentences, reasoning, and evidence.
- Appreciate the value of various drafting strategies used in the writing process.
- Develop introductions and conclusions that create your first and last impression on readers.
- Draft a focused thesis is specific, precise,

debatable, demonstrable, assertive, and direct.
- Write an effective conclusion helps your audience understand how your essay has fulfilled the purpose of the writing task.

Acknowledgments:

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4A. OUTLINING

Outlining is a focused prewriting and visualization technique that helps writers organize their ideas for an essay to meet a word count requirement, to decide which evidence and appeals will best suit their purpose and audience, and keep arguments and counterarguments focused on the main idea. Drafting is the step in the writing process at which you compose a complete first version of an academic essay or other piece of writing. Organizing your ideas for an essay into a formal or informal outline will help you translate your raw insights and research into a form that will communicate meaning to a reader. It will also provide you with a guide to follow in that moment when you reach the end of a paragraph and need to transition to a new one. Used in combination, outlining and drafting are powerful tools that can writers use to organize their ideas, previsualize their finished piece of writing, and manage their time effectively as the clock ticks down toward your deadlines.

Planning Ahead

When tasked with composing an essay, giving a presentation, or writing an application letter, you need to develop your ideas in an order that makes sense to your audience and suits the purpose of the task. Order refers to your choice of what to present first, second, third, and so on in your writing – from the order of individual words in a sentence to the order of sentences in paragraphs and paragraphs in an essay. Outlining provides writers the ability to play around with the order of ideas, evidence, paragraphs, and other elements of an essay before committing them to the page. A formal outline is a detailed guide that shows how all of your supporting ideas relate to each other and to your thesis. It helps you distinguish between ideas and details that are of relatively equal importance from ones of lesser or supporting importance. An outline is a useful framework for crafting your first draft.

Cognitively, outlining also stimulates the brain to begin previsualizing a finished composition. With practice, a writer can use an outline (or even a detailed task analysis, freewrite, or idea map) to think spatially and temporally about the writing process. Thinking spatially involves a writer's ability to picture how the essay will take physical shape on the page as their thoughts flow from their fingertips through the pen or keyboard and become words, sentences, paragraphs, and even chapters. Temporal thinking involves a writer's ability to

conceptualize and schedule the hours, days, or even months that will be required to draft, revise, and edit any essay or writing task. While writers are always making spatial and temporal decisions internally while planning and drafting an essay, an outline can provide you a concrete representation of your planning and a guide to follow while writing your first draft.

As writers consider the purpose and goals for a writing task, they often begin by prewriting to reflect on the best way to order their ideas, appeals, and evidence. Poets, journalists, and essayists and other writers typically balance order and purpose in their writing by considering three ways of organizing:

- Order of Importance
- Chronological Order
- Spatial Order

Order	Purpose
Order of Importance	• To persuade or convince • To rank or evaluate items or issues by the value or significance
Chronological Order	• To explain the history of an event or topic • To narrate a story or share an anecdote • To explain the steps in a process of making, doing, or thinking
Spatial Order	• To help readers visualize a person, place, or event as you see it • To describe sensory examples: sight, smell, sound, taste, touch

Academic essays typically deploy Order of Importance strategies. Once you have written out our working thesis, you are ready to develop a formal outline for an academic essay. There are many strategies and methods for outlining an essay. Typically, a formal outline uses numbers and letters or bullet points to format the page.

A formal outline for an academic essay will typically look something like the following example. An outline like this one can help you make sure that your essays develop your own voice as a writer and use your sources for support, rather than letting your sources dominate the essay. Distinguished Professor of Writing Lisa Ede once said, "let your writing tell you what to read." Creating even a skeletal outline for an essay or writing project allows you to follow that advice and confidently develop your voice while reading, researching, and drafting.

- **Introduction**
    - Lure/Hook
    - Topic Context
        - Question at issue
    - Thesis
    - Preview of main ideas (useful for essays that are longer than five paragraphs)

- **Background and Context**
    - Depending on the length and content requirements of an essay assignment, it may be useful to include a background and context

paragraph to define keywords, provide background information or historical context, or situate your approach to a topic in relation to a particular audience or discourse community.

- ## Supporting Arguments

  As many as needed to develop your thesis and meet your word count.
  - Topic Sentence
  - Reasoning
  - Evidence
    - Signal Phrase
    - Quotation or Paraphrase
    - Explanation
  - Analysis
  - Transition

- ## Alternative/Opposing Arguments

  As needed to develop your thesis
  - Topic Sentence: Assertion about your thesis from an alternative perspective
  - Reasoning
  - Evidence
  - Analysis and refutation (if needed) of the alternative reasoning

- Transition

Synthesis

- Synthesis paragraphs reflect on the relationship between the supporting and alternative arguments and consider the possibilities for reaching common ground on the issue

Conclusion

- Reiterate your main idea and summarize how you arrived at your thesis
- Consider the broader implication and/or limitations of your reasoning and evidence
- Circle the reader back to your opening sentences to bring them full circle

References

- Citation styles vary by academic discipline and instructor preference. Humanities scholars generally use MLA, social science and science scholars generally use APA, and styles like Chicago and Harvard are used in a variety of academic

disciplines

4B. DRAFTING

Drafting is the point in the writing process at which you compose a complete first version of an essay. There are as many ways to write a first draft as there are essays in the world. Some academic writers begin their drafts with body paragraphs and work backwards to their introduction while others feel the need to develop a solid introduction before launching into the body of the essay. The best advice offered by most professional writers is to try not to worry too much about how unprepared, disorganized, repetitive, or uninspired a first draft might feel because relatively few of us can sit down and compose an entire essay (or even email) that is ready to be published in a single draft. As students, it can be easy to overlook the fact that the books and articles we read for class have been revised and edited many times and with the support of many people prior to publication. Your instructors will expect you to perform the role of both writer and editor before turning in your final draft.

As you dive into the drafting stage of the writing process, the following advice may come in handy when you are facing the pressure of deadlines and grades:

- **Begin with the part of your essay you know the most about or feel least nervous about.**

    - Having an outline allows you to start with the third, fifth, or second paragraph of an essay without worrying how it will flow with the rest. Your initial paragraphs may vary in length or contain insufficient reasoning or evidence as you draft. Topic sentences, transitions, and other details can be cleaned up later. Be sure to cite sources even if you're unsure what quotation or other evidence you might include to reduce your formatting time later (and help you avoid unintentional plagiarism).

- **Just do it!**

    - Hesitation can be a writer's worst enemy. Facing a blank page can feel like a climbing to the top of a diving platform and being too wary to jump or being unable to choose a restaurant for dinner. Although every good writer should be self-critical at times, try to remember that a first draft can be terrible and still be very useful. Try not to look back or doubt your ideas – there will be time for that later. Treat your drafting sessions like freewriting and do not worry about transitions, spelling,

punctuation, and other mechanics.

- **Leave yourself a short note or comment at the end of each writing session.**
    - Every writer has picked up something they wrote a day or week ago and wondered what the heck they were thinking. Take an extra minute at the end of a writing session to leave yourself a short note or comment to remind yourself where you hope to pick up or anything you need to look up. Notes and comments can also be useful if you feel a sentence in your paragraph may be tangential or incomplete and you want to come back to it later.
- **Pace yourself and take breaks.**
    - Essays take time to develop. Hopefully, you can find a place to write where you are comfortable and able to avoid distractions. Turn off your phone and try not to have an internet browser open unless citing evidence.
- **Be reasonable with your goals.**
    - Begin each writing session by taking a moment to

consider how long you plan to write and what you hope to accomplish. Plan breaks to stretch and rehydrate. Holding yourself to a goal for each session will help you stay on track toward your deadlines and give you a sense of achievement. Rewarding yourself after each successful writing session can be useful motivation as well.

- **Keep your audience, purpose, and task requirements in mind**.
    - By the time we get several paragraphs or hours into a writing task, we can become so attached to our own ideas and writing style that we lose track of our audience and purpose. Asking yourself "who will be reading this essay?" and "how will it be assessed?" or "what is my overall purpose?" can help you keep an eye on the big picture. Checking assignment guidelines will help guide your work and help you ensure that your draft meets an instructor or editor's expectations.

The Value of First Drafts

A first draft is a complete version of a piece of writing, but

it is certainly not expected to be the final version. During the revision stage, you will have the opportunity to make all kinds of changes to your first draft before you put the final touches on it during the editing stage. A first draft gives you a complete working version of an essay that is ready to share with peers, writing coaches, instructors, and/or editors that can be improved with revision and editing.

4C. BODY PARAGRAPHS

Body paragraphs present the reasoning and evidence to demonstrate your thesis. In academic essays, body paragraphs are typically a bit more substantial than in news reporting so a writer can share their own ideas, develop their reasoning, cite evidence, and engage in conversation with other writers and scholars. A typical body paragraph in a college essay contains the following elements, which can be remembered through the useful acronym TREAT.

The TREAT Method

- **T**opic Sentence – an assertion that supports the thesis and presents the main idea of the paragraph
- **R**easoning – critical thinking and rhetorical appeals: ethos, logos, and pathos
- **E**vidence – facts, examples, and other evidence integrated into the paragraph using summaries, paraphrases, and quotations
- **A**nalysis – examination and contextualization of the evidence and reasoning
- **T**ransition – the flow of ideas from one paragraph to the next

Effective body paragraphs are:

- **Specific and narrow.** Topic sentences provide your audience a point of transition and flow from paragraph to paragraph. Topic sentences help you expand and develop your thesis and set up the organization of each paragraph. Developing specific reasoning and specific, concrete examples and evidence in each paragraph will build your credibility with readers. If used properly, well-developed reasoning and evidence are more compelling than general facts and observations.

- **Relevant to the thesis.** Primary support is considered strong when it relates directly to the thesis. Body paragraphs should show, explain, and prove your thesis without delving into irrelevant details. With practice and the understanding that there is always another essay, effective writers resist the temptation to lose focus. Keeping your audience and purpose in mind when choosing examples will help you make sure to stay focused on your thesis.

- **Detailed**. Academic paragraphs are typically longer than newspaper and magazine paragraphs because scholars need space to develop their reasoning and provide sufficiently detailed evidence to support their claims. Using multiple examples and precise details shows readers that you have considered the facts carefully and enhances the impact of your ideas.

- **Organized**. If your paragraph starts to include information or ideas that stray from your topic sentence, either the paragraph or the topic sentence might need to change.

Reasoning and Evidence

In written and oral communication, we demonstrate our critical thinking skills through the various types of rhetorical appeals we make to our audience. The purpose and audience for a writing task shape the way writers develop reasoning and select evidence to support their ideas. Writers develop reasoning in body paragraphs through three primary methods: ethos, logos, and pathos. Writers can deploy many forms of

evidence to support their reasoning, including: facts, examples, judgments, testimony, and personal experience.

Reasoning

The ancient Greek philosopher Aristotle developed a simple method for categorizing forms of reasoning by identifying three primary modes of argumentative reasoning: ethos, logos, and pathos.

- **Ethos** is reasoning that establishes a writer's credibility. By showing yourself to be a critical and sympathetic reader, who considers multiple perspectives and demonstrates ethical thinking, you can establish ethos in your body paragraphs.

- **Logos** is reasoning that develops logical arguments and demonstrates a writer's command of the facts. Demonstrating your knowledge of the facts and showing that you can distinguish between competing claims at truth will ground your writing in common sense and objectivity.

- **Pathos** is reasoning that appeals to human emotions and psychological motivations. Humans are subjective animals, and our ability to develop an emotional connection with an audience can have a powerful or subtle impact on whether they will agree with a writer's reasoning.

A fourth form of reasoning, **kairos**, can occasionally be used to make an appeal to an audience that the perfect moment or right opportunity has arisen for action. Arguments for changing policies, ending wars, starting revolutions, or engaging in radical social change typically deploy kairos in addition to ethos, logos, and pathos in order to motivate people to take action a critical times in history.

Evidence

Evidence includes anything that can help you support your reasoning and develop your thesis. As you develop body paragraphs, you reveal evidence to your readers and then provide analysis to help the reader understand how the evidence supports the reasoning and assertions you are making in each body paragraph. Be sure to check with each instructor to confirm what types of evidence are appropriate for each writing task you are assigned. The following kinds of evidence are commonly used in academic essays:

- **Facts**. Facts are the best kind of evidence to use for academic essays because they often cannot be disputed or distorted. Facts can support your stance by providing background information or a solid evidence-based foundation for your point of view. Remember that facts need explanations. Be sure to use signal phrases like "according to" and "as demonstrated by" to introduce facts and use analysis to explain the relevance of facts to your readers.

- **Examples** show readers that your ideas are grounded in real situations and contexts. Examples help you highlight general trends and ground your facts in the real world. Be careful not to take examples out of context or overgeneralize based on individual cases.

- **Judgments**. Judgments are the conclusions of experts drawn from a set of examples or evidence. Judgments are more credible than opinions because they are founded upon careful reasoning and a thorough examination of a topic. Citing a credible expert to support your opinion can be a powerful way to build ethos in your writing.

- **Testimony**. Testimony consists of direct quotations from eyewitnesses or expert witnesses. An eyewitness is someone who has direct experience with a subject; they add authenticity and credibility to an argument or perspective based on facts. An expert witness is a person who has extensive expertise or experience with a topic. This person provides commentary based on their interpretation of the facts or extensive knowledge on a topic or event.

- **Personal Experience**. Personal observation is similar to eyewitness or expert testimony but consists of your own experiences and/or expertise. Personal experience can be effective in academic essays if directly relevant to the topic and suited to the purpose of a writing task.

Key Takeaways

- Always be aware of your purpose for writing and the needs of your audience. Cater to those needs in every sensible way.
- Write paragraphs of an appropriate length for your writing assignment. Paragraphs in college-level writing can be up to a page long, as long as they cover the main topics in your outline.
- Use your prewriting and outline to guide the development of your paragraphs and the elaboration of your ideas.

Addressing Counterarguments and Different Perspectives

> "Few things are more difficult than to see outside the bounds of your own perspective—to be able to identify assumptions that you take as universal truths but which, instead, have been crafted by your own unique identity and experiences in the world."
>
> ~David Takacs

Why acknowledge and respond to other points of view?

- Address **potential weaknesses** in your argument before others can point them out to you.
- Acknowledge the **complexity** of an issue by considering different perspectives and aspects of an issue. No issue has a simple solution or is just Side A versus Side B.
- Establish your writing ***ethos*** (can your reader trust you?): your reader is more likely to trust you if you

thoughtfully analyze an issue from multiple angles.
- Add to your essay's word count!

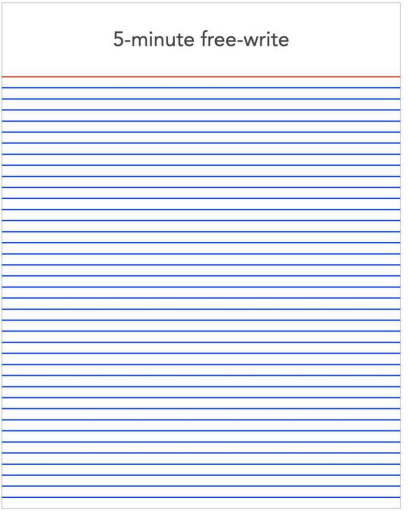
Four steps to acknowledging and responding to other points of view

Step One: Know your standpoint

What is my standpoint and why should I know it?

- Standpoint is the unique perspective from which you view the world. It includes: your background and experiences, your political and religious beliefs, your identity (gender, ethnicity, class, sexuality, and ability), your relationship to others, and your social privilege. These are things that will affect how you view and understand an issue.
- It's important to acknowledge your standpoint because it affects what and how you argue.

Good writers are good readers! And good readers. . .



- Who are you?
- **Make a list** of what you'll bring to a conversation about the issue on which you're writing. What are your assumptions, your background and experience, your knowledge and expertise? Be honest!

Consider writing your standpoint into your essay

- Writing your standpoint into your essay **builds trust** with your readers. Even if they have a different standpoint, they will respect your honesty and hopefully listen respectfully to what you have to say.

- Writing from your standpoint can make your writing feel more **authentic**, to you and your reader. "This is me!"

Even if you don't explicitly reveal your standpoint to your reader, you'll want to know your standpoint so that you are aware of your own implicit bias as you write.

How do I write in my standpoint? Can I use "I"?

Try one of these templates:

- "What concerns me *as a business major*. . ."
- "I write this essay *during a time when*. . ."
- "I am concerned about. . ."

See how other writers we've read have done it:

- "Now, *as a professor at the Harvard Graduate School of Education*, I. . ." [From Anthony Abraham Jack, "I Was a Low-Income College Student. Classes Weren't the Hard Part." *The New York Times Magazine*]
- "From my first day *as a sociology professor at a university with a Division I football and men's basketball team*, education and athletics struck me as being inherently at odds. . ." [From Jasmine

Harris, "It's Naive to Think College Athletes Have Time for School," *The Conversation*]

- "In this society, that norm is usually defined as white, thin, male, young, heterosexual, Christian, and financially secure. It is within this mythical norm that the trappings of power reside. *Those of us who stand outside that power*, for any reason, often identify one way in which *we* are different, and *we assume* that quality to be the primary reason for all oppression. . ." [From Audre Lorde, "The Transformation of Silence into Language and Action"]
- "I might not carry with me the feeling of my audience in stating my own belief. . ." [From Ralph Waldo Emerson, "The American Scholar"]

Step Two: Consider potential weaknesses in your argument and different points of view on the issue

What potential weaknesses in your argument might you address?

- **Logic**: would a reader question any of your assumptions?

    - between your reasoning and your claim: your main unstated assumption
    - or between your evidence and your reasoning: is there evidence or types of evidence a reader might be skeptical of?

- Does the reader hold false **assumptions** about the issue?
- Could a reader give a **different explanation of the issue**?
- Could a reader draw a **different conclusion from the evidence**?
- Is there a **specific reader** who would disagree?

What alternative points of view on the issue might you consider?

- How might someone think differently about the issue?
- How might someone approach the issue from a different standpoint?
- What might keep someone from trusting or believing a claim or point you make?
- What might make someone tentative about taking action?
- What might keep a person from having an open mind?

Which one should I choose to address?

It depends on the essay's length. You might consider **1-2 counterarguments** that are **most important** for you to address in a paper (depending on the length).

- this could be a view your audience/community is likely to hold themselves
- or a common-knowledge one you think everyone will think of while reading
- and of course the one that is most specific to your argument
- if you can get one that fits more than one of these criteria, that's even better!

What NOT to do when considering a counterargument

Image: Comic by Zach Weiners mith; SMBC

Build a **straw man** counterargument

- A straw man argument is a logical fallacy where the writer misrepresents or oversimplifies someone else's argument in order to make it easier to refute.
- Writers also create straw man arguments when they make up a potential counterargument that is easy to refute, but isn't something most people would reasonably believe.

Step Three: It's time to write your counterargument into your essay

An exemplary counterargument:

- exists as its own paragraph
- you fully acknowledge and respond to it
    - Note: You don't have to **refute** a counterargument for your argument to work. Our world is big enough to hold multiple points of view. The paragraph should ultimately support your thesis, but you may amend, qualify, complicate, or open up your claim, which is often why, organizationally, discussion of counterarguments or different points of view work best in the introduction of your essay to set up your claim **or** as the last body paragraph to lead into your conclusion.
- relates to your audience/community's likely concerns and interests
- seems like a realistic thing someone might think (is not a straw man or caricature)
- ideally, is specific to *your* argument, not your topic in general

- considers both sides respectfully
- may be more than one counterargument or different perspective, but you'd need a separate paragraph for each in order to give them full consideration

Addressing a **counterargument** versus a **different perspective**

A true **counterargument** is the opposing claim on an issue:

- Claim: Academic probation does not help students progress.
- Counterargument: Academic probation does help students progress.

Different perspectives might offer different reasoning, consider different factors or conditions, or ask about different groups of people or situations.

A counterargument needs to be rebutted. Different perspectives can help you amend, qualify, complicate, or open up your claim.

You might use a counterargument to qualify your thesis

An example:

Reasoned thesis: Hook-up culture is now at the center of the institution of higher education because it is thick, palpable, the air students breathe, and we find it on almost every residential campus in America. [From Lisa Wade, "Sociology and the New Culture of Hooking Up on College Campuses"]

A counterargument: Research findings suggest that the sexual practices of college students haven't changed much since the 1980s. [From David Ludden, "Is Hook-Up Culture Dominating College Campuses?"]

Qualified claim: Although sexual practices of college students haven't changed much in the last few decades, hook-up culture is now at the center of the institution of higher education because it is thick, palpable. . .

Counterargument paragraph: "The topic of my book, then, isn't just hooking up; it's hook-up *culture*. . ." (Wade).

A template for a counterargument paragraph

I recognize that others may have a different perspective than [state your claim*]. They might believe that [state their claim]. They believe this because [provide several sentences of support]. However, [restate your claim and

explain in several sentences why you believe the way you do].

**You can also consider counterpoints to your reasoning, evidence, or standpoint.*

Step Four: Decide where to organize your counterargument paragraph

Counterargument	**Examples**
An effective counterargument does not just say "someone might disagree," but attempts to be specific: who (ideally someone like your reader) might disagree and why? What can you say that acknowledges their concerns but shows that your idea is still convincing? Some essays naturally acknowledge the counterargument all the way through because they're proposing a change, which means the current situation is already a counterargument. In this case, it makes sense to address the counterargument early on: Why are things this way now? What's wrong with it? Then consider if someone might agree that things should change but disagree about your course of action.	Example 1: The current method of ranking college basketball teams came into existence because. . . (This paragraph would likely be in the beginning.) Example 2: Some college basketball fans might think that while the rankings aren't completely correct in predicting winnings, they're more complicated than I'm allowing for in this discussion; this idea merits consideration but does not ultimately derail my argument. (This counterargument might come near the beginning, too, because it discusses a potential flaw in the basic idea: someone might disagree that the problem is as bad as I'm saying. In this case, it's likely good to talk about that early on, because if a reader thinks this they will probably not read all the way to page four to see you address their concern. Also note how this topic sentence ends by saying how the paragraph will end: with my idea still being better.)

If my counterargument is X,	**then where in the essay should it go?**
If your topic doesn't seem very controversial on its face. . .	consider putting the counterargument in the beginning, to establish the controversy.
If your counterargument is similar to one of your best points in the body of the essay. . .	maybe put the counterargument paragraph before that body paragraph so your response logically leads into the next paragraph about a similar point.
If you have several counterarguments paragraphs you want to include. . .	you could put them throughout the body.
If you have one solid counterargument paragraph but a couple of other opposed points you want to mention. . .	you can address those points in other paragraphs where they fit most closely, including in a context paragraph and the regular evidentiary body paragraphs.
If none of those seems true—it's just another paragraph that could come anywhere—. . .	reconsider your overall structure and find the place where this information needs to come. What do readers need to know first? Why? What needs to come later?

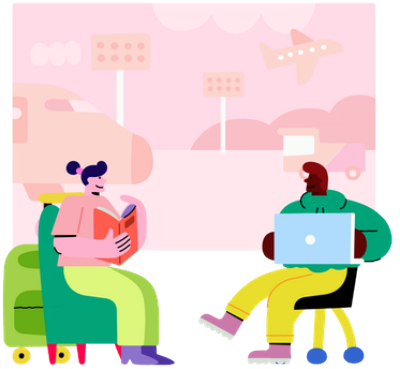
Being aware of different perspectives can also help you develop

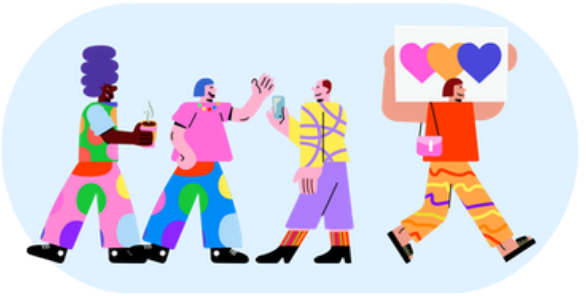
your **conclusion** paragraph. In your conclusion, you can **reaffirm** your claim and then:

- **amend** part of your claim
- **qualify** your claim
- **complicate** your claim
- **open up** your claim

Writing as collaboration

Think of adding in counterarguments or different perspectives as collaborating with others on addressing an issue. . .





Brazuca illustrations by Cezar Berje, CC0

Opening up our **minds** and our **hearts** to **different perspectives** makes us **stronger.**

4D. INTRODUCTION AND CONCLUSION PARAGRAPHS

Introductions: Getting Readers to Bite

The first sentence of every essay, poem, or novel is perhaps the most important because a reader will immediately use the first sentence to develop impressions and make assumptions about a writer's style, voice, and purpose. Thoughtful writers begin every piece of writing with a unique **lure** (or hook) that will attract the attention of readers and entice them to "bite" (read an essay or listen to an idea). Startling examples, surprising statistics, and sophisticated questions are a few effective strategies for opening sentences of academic essays. Quotations can be useful if they are relevant to the topic and will be referenced elsewhere in the essay. Generic statements like "Throughout history," and other clichés like "according to the dictionary" should be avoided for most essays unless you are using them to make a specific point for a specific audience and purpose.

Beginning with your first sentence, the goal of an introduction is to guide readers toward your thesis. You can effectively guide readers from your opening sentence to your working thesis summarizing your topic, identifying important authors or sources you will be analyzing or referencing, and sharing the question at issue that your thesis seeks to answer.

Introductions: Developing Context and a Thesis

A **thesis** is a focused sentence that provides your reader with your interpretation of a topic or text and the primary reasoning or evidence that supports your position. **Context** is information about your topic that you want to make sure your audience knows upfront so they can understand the argument you are trying to make in your thesis. Consider the audience and purpose of your writing task and whether you are writing to a general, specialized, or very specific set of readers. Developing context forms a connection between the creative flourish of your opening lines and the clarity and concision of your thesis.

A thesis provides your reader a controlling idea and main point of focus as they read through the body paragraphs and conclusion of an essay. What makes a thesis focused?

A **thesis** is focused when it is:

- **Specific**. A thesis for a book may consider a broad topic but multi-paragraph essays require writers to concentrate on narrow topics in order to develop depth in their reasoning and evidence. Considering the audience and purpose of your task and developing questions at issue can help you pinpoint the one thing you really want your readers to take away from your essay.
- **Concise**. A thesis statement must be concise enough to develop a complex and intellectually rigorous perspective on your topic in a coherent and efficient sentence or two. Concision in a thesis can become a tool for the writer to help them stay organized while developing arguments and counterarguments.
- **Debatable**. A thesis must present a position or point of view on topic rather than a restatement of fact or observation. Ask yourself, could any reasonable reader within my discourse community reasonably disagree with my thesis? Supporting the claim of your thesis with reasoning and evidence will help you develop its debatable aspects. Sharing your working thesis with classmates and others will help you determine whether everyone already agrees with you or not.
- **Demonstrable**. For any claim you make in your thesis, you must be able to show the reader the primary reason

and evidence that supports your position or interpretation. Worthy arguments are backed by examples and details. Be sure you can demonstrate each reason you use to support your claim within the required length of your essay or writing task.

- **Assertive**. Remember that making an argument in an essay does not prevent you from shifting your perspective at a later date. Write with the confidence that you belong and are welcome in the conversation you are entering. Take a stance that provokes your readers to shift their perspective on this topic and show that you care about your topic.
- Readers appreciate directness and sincerity. When writing academic essays, there is no need to use phrases like *I feel*, *I believe*, or *in my opinion* because the they are unnecessary and may irritate your audience. Please note that this advice is not intended to discourage you from using personal examples in your essays if appropriate for your writing task.

Dog lovers, get your counterarguments ready. The three examples below provide a basic example of how to develop a focused thesis:

- **Not a thesis**: *Cats are smarter than dogs.*

The example sentence is a claim but not a thesis because it provides no reasoning or evidence to support the claim. Opinions like "I think everyone should take the bus to work twice a week" only become thesis statements when they are supported with reasoning or evidence. Without reasoning or evidence, a person reading this example thesis would have very little sense of how the writer will defend this claim or why the writer thinks that cats are smarter than dogs

- **Unfocused thesis**: *Cats are smarter than dogs because they can learn how to use a litterbox, rarely run away from home, and are less clingy and more independent than dogs.*

The second example sentence is off to a better start than the first example because it makes a claim and also provides reasoning and evidence to support the claim. However, there are too many reasons to develop in a relatively short essay and some of the evidence may be difficult to research or defend. Developing a working thesis, even at the preliminary stages of a writing project, can provide you with purpose and a place to start as you begin to outline and draft your essays.

- **A Focused Thesis:** *Cats are smarter dogs because they*

can learn how to use a litterbox.

The third example may not be perfect but presents a position on the topic and narrows the focus of the topic sufficiently to continue the writing process. In this case, there will certainly be dog-lovers ready to provide counterarguments and alternative perspectives.

Power words

Power words like *because*, *although*, *therefore*, *since*, *despite*, *rather than*, *more than*, *less than*, *along with*, and *considering that* are all examples of transitional and metacognitive word and phrases that can be used to create specificity and complexity in a thesis. Try using different kinds of power words as you draft your thesis statement to help you connect your claim with your primary reason or evidence for making the claim. While there is no singular method or formula for writing the perfect thesis for every paper, developing a solid working thesis for an academic essay can help you be more efficient while researching, outlining, drafting, and revising. A great thesis will crystalize your idea for you reader and help them remember the most important thing you want them to take away from your essays.

Conclusions

Conclusions merit consideration right alongside introductions because the two types of paragraphs (or sections of longer essays) perform similar functions. Conclusions and introductions both summarize, contextualize, condense, and synthesize the main ideas you hope to convey to your readers. Conclusions discuss the implications of the thesis, defend the organization of the essay, and leave the reader with something to mull over without distracting them with new information about the topic. Writers often reach the final paragraph and feel tired or stressed as the clock ticks away toward a deadline. Having composed your introduction and body paragraphs to demonstrate your thesis, what is left to say but "That's all folks! Thanks for reading!" Writing effective conclusions that do not simply restate but demonstrate the significance and implications of your thesis statement can help you to leave a lasting impact on any audience. Here are some tips for ensuring that lasting impact is positive.

Effective conclusions:

- Tie together the threads of body paragraph reasoning and evidence to help readers understand how a writer has demonstrated their thesis

- Rephrase rather than directly restate the thesis (especially in relation to any alternative or opposing perspectives you explored)
- Consider the broader implications and/or limitations of assertions, reasoning, and evidence
- Circle the reader back to the opening sentence to create a sense of closure

Ineffective Conclusions:

- Contradict or change a thesis (this can occur through awkward transition sentences or mean that you need to revise your thesis and introduction to reflect your final thoughts)
- Restate the thesis word for word without explaining how it has been demonstrated
- Introduce new lines of reasoning and sources of evidence
- Demonstrate disregard for alternative or opposing perspectives on the topic
- Begin with generic transition statements like "in conclusion"

Key Takeaways

- Introductions and conclusions create your first and last impression on readers.
- Academic essays require a thesis statement to provide your audience with a clear sense of your position, opinion, perspective on a topic, rather than a summary of the topic.
- A focused thesis is specific, precise, debatable, demonstrable, assertive, and direct.
- An effective conclusion helps your audience understand how your essay had demonstrated the thesis and fulfilled the purpose of the writing task.

CHAPTER FIVE: THE WRITING PROCESS

Learning Objectives

- Understand the value of peer review and writing labs as part of your writing community.
- Develop strategies for responding objectively to feedback from multiple sources.
- Understand the purpose and role of revising your drafts as a critical part of the writing process.
- Identify self-editing strategies that can help you revise your writing.
- Prepare a final draft for submission by reviewing style, grammar, and formatting.
- Develop strategies for being a better self-

editing and editor of other writing.
- Understand how to apply MLA and APA formatting

Acknowledgments:

Chapter 5 is adapted from Chapters 8 and 9 of Writing for Success by University of Minnesota, which is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike 4.0 International License.

5A. SHARING

Sharing and Reviewing

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

You, too, can ask a peer to read your draft when it is ready. Providing your peer reviewers with questions you would like them to consider, areas you would like them to focus on, or other things you would like feedback on will help your reviewer provide more constructive feedback. After evaluating the feedback and assessing what is most helpful, the reader's feedback will help you when you revise your draft. This process is called peer review and is used by professors and other professionals to share ideas, receive feedback, and prepare essays for revision and publication.

You can work with a partner in your class and identify specific ways to strengthen each other's essays. Although you may be uncomfortable sharing your writing at first, remember that

each writer is working toward the same goal: a final draft that fits the audience and the purpose. Maintaining a positive attitude when providing feedback will put you and your partner at ease. The box that follows provides a useful framework for the peer review session.

Peer Review Template

Title of essay:_____

_____

Date:_____

_____

Writer's name:_____

_____

Peer reviewer's name:_____

_____

1. This essay is about:_____

   _____
2. Your main points in this essay are:_____

   _____.
3. What I most liked about this essay is:_____

   _____.

4. These three points struck me as your strongest:
5. These places in your essay are not clear to me:

- Where:_____
  _____

Needs improvement because:_____
_____

- Where: :_____
  _____

Needs improvement because:_____
_____

- Where: _____
  _____

Needs improvement because: _____
_____

The one additional change you could make that would improve this essay significantly is: _____
_____

Writing Labs and Tutors

Most colleges and universities offer students additional writing coaching and tutoring through writing centers, tutoring, centers, accessible education centers, multicultural centers, and/or services for student athletes. In most cases, writing coaching, tutoring, and online writing labs are free to students. Writing coaches typically focus their sessions on content, organization, and structure issues rather than grammar, spelling, and punctuation. (Please do not ask a writing tutor to edit your grammar for you as if they are a proofreader!) Prepare questions for your tutor in advance and bring your writing task instructions and other useful information so they can provide the best possible feedback and guidance. Ask your instructor if your school has a writing or tutoring center if you are unsure.

Using Feedback Objectively

The purpose of peer feedback is to receive constructive criticism of your essay. Your peer reviewer is your first real audience, and you have the opportunity to learn what confuses and delights a reader so that you can improve your work before sharing the final draft with a wider audience (or your intended audience).

It may not be necessary to incorporate every recommendation your peer reviewer makes. However, if you start to observe a pattern in the responses you receive from peer reviewers, you might want to take that feedback into consideration in future assignments. For example, if you read consistent comments about a need for more research, then you may want to consider including more research in future assignments.

Using Feedback from Multiple Sources

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

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

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

5B. REVISING

Revising and editing are the two tasks you undertake to significantly improve your essay. Both are very important elements of the writing process. You may think that a completed first draft means little improvement is needed. However, even experienced writers need to improve their drafts and rely on peers during revising and editing. You may know that athletes miss catches, fumble balls, or overshoot goals. Dancers forget steps, turn too slowly, or miss beats. For both athletes and dancers, the more they practice, the stronger their performance will become. Web designers seek better images, a more clever design, or a more appealing background for their web pages. Writing has the same capacity to profit from improvement and revision. Published writing is typically revised and edited multiple times before it reaches the page or screen. The lessons in this section will help you appreciate that good writers may put as much or even far more time into revising and editing an essay as they do into writing a first draft.

Understanding the Purpose of Revising

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

- When you revise, you share your work with peers, writing coaches, instructors and other trusted readers and self-reflect to take a second look at your ideas. You might add, cut, move, or change information in order to make your ideas clearer, more accurate, more interesting, or more convincing.

Strategies for Revision

How do you get the best out of your revisions and editing? Here are some strategies that writers have developed to look at their first drafts from a fresh perspective. Try them over the course of this semester; then keep using the ones that bring results.

- Plan time between your first draft and your deadline. You are proud of what you wrote, but you might be too

close to it to make changes. Set aside your writing for a few hours or days until you can look at it objectively.
- Ask someone you trust for feedback and constructive criticism.
- Pretend you are one of your readers or a journal editor. Would they be satisfied or dissatisfied?
- Use the resources that your college provides. Find out where your school's writing lab is located and ask about the assistance they provide online and in person.
- Develop "thick skin." Accepting criticism and seeking praise can be emotionally taxing.
- Use the feedback you receive to complete a "reverse outline" of your first draft, creating a guide you can follow while you write your second draft.

Many people hear the words *critique* and *criticism* and pick up only negative vibes that provoke feelings that make them blush, grumble, or shout. However, as a writer and a thinker, you need to learn to be critical of yourself in a positive way and have high expectations for your work. You also need to train your eye and trust your ability to fix what needs fixing. You may receive different feedback from various reviewers and have to trust your instincts while revising your work.

Revising for Unity and

Coherence

Creating an outline that you can follow closely offers you a reasonable guarantee that your writing will stay on purpose and not drift away from the controlling idea. However, when writers are rushed, are tired, or cannot find the right words or quotations their writing may become underdeveloped and flat. Their writing may no longer be clear and concise, and they may be adding information that is not needed to develop the main idea. Revising for overall unity and coherence is a great place to begin.

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

Transitions

What this section is about

In this crazy, mixed-up world of ours, transitions glue our ideas and our essays together. This section will introduce you

to some useful transitional expressions and help you employ them effectively.

The function and importance of transitions

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

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

important cues, transitions help readers understand the logic of how your ideas fit together.

Signs that you might need to work on your transitions

How can you tell whether you need to work on your transitions? **Here are some possible clues:**

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

Organization

Since the clarity and effectiveness of your transitions will

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

If after doing this exercise you find that you still have difficulty linking your ideas together in a coherent fashion, your problem may not be with transitions but with organization. For help in this area (and a more thorough explanation of the "reverse outlining" technique described in the previous paragraph), please see the [University of North Carolina] Writing Center's handout on organization.

How transitions work

The organization of your written work includes two elements: (1) the order in which you have chosen to present the different parts of your discussion or argument, and (2) the relationships you construct between these parts. Transitions cannot substitute for good organization, but they can make your organization clearer and easier to follow. Take a look at the following example:

El Pais, a Latin American country, has a new democratic government after having been a dictatorship for many years. Assume that you want to argue that El Pais is not as democratic as the conventional view would have us believe.

One way to effectively organize your argument would be to present the conventional view and then to provide the reader with your critical response to this view. So, in Paragraph A you would enumerate all the reasons that someone might consider *El Pais* highly democratic, while in Paragraph B you would refute these points. The transition that would establish the logical connection between these two key elements of your argument would indicate to the reader that the information in paragraph B contradicts the information in paragraph A. As a result, you might organize your argument, including the transition that links paragraph A with paragraph B, in the following manner:

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

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

Paragraph B: points that contradict the view that El Pais's new government is very democratic.

In this case, the transition words "Despite the previous

arguments," suggest that the reader should not believe paragraph A and instead should consider the writer's reasons for viewing El Pais's democracy as suspect.

As the example suggests, transitions can help reinforce the underlying logic of your paper's organization by providing the reader with essential information regarding the relationship between your ideas. In this way, transitions act as the glue that binds the components of your argument or discussion into a unified, coherent, and persuasive whole.

Types of transitions

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

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

1. **Transitions between sections:** Particularly in longer works, it may be necessary to include transitional paragraphs that summarize for the reader the information just covered and specify the relevance of this information to the discussion in the following section.
2. **Transitions between paragraphs:** If you have done a good job of arranging paragraphs so that the content of one leads logically to the next, the transition will highlight a relationship that already exists by summarizing the previous paragraph and suggesting something of the content of the paragraph that follows. A transition between paragraphs can be a word or two (however, for example, similarly), a phrase, or a sentence. Transitions can be at the end of the first paragraph, at the beginning of the second paragraph, or in both places.
3. **Transitions within paragraphs:** As with transitions between sections and paragraphs, transitions within paragraphs act as cues by helping readers to anticipate what is coming before they read it. Within paragraphs, transitions tend to be single words or short phrases.

Transitional expressions

Effectively constructing each transition often depends upon your ability to identify words or phrases that will indicate for the reader the kind of logical relationships you want to convey. The table below should make it easier for you to find these

words or phrases. Whenever you have trouble finding a word, phrase, or sentence to serve as an effective transition, refer to the information in the table for assistance. Look in the left column of the table for the kind of logical relationship you are trying to express. Then look in the right column of the table for examples of words or phrases that express this logical relationship.

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

LOGICAL RELATIONSHIP	TRANSITIONAL EXPRESSION
Similarity	also, in the same way, just as ... so too, likewise, similarly
Exception/ Contrast	but, however, in spite of, on the one hand ... on the other hand, nevertheless, nonetheless, notwithstanding, in contrast, on the contrary, still, yet
Sequence/Order	first, second, third, ... next, then, finally
Time	after, afterward, at last, before, currently, during, earlier, immediately, later, meanwhile, now, recently, simultaneously, subsequently, then
Example	for example, for instance, namely, specifically, to illustrate
Emphasis	even, indeed, in fact, of course, truly
Place/Position	above, adjacent, below, beyond, here, in front, in back, nearby, there
Cause and Effect	accordingly, consequently, hence, so, therefore, thus
Additional Support or Evidence	additionally, again, also, and, as well, besides, equally important, further, furthermore, in addition, moreover, then
Conclusion/ Summary	finally, in a word, in brief, briefly, in conclusion, in the end, in the final analysis, on the whole, thus, to conclude, to summarize, in sum, to sum up, in summary

Keep in mind that transitional words and expressions are used at the beginning and end of paragraphs to guide readers from the flow of one significant idea to the next. They are used in combination with topic sentences, reasoning, evidence, and analysis to build effective paragraphs. Phrases like "in conclusion" may be useful within paragraphs but are less creative and interesting than transitioning more fluidly into your final paragraph from the one that precedes it.

Clarity and Concision

Some writers are very methodical and painstaking when they write a first draft. Other writers unleash a storm of words in order to get out all their ideas at once. Do either of these composing styles match your approach? Or is your composing style somewhere in between? No matter which description best fits you, the first draft of almost every piece of writing, no matter its author, can be made clearer and more concise.

If you have a tendency to write too much, you will need to look for unnecessary words. If you have a tendency to be vague or imprecise in your wording, you will need to find specific words to replace any overly general language.

Identifying Wordiness

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

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

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

Revised: The Biology Department sponsors two major experiments.

- **Sentences with unnecessary modifiers.**

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

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

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

Wordy: As a world leader in the field of green technology, the company plans to focus its efforts in the area of geothermal energy.

A report as to whether or not to use geysers as an energy source is in the process of preparation.

Revised: As a world leader in green technology, the company plans to focus on geothermal energy.

A report about using geysers as an energy source is in preparation.

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

Avoid passive voice when you can.

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

Revised: Drivers who have a poor sense of direction benefit from using a GPS device.

- **Sentences with wordy constructions that can be shortened.**

Wordy: The e-book reader, which is a recent invention, may have become as commonplace as the cell phone; even my over-sixty uncle and his wife just bought one of those.

Revised: E-book readers have recently become as commonplace as cell phones.

Choosing Specific, Appropriate Words to suit your Audience and Purpose

Most college essays should be written in formal English

suitable for an academic situation. Follow these principles and check with your instructors to be sure that your word choice and tone of voice are appropriate.

- **Avoid slang and derogatory language.** Find alternatives to words like *huge, dope*, *awesome,* and *sucks* that may be unfamiliar, upsetting, or insulting to your readers.
- **Use formal rather than casual words.** Write about "men and women" rather than "gals and guys" unless you are trying to create a specific effect. A formal tone calls for formal language. Inclusive terms like they and folks may also be preferable to gendered pronouns.
- **Use contractions strategically.** Contractions combine two words into a single word, such as replacing *do not* with *don't*, *I am* with *I'm*, *have not* with *haven't*, and so on. Contractions can be effective for establishing style and tone but overuse can be considered too informal for academic writing.
- **Avoid clichés.** Overused expressions such as *green with envy*, *face the music*, *better late than never*, and similar expressions are empty of meaning and may not appeal to your audience.
- **Be mindful of words that sound alike but have different meanings.** Some examples are *allusion/illusion*, *complement/compliment*, *council/counsel*, *concurrent/consecutive*, *founder/flounder*, and *historic/*

historical. When in doubt, check a dictionary.

- **Choose words with the connotations you want.** Choosing a word for its connotations is as important in formal essay writing as it is in all kinds of writing. Compare the positive connotations of the word *proud* and the negative connotations of *arrogant* and *conceited*.
- **Use specific words suited to your audience and purpose rather than overly general words.** Find synonyms for *things*, *people*, *nice*, *good*, *bad*, *interesting*, and other vague words. Or use specific details to make your exact meaning clear. Use a **thesaurus** to look up synonyms to develop your vocabulary but be mindful that not all synonyms mean exactly the same thing.

Revise and Edit Poster

Revise-and-Edit-Poster-1 (download here).

5b. Key Takeaways

- During revising, you add, cut, move, or change information in order to improve content.
- Unity in writing means that all the ideas in each paragraph and in the entire essay clearly belong together and are arranged in an order that makes logical sense.
- Coherence in writing means that the writer's wording clearly indicates how one idea leads to another within a paragraph and between paragraphs.
- Transitional words and phrases effectively make writing more coherent.

Acknowledgments:

- Chapter 5b is adapted from Chapters 8 and 9 of Writing for Success by University of Minnesota, which is licensed

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5C. EDITING + FORMATTING

When you edit, you take a closer look at your revisions as a reader rather than writer. At this stage in the writing process, try to step back from your ideas and focus just on individual words and sentences. You add or change words. You fix any problems in grammar, punctuation, and sentence structure. You improve your writing style. You make your essay into a polished, mature piece of writing, the end product of your best efforts.

If you have been incorporating feedback and making revisions, you have produced multiple drafts of your writing. So far, all your changes have been content changes. Perhaps with the help of peer feedback, you have made sure that you sufficiently supported your ideas. You have checked for problems with unity and coherence. You have examined your essay for word choice, revising to cut unnecessary words and to replace weak wording with specific and appropriate wording.

The final step after revising the content is editing. When you edit, you examine the surface features of your text. You examine your spelling, grammar, usage, and punctuation. You

also make sure you use the proper format when creating your finished assignment.

Plan Time for Editing

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

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

Editors Checklist

Grammar

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

Sentence Structure

- Are all my sentences simple sentences, or do I vary my sentence structure?

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

Punctuation

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

Mechanics and Usage

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

NOTE: If you're unsure about some of these issues, a quick internet search should help you find several pages that will guide you in the right direction.

Be careful about relying too much on spelling checkers and grammar checkers. A spelling checker cannot recognize that you meant to write *principle* but wrote *principal* instead. A grammar checker often queries constructions that are perfectly correct. The program does not understand your meaning; it makes its check against a general set of formulas that might not apply in each instance. If you use a grammar checker, accept the suggestions that make sense, but consider why the suggestions came up.

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

Formatting

Remember to use proper format when creating your finished assignment. Sometimes an instructor, a department, or a college will require students to follow specific instructions on titles, margins, page numbers, or the location of the writer's name. These requirements may be more detailed and rigid for research projects and term papers, which often adhere to American Psychological Association (APA) or Modern Language Association (MLA) style guides, especially when citations of sources are included.

Citation style guides are updated regularly. The publishing industry and academics use a wide-variety of standardized formatting and citation styles, including MLA, APA, Chicago, Harvard and more. First-year writing instructors typically prefer MLA citation style, however, always check with your instructor for any class regarding their preferred or required citation style. For current information on citation style guides, the following links may be useful:

- The Purdue University Online Writing Lab (OWL): nationally recognized leader in providing a comprehensive, up-to-day citation guide website for students and instructors.

- MLA (Modern Language Association) Style Guide: nationally recognized guide for publication formatting in the humanities.

- APA (American Psychological Association) Style Guide: nationally recognized guide for publication formatting in the sciences and social sciences.

To ensure the format, style, and citations are correct and follow any specific instructions, make a final check before you submit any writing assignment.

5c. Key Takeaways

- During editing, you take a second look at the words and sentences you used to express your ideas and fix any problems in grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, and

formatting.

- Budget time for editing and proofreading. Use all available resources, including editing checklists, peer editing, and your institution's writing lab, to improve your writing.

Dress for Success: Formatting Your Paper

Think about your dress style when you hang out with friends.

Think about your dress style when you interview for a job.

Do you dress differently? Why do you dress differently?

You might dress differently depending on the situation and community.

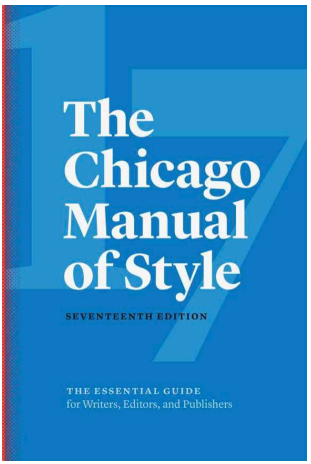
It's the same with your writing. You might adopt different writing styles depending on the situation and community. How you **format** your essay also depends on the situation and community.

MLA vs. APA

As the Yale Poorvu Center for Teaching and Learning explains:

"The first two styles are known as "in-text" citation styles,

which means that you give some information about the source directly after the quotation, but leave the rest to a list of References (APA) or Works Cited (MLA) at the end of the paper. (1) MLA style, defined by the Modern Language Association, is most common in the humanities. Because humanities research highlights how one piece of writing influences another, MLA style emphasizes the author's name and the page in the original text you're using. This information allows scholars to track down easily the exact sentences you're analyzing. (2) APA style, defined by the American Psychological Association, is most common in the social sciences. Although the author's name is an important element in APA citations, this style emphasizes the year the source was published, rather than the page number, which allows a reader to see quickly how the research you're writing about has evolved over time."



Another style you may have heard of is Chicago Style, which is used in business fields and for publishing.

Why is formatting your paper to MLA important?

- Cite the sources you use
- Help an interested reader find the sources you reference
- Consistency and continuity: "branding" your paper
- Situates your essay within humanities scholarship and the humanities community
- "Nice suit!" – it's part of presenting yourself professionally
- Skills you hone: polish, patience, proficiency

Dress for success: Time to format your essay

1. Every place you summarize, paraphrase, or quote a specific passage, section, idea, or statistic from a source:

    - Provide a parenthetical **in-text citation**
        - Ex. "For to survive in the mouth of this dragon we call america, we have had to learn this first and most vital lesson—that we [Black women] were never meant to survive" (Lorde 42).
        - Ex. Audre Lorde's "poems and prose largely deal with issues related to civil rights, feminism, lesbianism, illness and disability, and the exploration of black female identity" (Wikipedia).

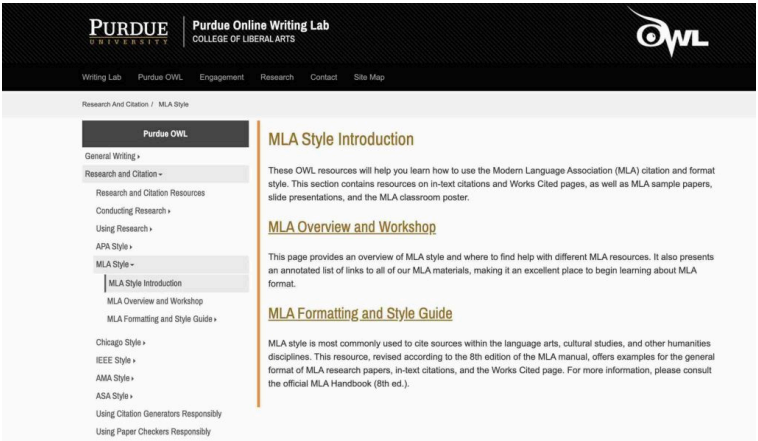
2. Works Cited page

    - A **new** page

3. A great **title** for your essay!

    - Still not sure? Use your essay's question at issue as the title.

Web Resource: Purdue University's Online Writing Lab (OWL)



Click on the image to go to the Purdue OWL MLA style guide

Web Resource: Writing for Success: Using MLA Style

Images:

- Dressing to hang out with your friends; Freepik
- People Sitting in a Waiting Room by Amtec Photos is licensed CC BY SA 2.0

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