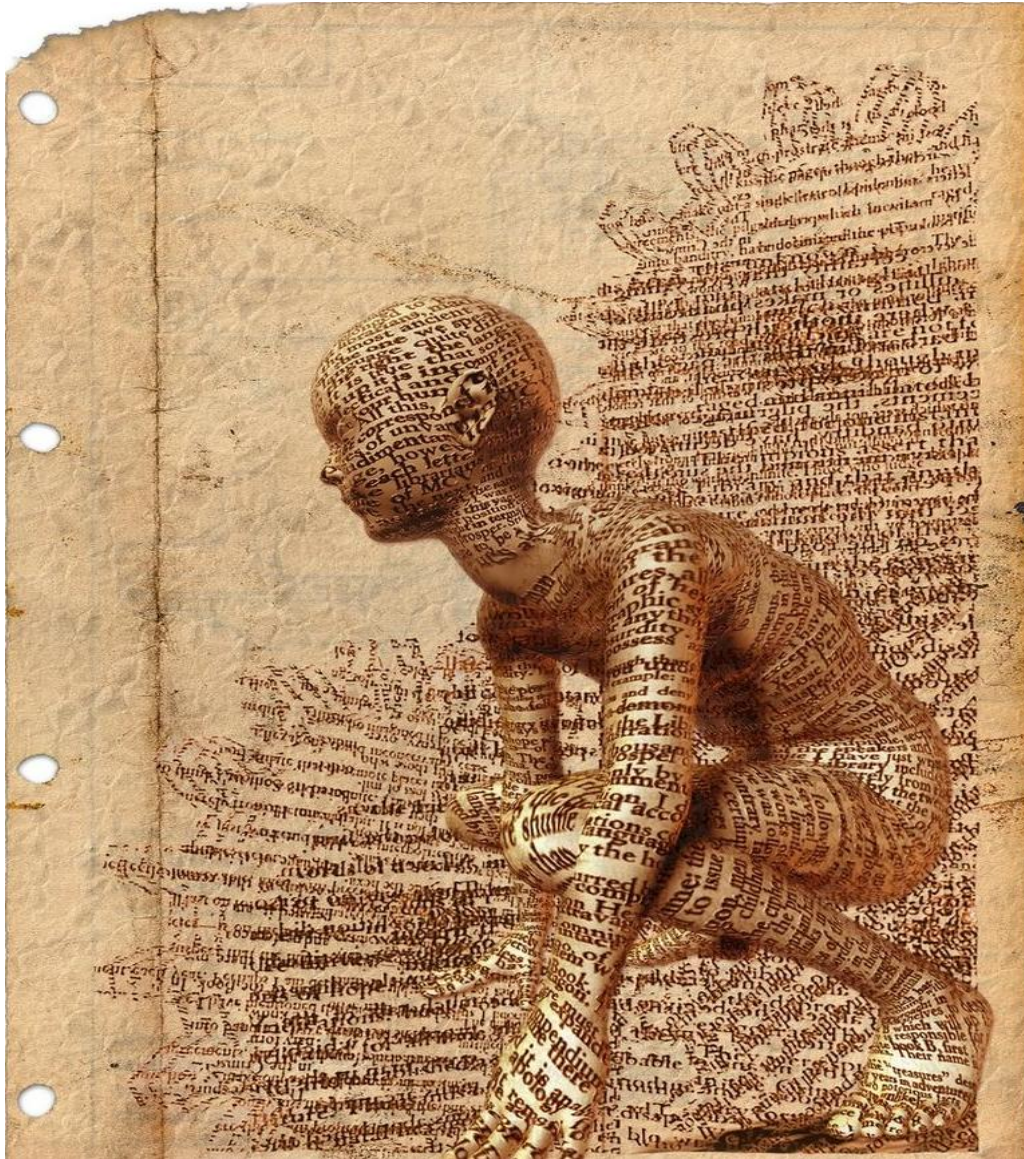




College English *at Skyline College*



Instructor: Rachel Bell

Students taking this course online: unless you prefer a print version, you are not required to purchase this reader as it will be provided for you electronically.

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Writing Guidelines:

Top 20 Ways to get an "A" and to Become a Stronger, More Confident Writer

(1) PAPER TOPICS:

All the writing you will be doing in this course is reading-based. This means that every essay you write will be a response to and analysis of the reading arguing a point of view about the reading. If you write an essay that does not mention the reading or directly examine the reading, it will be considered off topic and will receive little to no credit. You will not be writing plot summaries. You will summarize parts of the reading to support your argument, but summary should not take over your paper. Each paragraph should serve to prove a clear and specific point and all paragraphs should work together to prove one unifying, thesis (opinion on the reading). For all papers, except the midterm and final exam, you will be creating your own argument about the assigned reading so that you are writing from a place of interest rather than duty. You cannot pass this course if you fail to turn in one of the assigned papers.

(2) CRITICAL THINKING:

A good critical thinker...

(from Texas A&M University)

1. considers all sides of an issue.
2. conducts research to challenge initial assumptions.
3. uses convincing and sound evidence.
4. recognizes fallacies and creates arguments using solid logic.
5. is reasonable making concessions, seeing other possible arguments and is sensitive to different views.

(3) CRITICAL READING:

To be a good writer you must also be an active and critical reader:

- Use reading strategies BEFORE you read: preview your text; determine purpose; draw on previous knowledge; predict what will happen; learn prefixes, roots and suffixes to build vocabulary.
- Use reading strategies WHILE you read: underline or highlight key points and quotes as you read; take notes in the margins: identify major plot/argument points, add your own views and questions; monitor your comprehension.
- Use reading strategies AFTER you read: connect new knowledge to previous knowledge; use critical thinking skills to evaluate new knowledge; organize information gathered.
- Take notes on class presentations which provide context on the reading to aid in comprehension

(4) THE WRITING PROCESS:

The best writing is done, not last minute, but through a process using these stages:

- Freewriting: writing continuously letting thoughts unselfconsciously flow (often for about 10 to 20 mins) without regard to spelling, grammar, style etc., and no corrections are made. An excellent technique to push through writer's block and to explore a given topic.
- Brainstorming: is like freewriting in that you write down what comes to mind, but it is different because it is a list of words and phrases and not a string of sentences.
- Journalist questions: creating questions using: Who?, What?, When?, Where?, Why?, and How?. Then, writing out sentences or phrases in answer, as they fit your particular topic.
- Clustering/listing: methods used to organize ideas. Clustering is an informal map of ideas with the main idea at the center surrounded by the supporting ideas and evidence. Listing is an informal kind of outline with the main points followed by supporting points and evidence.
- Outlining: a formalized, logical overview of an essay in "skeletal" form consisting of the thesis, the main supporting points, and the specific evidence proving the supporting points.
- Drafting: using an outline and focusing on proving a main idea, compose the essay and include an introduction, body paragraphs and a conclusion. There will be multiple versions in the drafting stage as you get your ideas in the shape you want them to be.
- Revising: the larger elements of writing generally receive attention first—the focus, organization, paragraphing, content, and overall strategy. Deals with chunks of text longer than a sentence; whole paragraphs can be dropped or added; changes can be quite dramatic.
- Editing/Proofreading: checking such things as grammar, mechanics, and spelling. Don't edit your writing until the other steps in the writing process are complete.

(5) WORKSHOPPING:

For each paper, you will be giving and receiving written and verbal advice from your peers using "Peer Workshop Feedback" response sheets with the goal of assisting yourself and others to write strong, focused essays. Also, the written advice will be part of each student's participation grade. Here are some overall good practices to use in peer response so it is a constructive and positive experience for everyone:

- When you get advice from your peers, there is no need to feel pressured. You are the author so ultimately if you do not agree with someone's point, you do not need to incorporate that change.
- When giving advice, it is difficult hearing criticism from others so be tactful and never insulting.
- When giving advice, also be honest. It is not helpful to simply tell someone, "Yeah, it was good; I liked it." Giving students no avenues for revision and letting them think everything is "fine as is" can be more hurtful than the truth.
- Balance your criticism with praise. Do not forget to tell the author what you liked about the essay as well. Sometimes we get too focused on "fixing" things and forget to tell people what we liked or what they did well. Provide positive comments along with suggestions for improvement.

(6) GRADING:

For each essay, I will complete an "Instructor Feedback" sheet commenting on aspects of the essay by category along with detailed written comments. Here are the **Essay Grading Standards**:

| | |
|-------------------------------------|--|
| "A" essay: (90-100) | <u>Excellent</u> . The essay engages the reader in a thoughtful, insightful, and sophisticated response to the assigned topic. A clear, meaningful central idea is present and supported by specific details, relevant examples, and thought provoking discussion. The ideas in the essay are well organized, coherent, and unified. There are no significant errors in spelling, grammar or punctuation, and the essay adheres to all the standards in writing, including grammar, punctuation, spelling, formatting, and documentation. |
| "B" essay: (80-89) | <u>Good</u> . The essay fully addresses the assigned topic in an insightful and thoughtful manner. The central idea is supported with clear and relevant examples but may include some information that drifts off point or ideas that may not be fully developed. Competence in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and other written standards (as mentioned in "A" above) is demonstrated, but errors are present enough to be noted. |
| "C" essay: (70-79) | <u>Acceptable</u> . The essay addresses the assigned topic in a thoughtful but perhaps underdeveloped, disorganized, and/or incoherent manner. The central idea is apparent but may not be supported by sufficient details, examples, and/or explanations. Errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and/or other written standards occur frequently enough to distract the reader from writer's ideas. |
| "D" essay: (60-69) | <u>Unsatisfactory</u> . The essay only minimally addresses the assigned topic and/or may seriously lack in sophistication, organization, and/or depth in its ideas. The central idea tends to be unfocused, incoherent, and/or may not be supported by detailed examples and developed explanations. Errors in grammar, spelling or punctuation are excessive and distract the reader from the writer's ideas. |
| "F" essay: (59 and below) | <u>Not acceptable/failing</u> . All in all, an essay at the "F" level reveals ideas that do not demonstrate a sophisticated, planned, logical level of thought and appears to be more like a draft or free-written journal that does not follow the conventions of acceptable, essay writing standards. The "F" essay does not address the assigned topic, has no clear main idea and/or supporting ideas, and/or is seriously underdeveloped (far short of the required number of assigned pages), thus not meeting the minimum requirements. |

(7) CREATING YOUR OWN ARGUMENT:

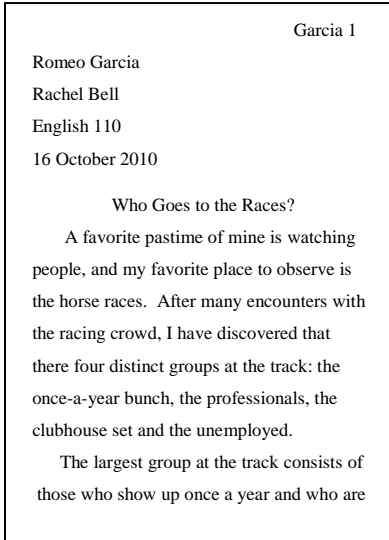
For the take home essays, you will be creating your own paper topics based on the reading. To arrive at a good topic and a strong argument try this process:

- Brainstorm all the issues, ideas, and themes raised in the reading
- Create complex questions using the journalist questions about the ideas raised in the brainstorm.
- Answer several of your best questions about the reading with your opinion.
- Deepen your answer by answering "so what?" So what is the significance? So what can be learned?
- Gather strong supporting evidence to illustrate and prove your argument.

(8) MLA PAPER FORMATTING:

A well formatted essay sends a positive message to the reader that the writer has invested time and attention into crafting the essay. For each essay, follow these formatting guidelines:

MLA Title Page:



Put your last name, then the page number in top right corner of each page ½ inch from top

Name, Instructor, Class and Date placed at top left, 1 inch down from top.

Title of essay centered and placed above the introduction paragraph

The introduction, body and conclusion of the essay follow double-spaced, font 12

For all papers using MLA format, the margins must be 1 inch at top, sides and bottom.

No extra spacing needed between paragraphs; just indent 10-15 spaces at beginning of each paragraph

Meet minimum page requirements:
5% deducted if half page under,
10% deducted if full page under

(9) TITLES and AUTHORS:

Creating your Own Title:

Titles are the first impression of an essay and first impressions matter. Pull in your reader's interest:

- Titles should convey the *topic* of the paper revealing what the paper is going to be about
- Many titles reflect the *point* or argument that is being made about the topic
- A good title should also be *creative*, thought-provoking, and make the reader keep reading

Text Titles and Author Names:

When referring to authors and their texts, be sure to use the proper formatting:

- Put the titles of *shorter works in quotes*, like poems, chapter titles, web pages or short stories. For *longer works underline or italicize the title*, like plays, films and books.
- For titles, only quote them, underline them, OR italicize them—*never a combination of styles*.
- When first introducing a text, also provide the *full name of the author*.
- After introducing authors by full name, *refer to them by last name* after (never by first name).
- *Don't misspell* an author's name or text title; it sends a wrong message to your reader.
- *Don't confuse characters* in stories and authors as being the same person as often they are not.
- In reading-based writing (which is the type of writing we're doing in this class) introduce the text and the author that is being written about in the *introductory paragraph*.

(10) MLA FORMAT FOR RESEARCH, IN-TEXT CITATIONS, AND WORKS CITED:

Research:

- Use credible sources (don't pull "facts" from sources the general public can alter like "Wikipedia")
- Use research to support and strengthen your claims, not to replace your own arguments
- Use Skyline's library page for MLA formatting guides, research engines and advice:
<http://www.smccd.edu/accounts/skylib/>

In-Text Citations—crediting sources within the paper:

You have two options when you cite your sources within the text of your paper:

(1) Provide the author's name and the page number on which you found the material you are citing:
Example: Forecasters agree that El Niño has "made for an unusual year" (Sampson 91).

(2) Provide author's name in text of your sentence and include only page number after the sentence.
Example: Forecasters from across the country agree with John Sampson's statement that El Niño has "made for an unusual year" (91).

Note: Do not use commas, p., pgs., or any other such notation in the citation. The period goes after parenthesis.

- When no author is given for a source, include the title of the article, web page or book instead of the author. If the title is long, you can shorten it in the parenthetical documentation.
- When you are citing online sources (from a webpage or an online database), and there are no page numbers, cite the author's name as usual, but don't include page numbers.
Example: Research shows that "supplementing a woman's diet early in pregnancy with folic acid can prevent up to 70% of neural tube defects" (Moore).
- When a writer's or a speaker's quoted words appear in a source written by someone else, begin the parenthetical citation with the abbreviation "qtd. in."
Example: According to Richard Retting, "As the comforts of home and the efficiency of the office creep into the car, it is becoming increasingly attractive as a work space" (qtd. in Johnson 23).

MLA Works Cited page:

| |
|---|
| Works Cited |
| Astin, Alexander W. <i>Achieving Educational Excellence</i> . WA: Jossey-Bass, 1985. |
| "Money." <i>Compton's Precyclopedia</i> . 1977 ed., X, 80-91. |
| Mumford, Lewis. <i>The Highway and the City</i> . New York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1963. |
| Redford, Robert. Personal Interview. 24 Sept. 1996. |

- Works Cited title at top
- Double-space throughout entries, font 12
- Entries are listed alphabetically by author's last name or by title if no author exists
- Margins must be 1 inch at top, sides and bottom.
- Second line of each entry indented 1 ½ inches from left margin

The format of the source information will vary depending on if the source is a book, a website, an article, etc. For the proper format by type, visit: <http://www.smccd.edu/accounts/skylib/citing.html>

You can use sites like this one to properly format citations for you: <http://citationmachine.net/>

(11) PLAGIARISM:

The quickest way to fail the course and lose your instructor as an ally is to plagiarize in your paper.

What is plagiarism?

- failing to cite quotations and borrowed ideas;
- failing to enclose borrowed language in quotation marks;
- failing to put summaries and paraphrases in your own words;
- mixing an author's phrases with your own without citation or quotes.

What will happen to you if you plagiarize?

**** READ THIS CAREFULLY ****

- There is no sympathy for students in this course who copy the words of others and submit them as their own. If you copy the language and/or ideas of others, you will be caught and receive an F.
- Your name will also be submitted to the dean and your name will be added to a list of students who have been guilty of plagiarizing and this list can be shared with your current and future instructors.
- You may be referred to the College Disciplinarian for further sanctions which range from a warning to expulsion from Skyline College.

(12) QUOTING and PARAPHRASING:

The writing you will be doing in this course is reading-based, so you will want to include quotes and paraphrases from the reading to prove and illustrate your points. Here are some guidelines:

- Include a *mix of paraphrasing* (putting the text in your own words and citing the original source) and *quotations* (direct language enclosed in quotes)
- Follow quotes and paraphrases with the *author's last name and the page number in parenthesis* (Steinbeck 259) or if the author is clear, just the page number in parenthesis (259).
- *Don't drop quotes*—connect all quotes to phrases that introduce them. The phrases could include:
 - The speaker and context of the quote: Dee reacts when Sal is wrongfully accused, "quote" (17).
 - Lead in with your own idea: Miss Grierson's house is a reflection of her insanity, "quote" (23).
 - The author and a verb: Angelou argues/contends/insists/claims/refutes/asserts, "quote" (128).
- *Follow the quote with analysis* that expresses the quote's significance and why you chose to use it.
- For quotes *longer than 3 lines*, separate the quote into a block of text and indent all lines of the quote 10 spaces. No need to put quotation marks around indented quotes.
- *Don't over-quote*—including too many quotes pushes out your voice and analysis and gives the impression you cannot think for yourself.

(13) THESIS STATEMENTS:

The main point (claim) of an essay is often indicated in a single sentence called the thesis statement:

- A thesis statement is an *arguable assertion* that can be proven with evidence and opinions.
- Ask yourself: *Can I disagree?* You want to be able to answer YES because then you have a reason to write the paper in order to prove or defend the thesis.
- A thesis statement is often (but not always) *one sentence* and is most often *located in the introductory paragraph*.
- When writing about reading, the thesis should be an *opinion on or interpretation of the text*
- A thesis should be *effective*. It should be an opinion, not a fact; it should be limited, not too broad; and it should be sharply focused, not too vague.
- A thesis should be *creative, original, and interesting*
- A good thesis will have a strong "*So what?*". So what is the significance or importance of the topic? So what can be learned? So what is the consequence or impact? So why should people care or be concerned?
- Effective thesis formula: *Topic + opinion + So what?*

(14) INTRODUCTIONS:

Do's:

- In your introduction, attract the reader's attention - get him/her interested in reading the paper.
- Provide necessary or helpful background information about the topic - create a context or "set the stage" for the essay so a reader can understand or appreciate your main point. Don't start the essay "mid discussion" with no context.
- Give the reader a sense of why you're writing about this particular subject.
- State the core idea (thesis) of the essay.
- Since all the writing in this course is reading-based, introduce the text and the author that is being written about in the introductory paragraph.

Don'ts:

- **Avoid The Generic** (an introduction that could be stuck onto any essay about any subject) "In this modern, complex world, we all face many daily problems"
- **Avoid The Mechanical** "In this essay, I am going to discuss..." (Note: This approach is not favored in most humanities courses, but may be encouraged in business or science courses)
- **Avoid Clichés:** Avoid worn out over-used phrases like "According to the dictionary..." and "Don't judge a book by its cover." Use language that is fresh, original and engaging.
- **Avoid Dawdling:** Get to it. Move confidently into your essay. Don't slow your essay down with too much information that doesn't lead directly up to your thesis.

Some Possible Approaches for Introductions:

- Lead in with a related and short, illustrative story or example.
- Connect your topic to a familiar experience the reader is likely to have had or a cultural reference they are likely to have shared.
- Pose a provocative question, one that will get your reader thinking.
- Include a short direct quote that illuminates the topic (be sure to give full names of writers, experts, and text titles when you first reference them).
- Surprise your reader with striking facts or statistics.
- Provide background information and/or history on the topic.
- State a problem that will be analyzed or solved.

(15) TOPIC SENTENCES:

The main point (claim) of a paragraph is often indicated in a single sentence called the topic sentence:

- A topic sentence is like a thesis in that you can also ask yourself: Can I disagree? You want to be able to answer YES to show that there is an arguable claim that needs to be proven.
- A strong topic sentence connects back to your overall thesis and connects forward to the specific supporting point you are making in the paragraph to prove and illustrate your thesis.
- A strong topic sentence focuses each paragraph around one main point.
- In published writing you'll sometimes find topic sentences in the middle or even at the end of a paragraph, but placing your topic sentences at the beginning of each of your paragraphs is useful
- A strong topic sentence helps your reader to see where you are headed with your ideas in a particular paragraph; topics sentences help your reader form a mental map of your essay.
- A strong topic sentence often contains transitional words and phrases that logically move the reader from one paragraph to the next.

(16) PARAGRAPHS:

In order for body paragraphs to be useful to your reader, they need to be:

- **Relevant:** directly *related to your thesis*.
- **Focused:** centered on *one main idea*
- **Developed:** supported with sufficient *information and explanatory commentary*.

One way to ensure that each of your body paragraphs is clearly focused, convincingly developed, and connects back to thesis is to use the PIE strategy:

- **P = Point:** the "P" is the point you are making in your topic sentence: a clear statement of the main claim you are addressing in that paragraph which directly supports the thesis.
- **I = Information:** the "I" fills out the body of your paragraph with concrete information that supports the main point. Provide specific details in the form of examples, quotes, paraphrases, facts, personal knowledge, real life examples and experiences, etc.
- **E = Explanation:** the "E" is the writer's explanation of the significance of the provided information as it relates to the thesis. "So What?" is important or can be learned?

(17) CONCLUSIONS:

Some Possible Approaches for Conclusions:

- Set your discussion into a different, perhaps larger, context.
- Consider the implications or outcomes of your argument ("So what?").
- Offer opinions that your reader might or might not have accepted earlier.
- Propose a course of action.
- Try to solve a problem you have raised.
- Link the last paragraph to the first, perhaps by reiterating a word, phrase, reference or idea you used at the beginning.
- Use a quotation that amplifies your main point or puts it in a different perspective.

(18) TIMED WRITING:

In college and in life there will be occasions where you need to compose essays and written responses quickly and in a limited amount of time. Therefore, we will also be strengthening your timed essay writing abilities through writing the following essays: several 20-30 minute quizzes, a 75 minute midterm, and a 2.5 hour final exam. Here is some advice on how to be successful in timed writing situations:

- To write a strong essay in a limited amount of time, know the *important elements of an essay*:
Focus: respond directly to writing prompt (circle key words, count parts), stay focused on thesis;
Organization: points in logical order, paragraph breaks, strong topic sentences, transitions;
Development: specific detail for *each* paragraph (examples, facts, quotes, your own analysis);
Grammar-Punctuation-Spelling: set time aside at end to correct sentence-level errors
- Have a *time management plan* for 3 activities: 10-15% of time for prewriting (circling key words, counting parts of prompt, rough outline), 70-80% of time writing, and 10-15% proofreading
- The best way to prepare is to write several *practice timed essays* before exams

(19) STYLE

- When writing, strive for **simplicity** so there are no unnecessary or confusing words.
- **Combine sentences** to be concise, improve flow, and show logical relationships between ideas.
- To group similar ideas, balance your ideas, and remove repetition, use **parallelism**.

(20) GRAMMAR-PUNCTUATION-SPELLING:

Do [grammar exercises](#) to strengthen sentence level skills where needed:

| | | | |
|---|---|---|--|
| Adjectives & Adverbs Appositives Articles Commas | Contractions Coordinators Dangling Modifiers Fragments | Identifying Verbs and Subjects Possessives Run-Together Sentences Subject-Verb Agreement | Subordinators Verb Tenses |
|---|---|---|--|

Writing Guideline #1:

PAPER TOPICS

(1) PAPER TOPICS:

OVERVIEW:

All the writing you will be doing in this course is reading-based. This means that every essay you write will be a response to and analysis of the reading arguing a point of view about the reading. If you write an essay that does not mention the reading or directly examine the reading, it will be considered off topic and will receive little to no credit. You will not be writing plot summaries. You will summarize parts of the reading to support your argument, but summary should not take over your paper. Each paragraph should serve to prove a clear and specific point and all paragraphs should work together to prove one unifying, thesis (opinion on the reading). For all papers, except the midterm and final exam, you will be creating your own argument about the assigned reading so that you are writing from a place of interest rather than duty. You cannot pass this course if you fail to turn in one of the assigned papers.

For the specific due dates and page lengths for each paper, see the course syllabus which is linked from my faculty homepage: <http://www.smccd.edu/accounts/bellr/>

CREATING YOUR OWN ARGUMENT:

For the take home essays, you will be creating your own paper topics based on the reading. To arrive at a good topic and a strong thesis try this process:

- Brainstorm all the issues, ideas, and themes raised in the reading
- Create complex questions using the journalist questions about the ideas raised in the brainstorm.
- Answer several of your best questions about the reading with your opinion.
- Deepen your answer by answering “*so what?*” So what is the significance? So what can be learned?
- Gather strong supporting evidence to illustrate and prove your argument.

Fill out a [Creating Your Own Argument](#) process sheet to arrive at a strong and interesting argument on which to focus your paper.

PAPER GUIDELINES:

(1) **TOPICS:** For all the papers except the midterm and final, you will select your own paper topic. Write on an aspect of the reading that is interesting to you! In the reading, what caught your attention? Shocked or surprised you? Compelled you? Made you want to investigate further? Remember, for every essay that you write in this course, an analysis of the reading should be the focus. If your paper doesn't really address or analyze the assigned text, revise it so that it does.

(2) **WRITING GUIDELINES:**

Take a look at the concise writing guide that gives an overview of all the elements to include in a successful essay. This will help you as you select your topic and then as you plan and write your paper:

<http://www.smccd.edu/accounts/bellr/ReaderWritingGuidelines.htm>

(3) **FORMATTING:** For all the papers you submit in this course you want to use MLA formatting for the titles pages, the page numbering and the Works Cited page. Also, all pages should be double-spaced with 1 inch margins at the top, sides and bottom of the paper. For more details, visit:

<http://www.smccd.net/accounts/bellr/ReaderPaperFormatting.htm>

(4) **DEADLINES:** Deadlines are given well in advance and are very strict. I will accept no late work. You do, however, have 2 late tickets. If you're taking the course online, you can turn in two assignments 48 hours after their due date. If you're taking the course in the classroom, you can use a late ticket to turn the assignment in *the following* class. You cannot use late tickets on timed exams. I don't recommend you use a late ticket for the first due date of a paper as these are days when you workshop the paper. If you miss the first workshop due date, you will not get feedback for revision on your paper and since students without papers cannot participate in workshopping, you will lose the participation credit you get for responding to your peers' papers.

(5) **TWO DUE DATES:** You'll notice that all the papers have two due dates a week a part. This allows students a week to revise their essays after receiving peer feedback and to perhaps work with a tutor and/or the instructor on a paper. If students miss the first due date for a paper, they cannot turn in a revised paper a week later for a grade. First drafts are not graded. You cannot pass the course if you fail to submit one of the assigned papers.

(6) **PAGE LENGTH:** The page length for papers is also very strict. I page count all the essays before I read them. 5% (half a grade) is deducted for each half page under and 10% (a full letter grade) is deducted for a full page under. The page minimums are strict, but you can ignore the page maximums. If you want to write a long paper, I'll read it. I encourage students to go above and beyond the assignment. However, you don't want to turn in a long, rambling paper that isn't concise. More pages aren't always better.

(7) **TUTORING:** I highly recommend that you take advantage of the tutoring services offered in Skyline's Learning Center. Getting feedback is one of the most effective ways for you to improve your writing. Either come visit me in office hours or visit The Writing and Reading Lab in The Learning Center in building 5, room 5-100 (a floor below the library) which offers a full staff of tutors Monday-Thursday 8am-8pm, F 8-4pm:

<http://www.smccd.edu/accounts/skytlc/index.asp>

(8) **ESSAY CHECKLIST:** To assure that you have all the necessary elements for your paper, download and fill out the [Essay Checklist](#) and be sure all of the elements on the checklist are present in your paper. You will submit one of these checklists for each of the take home essays (the ones that are not timed essays).

Writing Guideline #2: CRITICAL THINKING

(2) CRITICAL THINKING:

*You assist an evil system most effectively by obeying its orders and decrees.
An evil system never deserves such allegiance. Allegiance to it means partaking of the evil.
A good person will resist an evil system with his or her whole soul. ~ Mahatma Gandhi*

*The propagandist's purpose is to make one set of people
forget that certain other sets of people are human. ~ Aldous Huxley*

*[People] become civilized, not in proportion to their willingness to believe,
but in their readiness to doubt. ~ H. L. Mencken*

WHAT IS CRITICAL THINKING?

Critical Thinking as Defined by the National Council for Excellence in Critical Thinking

by Michael Scriven & Richard Paul (from criticalthinking.org)

“Critical thinking is the intellectually disciplined process of actively and skillfully conceptualizing, applying, analyzing, synthesizing, and/or evaluating information gathered from, or generated by, observation, experience, reflection, reasoning, or communication, as a guide to belief and action. In its exemplary form, it is based on universal intellectual values that transcend subject matter divisions: clarity, accuracy, precision, consistency, relevance, sound evidence, good reasons, depth, breadth, and fairness.”

Another Brief Conceptualization of Critical Thinking by Linda Elder

“Critical thinking is self-guided, self-disciplined thinking which attempts to reason at the highest level of quality in a fair-minded way. People who think critically consistently attempt to live rationally, reasonably, empathically. They are keenly aware of the inherently flawed nature of human thinking when left unchecked. They strive to diminish the power of their egocentric and sociocentric tendencies. They use the intellectual tools that critical thinking offers – concepts and principles that enable them to analyze, assess, and improve thinking. They work diligently to develop the intellectual virtues of intellectual integrity, intellectual humility, intellectual civility, intellectual empathy, intellectual sense of justice and confidence in reason. They realize that no matter how skilled they are as thinkers, they can always improve their reasoning abilities and they will at times fall prey to mistakes in reasoning, human irrationality, prejudices, biases, distortions, uncritically accepted social rules and taboos, self-interest, and vested interest. They strive to improve the world in whatever ways they can and contribute to a more rational, civilized society. At the same time, they recognize the complexities often inherent in doing so. They avoid thinking simplistically about complicated issues and strive to appropriately consider the rights and needs of relevant others. They recognize the complexities in developing as thinkers, and commit themselves to life-long practice toward self-improvement. They embody the Socratic principle: *The unexamined life is not worth living*, because they realize that many unexamined lives together result in an uncritical, unjust, dangerous world.”

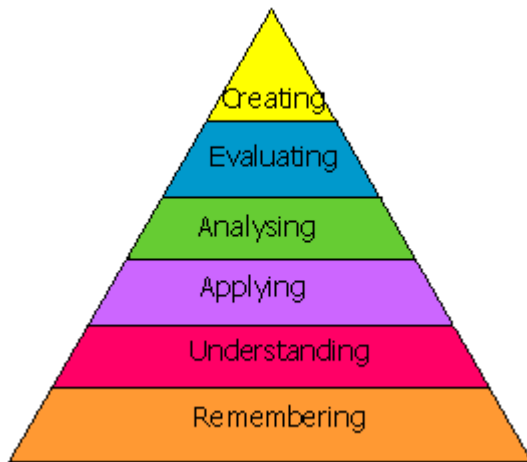
WHAT DOES A CRITICAL THINKER DO?

According to Robert H. Ennis, author of *The Cornell Critical Thinking Tests* (from criticalthinking.com)

| | |
|---|---|
| <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Is open-minded and mindful of alternatives 2. Tries to be well-informed 3. Judges well the credibility of sources 4. Identifies conclusions, reasons, and assumptions 5. Judges well the quality of an argument, including the acceptability of its reasons, assumptions, and evidence | <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 6. Can well develop and defend a reasonable position 7. Asks appropriate clarifying questions 8. Formulates plausible hypotheses; plans experiments well 9. Defines terms in a way appropriate for the context 10. Draws conclusions when warranted, but with caution |
|---|---|

Understanding Levels of Thinking Using Bloom's Taxonomy:

In 1956, Benjamin Bloom headed a group of educational psychologists who developed a classification of levels of intellectual behavior important in learning. During the 1990's a new group of cognitive psychologists, lead by Lorin Anderson (a former student of Bloom's), updated the taxonomy reflecting relevance to 21st century work:



Arranged from lower level thinking to higher level

| | |
|--|---|
| Creating: can you create a new product or point of view? | assemble, construct, create, design, develop, formulate, write |
| Evaluating: can you justify a stand or decision? | appraise, argue, defend, judge, select, support, value, evaluate |
| Analyzing: can you distinguish between the different parts? | appraise, compare, contrast, criticize, differentiate, discriminate, distinguish, examine, experiment, question, test |
| Applying: can you use the information in a new way? | choose, demonstrate, dramatize, employ, illustrate, interpret, operate, schedule, sketch, solve, use, write |
| Understanding: can you explain ideas or concepts? | classify, describe, discuss, explain, identify, locate, recognize, report, select, translate, paraphrase |
| Remembering: can you recall or remember the information? | define, duplicate, list, memorize, recall, repeat, reproduce, state |

HOW DO I BECOME A CRITICAL THINKER?

From the Texas A&M University Writing Center website (<http://writingcenter.tamu.edu>)

To make an argument, take a stand, or defend a thesis in a responsible way for an academic or educated reader requires that you consider the following:

All sides of the issue. By considering all sides and showing, whether through a literature review or through discussion, that you understand the issues, you strengthen their own position.

Your own position. You may not even be clear on your position until you begin prewriting. Conducting research and pursuing invention techniques may challenge your initial assumptions. Be ready to alter your thesis as you explore it.

Convincing and comprehensive evidence. Writing an argument makes you ask what is convincing to an educated reader. How much evidence is enough? What kind of evidence counts and what kind may be persuasive yet not sufficient?

Awareness of fallacies. A good argument is based on solid logic, without hasty generalizations, faulty causal attributions, misleading statistics, and so on.

Reasonableness. A reasonable writer will make concessions, show awareness of other possible arguments, and be sensitive to different perspectives. A reasonable writer will not play on emotion to excess or expect readers to assent based on his/her personality or reputation.

An Introduction to Literary Theory and Schools of Criticism

Psychoanalytic Criticism (1930s-present)

(<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/722/04/>)

Sigmund Freud

Psychoanalytic criticism builds on Freudian theories of psychology. While we don't have the room here to discuss all of Freud's work, a general overview is necessary to explain psychoanalytic literary criticism.

The Unconscious, the Desires, and the Defenses

Freud began his psychoanalytic work in the 1880s while attempting to treat behavioral disorders in his Viennese patients. He dubbed the disorders 'hysteria' and began treating them by listening to his patients talk through their problems. Based on this work, Freud asserted that people's behavior is affected by their unconscious: "...the notion that human beings are motivated, even driven, by desires, fears, needs, and conflicts of which they are unaware..." (Tyson 14-15).

Freud believed that our unconscious was influenced by childhood events. Freud organized these events into developmental stages involving relationships with parents and drives of desire and pleasure where children focus "...on different parts of the body...starting with the mouth...shifting to the oral, anal, and phallic phases..." (Richter 1015). These stages reflect base levels of desire, but they also involve fear of loss (loss of genitals, loss of affection from parents, loss of life) and repression: "...the expunging from consciousness of these unhappy psychological events" (Tyson 15).

Tyson reminds us, however, that "...repression doesn't eliminate our painful experiences and emotions...we unconsciously behave in ways that will allow us to 'play out'...our conflicted feelings about the painful experiences and emotions we repress" (15). To keep all of this conflict buried in our unconscious, Freud argued that we develop defenses: selective perception, selective memory, denial, displacement, projection, regression, fear of intimacy, and fear of death, among others.

Id, Ego, and Superego

Freud maintained that our desires and our unconscious conflicts give rise to three areas of the mind that wrestle for dominance as we grow from infancy, to childhood, to adulthood:

- id - "...the location of the drives" or libido
- ego - "...one of the major defenses against the power of the drives..." and home of the defenses listed above
- superego - the area of the unconscious that houses judgement (of self and others) and "...which begins to form during childhood as a result of the Oedipus complex" (Richter 1015-1016)

Oedipus Complex

Freud believed that the Oedipus complex was "...one of the most powerfully determinative elements in the growth of the child" (Richter 1016). Essentially, the Oedipus complex involves children's need for their parents and the conflict that arises as children mature and realize they are not the absolute focus of their mother's attention: "the Oedipus complex begins in a late phase of infantile sexuality, between the child's third and sixth year, and it takes a different form in males than it does in females" (Richter 1016).

Freud argued that both boys and girls wish to possess their mothers, but as they grow older "...they begin to sense that their claim to exclusive attention is thwarted by the mother's attention to the father..." (1016). Children, Freud maintained, connect this conflict of attention to the intimate relations between mother and father, relations from which the children are excluded. Freud believed that "the result is a murderous rage against the father...and a desire to possess the mother" (1016).

Freud pointed out, however, that "...the Oedipus complex differs in boys and girls...the functioning of the related castration complex" (1016). In short, Freud thought that "...during the Oedipal rivalry [between boys and their fathers], boys fantasized that punishment for their rage will take the form of..." castration (1016). When boys effectively work through this anxiety, Freud argued, "...the boy learns to identify with the father in the hope of someday possessing a woman like his mother. In girls, the castration complex does not take the form of anxiety...the result is a frustrated rage in which the girl shifts her sexual desire from the mother to the father" (1016).

Freud believed that eventually, the girl's spurned advanced toward the father give way to a desire to possess a man like her father later in life. Freud believed that the impact of the unconscious, id, ego, superego, the defenses, and the Oedipus complexes was inescapable and that these elements of the mind influence all our behavior (and even our dreams) as adults - of course this behavior involves what we write.

Freud and Literature

So what does all of this psychological business have to do with literature and the study of literature? Put simply, some critics believe that we can "...read psychoanalytically...to see which concepts are operating in the text in such a way as to enrich our understanding of the work and, if we plan to write a paper about it, to yield a meaningful, coherent psychoanalytic interpretation" (Tyson 29). Tyson provides some insightful and applicable questions to help guide our understanding of psychoanalytic criticism.

Typical questions:

- How do the operations of repression structure or inform the work?
- Are there any oedipal dynamics - or any other family dynamics - at work here?
- How can characters' behavior, narrative events, and/or images be explained in terms of psychoanalytic concepts of any kind (for example...fear or fascination with death, sexuality - which includes love and romance as well as sexual behavior - as a primary indicator of psychological identity or the operations of ego-id-superego)?
- What does the work suggest about the psychological being of its author?
- What might a given interpretation of a literary work suggest about the psychological motives of the reader?
- Are there prominent words in the piece that could have different or hidden meanings? Could there be a subconscious reason for the author using these "problem words"?

Here is a list of scholars we encourage you to explore to further your understanding of this theory:

- Harold Bloom - *A Theory of Poetry*, 1973; *Poetry and Repression: Revisionism from Blake to Stevens*, 1976
- Peter Brooks
- Jacques Lacan - *The Ego in Freud's Theory and in the Technique of Psychoanalysis*, 1988; "The Agency of the Letter in the Unconscious or Reason Since Freud" (from *Écrits: A Selection*, 1957)
- Jane Gallop - *Reading Lacan*, 1985
- Julia Kristeva - *Revolution in Poetic Language*, 1984
- Marshall Alcorn - *Changing the Subject in English Class: Discourse and the Constructions of Desire*, 2002

Carl Jung

Jungian criticism attempts to explore the connection between literature and what Carl Jung (a student of Freud) called the "collective unconscious" of the human race: "...racial memory, through which the spirit of the whole human species manifests itself" (Richter 504). Jungian criticism, closely related to Freudian theory because of its connection to psychoanalysis, assumes that all stories and symbols are based on mythic models from mankind's past.

Based on these commonalities, Jung developed archetypal myths, the *Syzygy*: "...a quaternion composing a whole, the unified self of which people are in search" (Richter 505). These archetypes are the Shadow, the Anima, the Animus, and the Spirit: "...beneath...[the Shadow] is the Anima, the feminine side of the male Self, and the Animus, the corresponding masculine side of the female Self" (Richter 505).

In literary analysis, a Jungian critic would look for archetypes (also see the discussion of Northrop Frye in the Structuralism section) in creative works: "Jungian criticism is generally involved with a search for the embodiment of these symbols within particular works of art." (Richter 505). When dealing with this sort of criticism, it is often useful to keep a handbook of mythology and a dictionary of symbols on hand.

Typical questions:

- What connections can we make between elements of the text and the archetypes? (Mask, Shadow, Anima, Animus)
- How do the characters in the text mirror the archetypal figures? (Great Mother or nurturing Mother, Whore, destroying Crone, Lover, Destroying Angel)
- How does the text mirror the archetypal narrative patterns? (Quest, Night-Sea-Journey)
- How symbolic is the imagery in the work?
- How does the protagonist reflect the hero of myth?
- Does the "hero" embark on a journey in either a physical or spiritual sense?
- Is there a journey to an underworld or land of the dead?
- What trials or ordeals does the protagonist face? What is the reward for overcoming them?

Here is a list of scholars we encourage you to explore to further your understanding of this theory:

- Maud Bodkin - *Archetypal Patterns in Poetry*, 1934
- Carl Jung - *The Archetypes and the Collective Unconscious*. Vol. 9, Part 1 of *Collected Works*. 2nd ed. Trans. R.F.C. Hull, 1968
- Bettina Knapp - *Music, Archetype and the Writer: A Jungian View*, 1988
- Ricahrd Sugg - *Jungian Literary Criticism*, 1993

Marxist Criticism (1930s-present)

(<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/722/05/>)

Whom Does it Benefit?

Based on the theories of Karl Marx (and so influenced by philosopher Georg Wilhelm Friedrich Hegel), this school concerns itself with class differences, economic and otherwise, as well as the implications and complications of the capitalist system: "Marxism attempts to reveal the ways in which our socioeconomic system is the ultimate source of our experience" (Tyson 277).

Theorists working in the Marxist tradition, therefore, are interested in answering the overarching question, whom does it [the work, the effort, the policy, the road, etc.] benefit? The elite? The middle class? And Marxists critics are also interested in how the lower or working classes are oppressed - in everyday life and in literature.

The Material Dialectic

The Marxist school follows a process of thinking called the material dialectic. This belief system maintains that "...what drives historical change are the material realities of the economic base of society, rather than the ideological superstructure of politics, law, philosophy, religion, and art that is built upon that economic base" (Richter 1088).

Marx asserts that "...stable societies develop sites of resistance: contradictions build into the social system that ultimately lead to social revolution and the development of a new society upon the old" (1088). This cycle of contradiction, tension, and revolution must continue: there will always be conflict between the upper, middle, and lower (working) classes and this conflict will be reflected in literature and other forms of expression - art, music, movies, etc.

The Revolution

The continuing conflict between the classes will lead to upheaval and revolution by oppressed peoples and form the groundwork for a new order of society and economics where capitalism is abolished. According to Marx, the revolution will be led by the working class (others think peasants will lead the uprising) under the guidance of intellectuals. Once the elite and middle class are overthrown, the intellectuals will compose an equal society where everyone owns everything (socialism - not to be confused with Soviet or Maoist Communism).

Though a staggering number of different nuances exist within this school of literary theory, Marxist critics generally work in areas covered by the following questions.

Typical questions:

- Whom does it benefit if the work or effort is accepted/successful/believed, etc.?
- What is the social class of the author?
- Which class does the work claim to represent?
- What values does it reinforce?
- What values does it subvert?
- What conflict can be seen between the values the work champions and those it portrays?
- What social classes do the characters represent?
- How do characters from different classes interact or conflict?

Here is a list of scholars we encourage you to explore to further your understanding of this theory:

- Karl Marx - (with Friedrich Engels) *The Communist Manifesto*, 1848; *Das Kapital*, 1867; "Consciousness Derived from Material Conditions" from *The German Ideology*, 1932; "On Greek Art in Its Time" from *A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy*, 1859
- Leon Trotsky - "Literature and Revolution," 1923
- Georg Lukács - "The Ideology of Modernism," 1956
- Walter Benjamin - "The Work of Art in the Age of Mechanical Reproduction," 1936
- Theodor W. Adorno
- Louis Althusser - *Reading Capital*, 1965
- Terry Eagleton - *Marxism and Literary Criticism, Criticism and Ideology*, 1976
- Frederic Jameson - *Marxism and Form, The Political Unconscious*, 1971
- Jürgen Habermas - *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, 1990

Reader-Response Criticism (1960s-present)

(<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/722/06/>)

What Do You Think?

At its most basic level, reader response criticism considers readers' reactions to literature as vital to interpreting the meaning of the text. However, reader-response criticism can take a number of different approaches. A critic deploying reader-response theory can use a psychoanalytic lens, a feminist lens, or even a structuralist lens. What these different lenses have in common when using a reader response approach is they maintain "...that what a text is cannot be separated from what it does" (Tyson 154).

Tyson explains that "...reader-response theorists share two beliefs: 1) that the role of the reader cannot be omitted from our understanding of literature and 2) that readers do not passively consume the meaning presented to them by an objective literary text; rather they actively make the meaning they find in literature" (154). In this way, reader-response theory shares common ground with some of the deconstructionists discussed in the Post-structural area when they talk about "the death of the author," or her displacement as the (author)itarian figure in the text.

Typical questions:

- How does the interaction of text and reader create meaning?
- What does a phrase-by-phrase analysis of a short literary text, or a key portion of a longer text, tell us about the reading experience prestructured by (built into) that text?
- Do the sounds/shapes of the words as they appear on the page or how they are spoken by the reader enhance or change the meaning of the word/work?
- How might we interpret a literary text to show that the reader's response is, or is analogous to, the topic of the story?
- What does the body of criticism published about a literary text suggest about the critics who interpreted that text and/or about the reading experience produced by that text? (Tyson 191)

Here is a list of scholars we encourage you to explore to further your understanding of this theory:

- Peter Rabinowitz - *Before Reading*, 1987
- Stanley Fish - *Is There a Text in This Class? - The Authority of Interpretive Communities*, 1980
- Elizabeth Freund - *The Return of the Reader: Reader-Response Criticism*, 1987
- David Bleich
- Norman Holland - *The Dynamics of Literary Response*, 1968
- Louise Rosenblatt
- Wolfgang Iser - *The Implied Reader: Patterns of Communication in Prose Fiction from Bunyan to Beckett*, 1974
- Hans Robert Jauss

Post-Structuralism, Deconstruction, Postmodernism (1966-present)

(<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/722/08/>)

Note: Structuralism, semiotics, and post-structuralism are some of the most complex literary theories to understand.

The Center Cannot Hold

This approach concerns itself with the ways and places where systems, frameworks, definitions, and certainties break down. Post-structuralism maintains that frameworks and systems, for example the structuralist systems explained in the Structuralist area, are merely fictitious constructs and that they cannot be trusted to develop meaning or to give order. In fact, the very act of seeking order or a singular Truth is absurd because there exists no unified truth.

Post-structuralism holds that there are many truths, that frameworks must bleed, and that structures must become unstable or decentered. Moreover, post-structuralism is also concerned with the power structures or hegemonies and power and how these elements contribute to and/or maintain structures to enforce hierarchy. Therefore, post-structural theory carries implications far beyond literary criticism.

What Does Your Meaning Mean?

By questioning the process of developing meaning, post-structural theory strikes at the very heart of philosophy and reality and throws knowledge making into what Jacques Derrida called "freeplay": "The concept of centered structure...is contradictorily coherent...the concept of centered structure is in fact the concept of a freeplay which is constituted upon a fundamental immobility and a reassuring certitude, which is itself beyond the reach of the freeplay" (qtd. in Richter, 878-879).

Derrida first posited these ideas in 1966 at Johns Hopkins University, when he delivered "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences": "Perhaps something has occurred in the history of the concept of structure that could be called an 'event,' if this loaded word did not entail a meaning which it is precisely the function of structural-or structuralist-thought to reduce or to suspect. But let me use the term "event" anyway, employing it with caution and as if in quotation marks. In this sense, this event will have the exterior form of a rupture and a redoubling" (qtd. in Richter, 878). In his presentation, Derrida challenged structuralism's most basic ideas.

Can Language Do That?

Post-structural theory can be tied to a move against Modernist/Enlightenment ideas (philosophers: Immanuel Kant, René Descartes, John Locke, etc.) and Western religious beliefs (neo-Platonism, Catholicism, etc.). An early pioneer of this resistance was philosopher Friedrich Nietzsche. In his essay, "On Truth and Lies in an Extra-moral Sense" (1873), Nietzsche rejects even the very basis of our knowledge making, language, as a reliable system of communication: "The various languages, juxtaposed, show that words are never concerned with truth, never with adequate expression..." (248).

Below is an example, adapted from the Tyson text, of some language freeplay and a simple form of deconstruction:

Time (noun) flies (verb) like an arrow (adverb clause) = Time passes quickly.

Time (verb) flies (object) like an arrow (adverb clause) = Get out your stopwatch and time the speed of flies as you would time an arrow's flight.

Time flies (noun) like (verb) an arrow (object) = Time flies are fond of arrows (or at least of one particular arrow).

So, post-structuralists assert that if we cannot trust language systems to convey truth, the very bases of truth are unreliable and the universe - or at least the universe we have constructed - becomes unraveled or de-centered. Nietzsche uses language slip as a base to move into the slip and shift of truth as a whole: "What is truth? ...truths are an illusion about which it has been forgotten that they are illusions..." (On Truth and Lies 250).

This returns us to the discussion in the Structuralist area regarding signs, signifiers, and signified. Essentially, post-structuralism holds that we cannot trust the sign = signifier + signified formula, that there is a breakdown of certainty between sign/signifier, which leaves language systems hopelessly inadequate for relaying meaning so that we are (returning to Derrida) in eternal freeplay or instability.

What's Left?

Important to note, however, is that deconstruction is not just about tearing down - this is a common misconception. Derrida, in "Signature Event Context," addressed this limited view of post-structural theory: "Deconstruction cannot limit or proceed immediately to a neutralization: it must...practice an overturning of the classical opposition and a general displacement of the system. It is only on this condition that deconstruction will provide itself the means with which to intervene in the field of oppositions that it criticizes, which is also a field of nondiscursive forces" (328). Derrida reminds us that through deconstruction we can identify the in-betweens and the marginalized to begin interstitial knowledge building.

Modernism vs Postmodernism

With the resistance to traditional forms of knowledge making (science, religion, language), inquiry, communication, and building meaning take on different forms to the post-structuralist. We can look at this difference as a split between Modernism and Postmodernism. The table below, excerpted from theorist Ihab Hassan's *The Dismemberment of Orpheus* (1998), offers us a way to make sense of some differences between modernism, dominated by Enlightenment ideas, and postmodernism, a space of freeplay and discourse.

Keep in mind that even the author, Hassan, "...is quick to point out how the dichotomies are themselves insecure, equivocal" (Harvey 42). Though post-structuralism is uncomfortable with binaries, Hassan provides us with some interesting contrasts to consider:

| Modernism vs Postmodernism | |
|-----------------------------------|--|
| <i>Modernism</i> | <i>Postmodernism</i> |
| romanticism/symbolism | paraphysics/Dadaism |
| form (conjunctive, closed) | antiform (disjunctive, open) |
| purpose | play |
| design | chance |
| hierarchy | anarchy |
| mastery/logos | exhaustion/silence |
| art object/finished work/logos | process/performance/antithesis |
| centering | absence |
| genre/boundary | text/intertext |
| semantics | rhetoric |
| metaphor | metonymy |
| root/depth | rhizome/surface |
| signified | signifier |
| narrative/ <i>grande histoire</i> | anti-narrative/ <i>petite histoire</i> |
| genital/phallic | polymorphous/androgynous |
| paranoia | schizophrenia |
| origin/cause | difference-difference/trace |
| God the Father | The Holy Ghost |
| determinacy | interdeterminacy |
| transcendence | immanence |

Post-Structuralism and Literature

If we are questioning/resisting the methods we use to build knowledge (science, religion, language), then traditional literary notions are also thrown into freeplay. These include the narrative and the author:

Narrative

The narrative is a fiction that locks readers into interpreting text in a single, chronological manner that does not reflect our experiences. Postmodern texts may not adhere to traditional notions of narrative. For example, in his seminal work, *Naked Lunch*, William S. Burroughs explodes the traditional narrative structure and critiques almost everything Modern: modern government, modern medicine, modern law-enforcement. Other examples of authors playing with narrative include John Fowles; in the final sections of *The French Lieutenant's Woman*, Fowles steps outside his narrative to speak with the reader directly.

Moreover, grand narratives are resisted. For example, the belief that through science the human race will improve is questioned. In addition, metaphysics is questioned. Instead, postmodern knowledge building is local, situated, slippery, and self-critical (i.e. it questions itself and its role). Because post-structural work is self-critical, post-structural critics even look for ways texts contradict themselves (see typical questions below).

Author

The author is displaced as absolute author(ity), and the reader plays a role in interpreting the text and developing meaning (as best as possible) from the text. In "The Death of the Author," Roland Barthes argues that the idea of singular authorship is a recent phenomenon. Barthes explains that the death of the author shatters Modernist notions of authority and knowledge building (145).

Lastly, he states that once the author is dead and the Modernist idea of singular narrative (and thus authority) is overturned, texts become plural, and the interpretation of texts becomes a collaborative process between author and audience: "...a text is made of multiple writings, drawn from many cultures and entering into mutual relations of dialogue...but there is one place where this multiplicity is focused and that place is the reader" (148). Barthes ends his essay by empowering the reader: "Classical criticism has never paid any attention to the reader...the writer is the only person in literature...it is necessary to overthrow the myth: the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author" (148).

Typical questions:

- How is language thrown into freeplay or questioned in the work? For example, note how Anthony Burgess plays with language (Russian vs English) in *A Clockwork Orange*, or how Burroughs plays with names and language in *Naked Lunch*.
- How does the work undermine or contradict generally accepted truths?
- How does the author (or a character) omit, change, or reconstruct memory and identity?
- How does a work fulfill or move outside the established conventions of its genre?
- How does the work deal with the separation (or lack thereof) between writer, work, and reader?
- What ideology does the text seem to promote?
- What is left out of the text that if included might undermine the goal of the work?
- If we changed the point of view of the text - say from one character to another, or multiple characters - how would the story change? Whose story is not told in the text? Who is left out and why might the author have omitted this character's tale?

Here is a list of scholars we encourage you to explore to further your understanding of this theory:

Theorists

- Immanuel Kant - "An Answer to the Question: What is Enlightenment?", 1784 (as a baseline to understand what Nietzsche was resisting)
- Friedrich Nietzsche - "On Truth and Lies in an Extra-moral Sense," 1873; *The Gay Science*, 1882; *Thus Spoke Zarathustra, A Book for All and None*, 1885
- Jacques Derrida - "Structure Sign and Play in the Discourse of Human Sciences," 1966; *Of Grammatology*, 1967; "Signature Even Context," 1972
- Roland Barthes - "The Death of the Author," 1967
- Deleuze and Guattari - "Rhizome," 1976
- Jean-François Lyotard - *The Postmodern Condition*, 1979
- Michele Foucault - *The Foucault Reader*, 1984
- Stephen Toulmin - *Cosmopolis*, 1990
- Martin Heidegger - *Basic Writings*, 1993
- Paul Cilliers - *Complexity and Postmodernity*, 1998
- Ihab Hassan - *The Dismemberment of Orpheus*, 1998; *From Postmodernism to Postmodernity: The Local/Global Context*, 2001

Postmodern Literature

- William S. Burroughs - *Naked Lunch*, 1959
- Angela Carter - *Burning Your Boats*, stories from 1962-1993 (first published as a collection in 1995)
- Kathy Acker - *Blood and Guts in High School*, 1978
- Paul Auster - *City of Glass* (volume one of the New York City Trilogy), 1985 (as a graphic novel published by Neon Lit, a division of Avon Books, 1994)
- Lynne Tillman - *Haunted Houses*, 1987
- David Wojnarowicz - *The Waterfront Journals*, 1996

New Historicism, Cultural Studies (1980s-present)

(<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/722/09/>)

It's All Relative...

This school, influenced by structuralist and post-structuralist theories, seeks to reconnect a work with the time period in which it was produced and identify it with the cultural and political movements of the time (Michel Foucault's concept of *épistème*). New Historicism assumes that every work is a product of the historic moment that created it. Specifically, New Criticism is "...a practice that has developed out of contemporary theory, particularly the structuralist realization that all human systems are symbolic and subject to the rules of language, and the deconstructive realization that there is no way of positioning oneself as an observer outside the closed circle of textuality" (Richter 1205).

A helpful way of considering New Historical theory, Tyson explains, is to think about the retelling of history itself: "...questions asked by traditional historians and by new historicists are quite different...traditional historians ask, 'What happened?' and 'What does the event tell us about history?' In contrast, new historicists ask, 'How has the event been interpreted?' and 'What do the interpretations tell us about the interpreters?'" (278). So New Historicism resists the notion that "...history is a series of events that have a linear, causal relationship: event A caused event B; event B caused event C; and so on" (Tyson 278).

New historicists do not believe that we can look at history objectively, but rather that we interpret events as products of our time and culture and that "...we don't have clear access to any but the most basic facts of history...our understanding of what such facts mean...is...strictly a matter of interpretation, not fact" (279). Moreover, New Historicism holds that we are hopelessly subjective interpreters of what we observe.

Typical questions:

- What language/characters/events present in the work reflect the current events of the author's day?
- Are there words in the text that have changed their meaning from the time of the writing?
- How are such events interpreted and presented?
- How are events' interpretation and presentation a product of the culture of the author?
- Does the work's presentation support or condemn the event?
- Can it be seen to do both?
- How does this portrayal criticize the leading political figures or movements of the day?
- How does the literary text function as part of a continuum with other historical/cultural texts from the same period...?
- How can we use a literary work to "map" the interplay of both traditional and subversive discourses circulating in the culture in which that work emerged and/or the cultures in which the work has been interpreted?
- How does the work consider traditionally marginalized populations?

Here is a list of scholars we encourage you to explore to further your understanding of this theory:

- Michel Foucault - *The Order of Things: An Archeology of the Human Sciences*, 1970; *Language, Counter-memory, Practice*, 1977
- Clifford Geertz - *The Interpretation of Cultures*, 1973; "Deep Play: Notes on the Balinese Cockfight," 1992
- Hayden White - *Metahistory*, 1974; "The Politics of Historical Interpretation: Discipline and De-Sublimation," 1982
- Stephen Greenblatt - *Renaissance Self-Fashioning: From More to Shakespeare*, 1980
- Pierre Bourdieu - *Outline of a Theory of Practice*, 1977; *Homo Academicus*, 1984; *The Field of Cultural Production*, 1993

Post-Colonial Criticism (1990s-present)

(<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/722/10/>)

History is Written by the Victors

Post-colonial criticism is similar to cultural studies, but it assumes a unique perspective on literature and politics that warrants a separate discussion. Specifically, post-colonial critics are concerned with literature produced by colonial powers and works produced by those who were/are colonized. Post-colonial theory looks at issues of power, economics, politics, religion, and culture and how these elements work in relation to colonial hegemony (western colonizers controlling the colonized).

Therefore, a post-colonial critic might be interested in works such as Daniel Defoe's *Robinson Crusoe* where colonial "...ideology [is] manifest in Crusoe's colonialist attitude toward the land upon which he's shipwrecked and toward the black man he 'colonizes' and names Friday" (Tyson 377). In addition, post-colonial theory might point out that "...despite *Heart of Darkness's* (Joseph Conrad) obvious anti-colonial agenda, the novel points to the colonized population as the standard of savagery to which Europeans are contrasted" (Tyson 375). Post-colonial criticism also takes the form of literature composed by authors that critique Euro-centric hegemony.

A Unique Perspective on Empire

Seminal post-colonial writers such as Nigerian author Chinua Achebe and Kenyan author Ngugi wa Thiong'o have written a number of stories recounting the suffering of colonized people. For example, in *Things Fall Apart*, Achebe details the strife and devastation that occurred when British colonists began moving inland from the Nigerian coast.

Rather than glorifying the exploratory nature of European colonists as they expanded their sphere of influence, Achebe narrates the destructive events that led to the death and enslavement of thousands of Nigerians when the British imposed their Imperial government. In turn, Achebe points out the negative effects (and shifting ideas of identity and culture) caused by the imposition of western religion and economics on Nigerians during colonial rule.

Power, Hegemony, and Literature

Post-colonial criticism also questions the role of the western literary canon and western history as dominant forms of knowledge making. The terms "first-world," "second world," "third world" and "fourth world" nations are critiqued by post-colonial critics because they reinforce the dominant positions of western cultures populating first world status. This critique includes the literary canon and histories written from the perspective of first-world cultures. So, for example, a post-colonial critic might question the works included in "the canon" because the canon does not contain works by authors outside western culture.

Moreover, the authors included in the canon often reinforce colonial hegemonic ideology, such as Joseph Conrad's *Heart of Darkness*. Western critics might consider *Heart of Darkness* an effective critique of colonial behavior. But post-colonial theorists and authors might disagree with this perspective: "...as Chinua Achebe observes, the novel's condemnation of European is based on a definition of Africans as savages: beneath their veneer of civilization, the Europeans are, the novel tells us, as barbaric as the Africans. And indeed, Achebe notes, the novel portrays Africans as a pre-historic mass of frenzied, howling, incomprehensible barbarians..." (Tyson 374-375).

Typical questions:

- How does the literary text, explicitly or allegorically, represent various aspects of colonial oppression?
- What does the text reveal about the problematics of post-colonial identity, including the relationship between personal and cultural identity and such issues as double consciousness and hybridity?
- What person(s) or groups does the work identify as "other" or stranger? How are such persons/groups described and treated?
- What does the text reveal about the politics and/or psychology of anti-colonialist resistance?
- What does the text reveal about the operations of cultural difference - the ways in which race, religion, class, gender, sexual orientation, cultural beliefs, and customs combine to form individual identity - in shaping our perceptions of ourselves, others, and the world in which we live?
- How does the text respond to or comment upon the characters, themes, or assumptions of a canonized (colonialist) work?
- Are there meaningful similarities among the literatures of different post-colonial populations?
- How does a literary text in the Western canon reinforce or undermine colonialist ideology through its representation of colonialization and/or its inappropriate silence about colonized peoples? (Tyson 378-379)

Here is a list of scholars we encourage you to explore to further your understanding of this theory:

Criticism

- Edward Said - *Orientalism*, 1978; *Culture and Imperialism*, 1994
- Kamau Braithwaite - *The History of the Voice*, 1979
- Gayatri Spivak - *In Other Worlds: Essays in Cultural Politics*, 1987
- Dominick LaCapra - *The Bounds of Race: Perspectives on Hegemony and Resistance*, 1991
- Homi Bhabha - *The Location of Culture*, 1994

Literature and non-fiction

- Chinua Achebe - *Things Fall Apart*, 1958
- Ngugi wa Thiong'o - *The River Between*, 1965
- Sembene Ousman - *God's Bits of Wood*, 1962
- Ruth Praver Jhabvala - *Heat and Dust*, 1975
- Buchi Emecheta - *The Joys of Motherhood*, 1979
- Keri Hulme - *The Bone People*, 1983
- Robertson Davies - *What's Bred in the Bone*, 1985
- Kazuo Ishiguro - *The Remains of the Day*, 1988
- Bharati Mukherjee - *Jasmine*, 1989
- Jill Ker Conway - *The Road from Coorain*, 1989
- Helena Norberg-Hodge - *Ancient Futures: Learning from Ladakh*, 1991
- Michael Ondaatje - *The English Patient*, 1992
- Gita Mehta - *A River Sutra*, 1993
- Arundhati Roy - *The God of Small Things*, 1997
- Patrick Chamoiseau - *Texaco*, 1997

Feminist Criticism (1960s-present)

(<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/722/11/>)

S/he

Feminist criticism is concerned with "...the ways in which literature (and other cultural productions) reinforce or undermine the economic, political, social, and psychological oppression of women" (Tyson). This school of theory looks at how aspects of our culture are inherently patriarchal (male dominated) and "...this critique strives to expose the explicit and implicit misogyny in male writing about women" (Richter 1346). This misogyny, Tyson reminds us, can extend into diverse areas of our culture: "Perhaps the most chilling example...is found in the world of modern medicine, where drugs prescribed for both sexes often have been tested on male subjects only" (83).

Feminist criticism is also concerned with less obvious forms of marginalization such as the exclusion of women writers from the traditional literary canon: "...unless the critical or historical point of view is feminist, there is a tendency to under-represent the contribution of women writers" (Tyson 82-83).

Common Space in Feminist Theories

Though a number of different approaches exist in feminist criticism, there exist some areas of commonality. This list is excerpted from Tyson:

1. Women are oppressed by patriarchy economically, politically, socially, and psychologically; patriarchal ideology is the primary means by which they are kept so
2. In every domain where patriarchy reigns, woman is other: she is marginalized, defined only by her difference from male norms and values
3. All of western (Anglo-European) civilization is deeply rooted in patriarchal ideology, for example, in the biblical portrayal of Eve as the origin of sin and death in the world
4. While biology determines our sex (male or female), culture determines our gender (masculine or feminine)
5. All feminist activity, including feminist theory and literary criticism, has as its ultimate goal to change the world by prompting gender equality
6. Gender issues play a part in every aspect of human production and experience, including the production and experience of literature, whether we are consciously aware of these issues or not (91).

Feminist criticism has, in many ways, followed what some theorists call the three waves of feminism:

1. **First Wave Feminism** - late 1700s-early 1900's: writers like Mary Wollstonecraft (*A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, 1792) highlight the inequalities between the sexes. Activists like Susan B. Anthony and Victoria Woodhull contribute to the women's suffrage movement, which leads to National Universal Suffrage in 1920 with the passing of the Nineteenth Amendment
2. **Second Wave Feminism** - early 1960s-late 1970s: building on more equal working conditions necessary in America during World War II, movements such as the National Organization for Women (NOW), formed in 1966, cohere feminist political activism. Writers like Simone de Beauvoir (*Le deuxième sexe*, 1972) and Elaine Showalter established the groundwork for the dissemination of feminist theories dovetailed with the American Civil Rights movement
3. **Third Wave Feminism** - early 1990s-present: resisting the perceived essentialist (over generalized, over simplified) ideologies and a white, heterosexual, middle class focus of second wave feminism, third wave feminism borrows from post-structural and contemporary gender and race theories (see below) to expand on marginalized populations' experiences. Writers like Alice Walker work to "...reconcile it [feminism] with the concerns of the black community...[and] the survival and wholeness of her people, men and women both, and for the promotion of dialog and community as well as for the valorization of women and of all the varieties of work women perform" (Tyson 97).

Typical questions:

- How is the relationship between men and women portrayed?
- What are the power relationships between men and women (or characters assuming male/female roles)?
- How are male and female roles defined?
- What constitutes masculinity and femininity?
- How do characters embody these traits?
- Do characters take on traits from opposite genders? How so? How does this change others' reactions to them?
- What does the work reveal about the operations (economically, politically, socially, or psychologically) of patriarchy?
- What does the work imply about the possibilities of sisterhood as a mode of resisting patriarchy?
- What does the work say about women's creativity?
- What does the history of the work's reception by the public and by the critics tell us about the operation of patriarchy?
- What role the work play in terms of women's literary history and literary tradition? (Tyson)

Here is a list of scholars we encourage you to explore to further your understanding of this theory:

- Mary Wollstonecraft - *A Vindication of the Rights of Women*, 1792
- Simone de Beauvoir - *Le deuxième sexe*, 1972
- Julia Kristeva - *About Chinese Women*, 1977
- Elaine Showalter - *A Literature of Their Own*, 1977; "Toward a Feminist Poetics," 1979
- Deborah E. McDowell - "New Directions for Black Feminist Criticism," 1980
- Alice Walker - *In Search of Our Mother's Gardens*, 1983
- Lillian S. Robinson - "Treasure out Text: Feminist Challenges to the Literary Canon," 1983
- Camille Paglia - *Sexual Personae: The Androgyne in Literature and Art*, 1990

Gender Studies and Queer Theory (1970s-present)

<http://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/resource/722/12/>

Gender(s), Power, and Marginalization

Gender studies and queer theory explore issues of sexuality, power, and marginalized populations (woman as other) in literature and culture. Much of the work in gender studies and queer theory, while influenced by feminist criticism, emerges from post-structural interest in fragmented, de-centered knowledge building (Nietzsche, Derrida, Foucault), language (the breakdown of sign-signifier), and psychoanalysis (Lacan).

A primary concern in gender studies and queer theory is the manner in which gender and sexuality is discussed: "Effective as this work [feminism] was in changing what teachers taught and what the students read, there was a sense on the part of some feminist critics that...it was still the old game that was being played, when what it needed was a new game entirely. The argument posed was that in order to counter patriarchy, it was necessary not merely to think about new texts, but to think about them in radically new ways" (Richter 1432).

Therefore, a critic working in gender studies and queer theory might even be uncomfortable with the binary established by many feminist scholars between masculine and feminine: "Cixous (following Derrida in *Of Grammatology*) sets up a series of binary oppositions (active/passive, sun/moon...father/mother, logos/pathos). Each pair can be analyzed as a hierarchy in which the former term represents the positive and masculine and the latter the negative and feminine principle" (Richter 1433-1434).

In-Betweens

Many critics working with gender and queer theory are interested in the breakdown of binaries such as male and female, the in-betweens (also following Derrida's interstitial knowledge building). For example, gender studies and queer theory maintains that cultural definitions of sexuality and what it means to be male and female are in flux: "...the distinction between "masculine" and "feminine" activities and behavior is constantly changing, so that women who wear baseball caps and fatigues...can be perceived as more piquantly sexy by some heterosexual men than those women who wear white frocks and gloves and look down demurely" (Richter 1437).

Moreover, Richter reminds us that as we learn more about our genetic structure, the biology of male/female becomes increasingly complex and murky: "even the physical dualism of sexual genetic structures and bodily parts breaks down when one considers those instances - XXY syndromes, natural sexual bimorphisms, as well as surgical transsexuals - that defy attempts at binary classification" (1437).

Typical questions:

- What elements of the text can be perceived as being masculine (active, powerful) and feminine (passive, marginalized) and how do the characters support these traditional roles?
- What sort of support (if any) is given to elements or characters who question the masculine/feminine binary? What happens to those elements/characters?
- What elements in the text exist in the middle, between the perceived masculine/feminine binary? In other words, what elements exhibit traits of both (bisexual)?
- How does the author present the text? Is it a traditional narrative? Is it secure and forceful? Or is it more hesitant or even collaborative?
- What are the politics (ideological agendas) of specific gay, lesbian, or queer works, and how are those politics revealed in...the work's thematic content or portrayals of its characters?
- What are the poetics (literary devices and strategies) of a specific lesbian, gay, or queer works?
- What does the work contribute to our knowledge of queer, gay, or lesbian experience and history, including literary history?
- How is queer, gay, or lesbian experience coded in texts that are by writers who are apparently homosexual?
- What does the work reveal about the operations (socially, politically, psychologically) homophobic?
- How does the literary text illustrate the problematics of sexuality and sexual "identity," that is the ways in which human sexuality does not fall neatly into the separate categories defined by the words homosexual and heterosexual?

Here is a list of scholars we encourage you to explore to further your understanding of this theory:

- Luce Irigaray - *Speculum of the Other Woman*, 1974
- Hélène Cixous - "The Laugh of the Medusa," 1976
- Laura Mulvey - "Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," 1975; "Afterthoughts on Visual Pleasure and Narrative Cinema," 1981
- Michele Foucault - *The History of Sexuality*, Volume I, 1980
- Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick - *Epistemology of the Closet*, 1994
- Lee Edelman - "Homographies," 1989
- Michael Warner
- Judith Butler - "Imitation and Gender Insubordination," 1991

Writing Guideline #3:

READING STRATEGIES

(3) READING STRATEGIES: 5 Methods

Reading Strategy I: The PRO Reading Process

The PRO process was developed by Roberta Alexander and Jan Lombardi in their textbook, *A Community of Readers*. This reading process is divided into four major steps:

P= PREPARE TO READ

Preview: look at titles and subtitles, objectives, introduction, final review or summary, headings, subheadings, visual aids, italicized and boldfaced words, and review questions at the end of the chapter.

Purpose: Determine your purpose as a reader to decide how much time you will need and what reading strategies you will use.

Previous knowledge: Schema is our prior knowledge and experiences. Activating your schema is when you consider what you already know on a topic. Understanding a text is easier when we can draw on what we already know. Expanding our schema and connecting new information strengthens a person's reading comprehension.

Predict: Ask questions about what you expect or would like to learn.

R= READ ACTIVELY

Become involved: Search for the meaning of the author's words. Create visual images. Determine whether the writer has fulfilled your predictions.

Be interested and alert: Be open-minded, look for answers to your questions, and choose a place and time when you can focus best.

Highlight and take notes as you read: Highlight important passages and quotes. Write notes in the margins reflecting your ideas, questions, and the key points of the reading.

Monitor your comprehension: Periodically, ask yourself "What have I just read?" and "What are the most important points?"

R= REFLECT

Discover new ideas

Connect new knowledge to previous knowledge

Use critical thinking skills to evaluate your new knowledge

O= ORGANIZE: SURE

S= Select the facts you need to know

U= Use the material you've selected

R= Recite the information (self-test)

E= Examine yourself periodically (review)

Reading Strategy II: Annotating Your Text

Annotating is a method to mark up an assigned reading selection, such as highlighting main ideas and writing your comments in the margins. Reading with a pencil in hand will help you to maintain a high level of concentration for you'll be actively seeking out the main ideas, and the process of writing will enable you to refine your responses to the selection.

Annotating is extremely useful for studying for tests as well as writing essays. Number one, as opposed to rereading the entire selection, you can simply take note of the important ideas that you've already highlighted. Your marked up book will come in handy especially when taking timed open-book exams. Number two, as opposed to generating essay ideas from scratch, you'll already have your questions and responses in the margins of the text. Clearly marked up reading selections will serve as valuable reference tools and memory aids for years to come.

SUGGESTIONS FOR ANNOTATING:

- 1) **Read first and then highlight selectively.** Too much highlighting defeats the purpose of creating an efficient review tool. Make conscious decisions about what to highlight, and limit the amount. Highlight only the ideas that most accurately state the main point of that section.
- 2) **Number related sub-points.** For example, if the essay is making an argument, number each of the main supporting points. Or if the selection is describing a process, number each of the major steps.
- 3) **Circle specialized vocabulary.** Part of becoming a member of an academic community is learning its language. Much like learning a foreign language, you'll want to take special note of new vocabulary that will be critical to your participation in this new community. Write brief definitions in the margins if necessary.
- 4) **Code in the margins.** Once you encounter a main idea, write a one-to-three word description that captures the essence of the idea in the margin. Coding helps you clearly see the main and most important points of a text. Also, when reviewing a text, reading just the coded words in the margins will create a clear summary of all the main ideas and concepts of a text.
- 5) **In the margins, write your own ideas, drawing from your own knowledge and experience, and make connections with your other classes.** For example, you may want to write responses such as "Good point!" "I see your point, but I don't agree because...", "I can think of more supporting evidence such as...", "You're jumping to conclusions..." and "This idea connects with what I'm studying in another class in that..."
- 6) **Write questions as you read.** Be a critical thinker while you read. What questions do the main ideas raise for you? What lingering questions do you have despite having read the selection? How does the information relate to your life or to issues that you are exploring in other realms of your life, such as your other classes?

PRACTICE ANNOTATING YOUR TEXT:

Read the text below carefully. As you read, do the following:

- (1) In the left margin write your own **QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS**, adding your own reactions as you read, your own observations, and questions you have.
- (2) Throughout the text, **UNDERLINE OR HIGHLIGHT** the main points and good quotes.
- (3) Throughout the text, **CIRCLE** unknown vocabulary and after you read, look up the words and write in the definitions.
- (4) In the right margin **CODE**, meaning write a one-to-three word description that captures the essence of each paragraph.

Reading selection: “Learning to Read” excerpt from *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*

MALCOLM X

Born Malcolm Little on May 19, 1925, Malcolm X was one of the most articulate and powerful leaders of black America during the 1960s. A street hustler convicted of robbery in 1946, he spent seven years in prison, where he educated himself and became a disciple of Elijah Muhammad, founder of the Nation of Islam. In the days of the civil rights movement, Malcolm X emerged as the leading spokesman for black separatism, a philosophy that urged black Americans to cut political, social, and economic ties with the white community. After a pilgrimage to Mecca, the capital of the Muslim world, in 1964, he became an orthodox Muslim, adopted the Muslim name El Hajj Malik El-Shabazz, and distanced himself from the teachings of the black Muslims. He was assassinated in 1965. In the following excerpt from his autobiography (1965), coauthored with Alex Haley and published the year of his death, Malcolm X describes his self-education.

It was because of my letters that I happened to stumble upon starting to acquire some kind of a homemade education.

I became increasingly frustrated at not being able to express what I wanted to convey in letters that I wrote, especially those to Mr. Elijah Muhammad. In the street, I had been the most articulate hustler out there. I had commanded attention when I said something. But now, trying to write simple English, I not only wasn't articulate, I wasn't even functional. How would I sound writing in slang, the way I would say it, something such as, “Look, daddy, let me pull your coat about a cat, Elijah Muhammad—”

Many who today hear me somewhere in person, or on television, or those who read something I've said, will think I went to school far beyond the eighth grade. This impression is due entirely to my prison studies.

It had really begun back in the Charlestown Prison, when Bimbi first made me feel envy of his stock of knowledge. Bimbi had always taken charge of any conversations he was in, and I had tried to emulate him. But every book I picked up had few sentences which didn't contain anywhere from one to nearly all of the words that might as well have been in Chinese. When

I just skipped those words, of course, I really ended up with little idea of what the book said. So I had come to the Norfolk Prison Colony still going through only book-reading motions. Pretty soon, I would have quit even these motions, unless I had received the motivation that I did.

I saw that the best thing I could do was get hold of a dictionary—to study, to learn some words. I was lucky enough to reason also that I should try to improve my penmanship. It was sad. I couldn't even write in a straight line. It was both ideas together that moved me to request a dictionary along with some tablets and pencils from the Norfolk Prison Colony school.

I spent two days just riffling uncertainly through the dictionary's pages. I'd never realized so many words existed! I didn't know *which* words I needed to learn. Finally, just to start some kind of action, I began copying.

In my slow, painstaking, ragged handwriting, I copied into my tablet everything printed on that first page, down to the punctuation marks.

I believe it took me a day. Then, aloud, I read back, to myself, everything I'd written on the tablet. Over and over, aloud, to myself, I read my own handwriting.

I woke up the next morning, thinking about those words—immensely proud to realize that not only had I written so much at one time, but I'd written words that I never knew were in the world. Moreover, with a little effort, I also could remember what many of these words meant. I reviewed the words whose meanings I didn't remember. Funny thing, from the dictionary first page right now, that “aardvark” springs to my mind. The dictionary had a picture of it, a long-tailed, long-eared, burrowing African mammal, which lives off termites caught by sticking out its tongue as an anteater does for ants.

I was so fascinated that I went on—I copied the dictionary's next page. And the same experience came when I studied that. With every succeeding page, I also learned of people and places and events from history. Actually the dictionary is like a miniature encyclopedia. Finally the dictionary's A section had filled a whole tablet—and I went on into the B's. That was the way I started copying what eventually became the entire dictionary. It went a lot faster after so much practice helped me to pick up handwriting speed. Between what I wrote in my tablet, and writing letters, during the rest of my time in prison I would guess I wrote a million words.

I suppose it was inevitable that as my word-base broadened, I could for the first time pick up a book and read and now begin to understand what the book was saying. Anyone who has read a great deal can imagine the new world that opened. Let me tell you something: from then until I left that prison, in every free moment I had, if I was not reading in the library, I was reading on my bunk. You couldn't have gotten me out of books with a wedge. Between Mr. Muhammad's teachings, my correspondence, my visitors—usually Ella and Reginald—and my reading of books, months passed without my even thinking about being imprisoned. In fact, up to then, I never had been so truly free in my life.

The Norfolk Prison Colony's library was in the school building. A variety of classes was taught there by instructors who came from such places as Harvard and Boston universities. The weekly debates between inmate teams were also held in the school building. You would be astonished to know how worked up convict debaters and audiences would get over subjects like “Should Babies Be Fed Milk?”

Available on the prison library's shelves were books on just about every general subject. Much of the big private collection that Parkhurst had willed to the prison was still in crates and boxes in the back of the library—thousands of old books. Some of them looked ancient: covers faded; old-time parchment-looking binding. Parkhurst, I've mentioned, seemed to have been principally interested in history and religion. He had the money and the special interest to have a lot of books that you wouldn't have in general circulation. Any college library would have been lucky to get that collection.

As you can imagine, especially in a prison where there was heavy emphasis on rehabilitation, an inmate was smiled upon if he demonstrated an unusually intense interest in books. There was a sizable number of well-read inmates, especially the popular debaters. Some were said by many to be practically walking encyclopedias.

They were almost celebrities. No university would ask any student to devour literature as I did when this new world opened to me, of being able to read and *understand*.

I read more in my room than in the library itself. An inmate who was known to read a lot could check out more than the permitted maximum number of books. I preferred reading in the total isolation of my own room.

When I had progressed to really serious reading, every night at about ten P.M. I would be outraged with the "lights out." It always seemed to catch me right in the middle of something engrossing.

Fortunately, right outside my door was a corridor light that cast a glow into my room. The glow was enough to read by, once my eyes adjusted to it. So when "lights out" came, I would sit on the floor where I could continue reading in that glow.

At one-hour intervals the night guards paced past every room. Each time I heard the approaching footsteps, I jumped into bed and feigned sleep. And as soon as the guard passed, I got back out of bed onto the floor area of that light-glow, where I would read for another fifty-eight minutes—until the guard approached again. That went on until three or four every morning. Three or four hours of sleep a night was enough for me. Often in the years in the streets I had slept less than that.

The teachings of Mr. Muhammad stressed how history had been "whitened"—when white men had written history books, the black man simply had been left out...I never will forget how shocked I was when I began reading about slavery's total horror. It made such an impact upon me that it later became one of my favorite subjects when I became a minister of Mr. Muhammad's. The world's most monstrous crime, the sin and the blood on the white man's hands, are almost impossible to believe...I read descriptions of atrocities, saw those illustrations of black slave women tied up and flogged with whips; of black mothers watching their babies being dragged off, never to be seen by their mothers again; of dogs after slaves, and of the fugitive slave catchers, evil white men with whips and clubs and chains and guns...

Book after book showed me how the white man had brought upon the world's black, brown, red, and yellow peoples every variety of the sufferings of exploitation. I saw how since the sixteenth century, the so-called "Christian trader" white man began to ply the seas in his lust for Asian and African empires, and plunder, and power. I read, I saw, how the white man never has gone among the non-white peoples bearing the Cross in the true manner and spirit of Christ's teachings—meek, humble, and Christlike...

I have often reflected upon the new vistas that reading opened to me. I knew right there in prison that reading had changed forever the course of my life. As I see it today, the ability to read awoke inside me some long dormant craving to be mentally alive. I certainly wasn't seeking any degree, the way a college confers a status symbol upon its students. My homemade education gave me, with every additional book that I read, a little bit more sensitivity to the deafness, dumbness, and blindness that was afflicting the black race in America. Not long ago, an English writer telephoned me from London, asking questions. One was, "What's your alma mater?" I told him, "Books." You will never catch me with a free fifteen minutes in which I'm not studying something I feel might be able to help the black man.

EXAMPLE OF ANNOTATING A TEXT:

See an example of an annotated text here with the strategies 1-4 listed below applied:

- (1) In the left margin write your own **QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS**, adding your own reactions as you read, your own observations, and questions you have.
- (2) Throughout the text, **UNDERLINE OR HIGHLIGHT** the main points and good quotes.
- (3) Throughout the text, **CIRCLE** unknown vocabulary and after you read, look up the words and write in the definitions.
- (4) In the right margin **CODE**, meaning write a one-to-three word description that captures the essence of each paragraph.

Reading selection: "Learning to Read" excerpt from *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*

Same time as martin Luther King Jr. MALCOLM X a religious organization founded in 1931 in U.S. with Islamic principles and favoring black independence. Born Malcolm Little on May 19, 1925, Malcolm X was one of the most articulate and powerful black leader leaders of black America during the 1960s. A street hustler convicted of robbery in 1946, he spent 1960s seven years in prison, where he educated himself and became a disciple of Elijah Muhammad, founder of the Nation of Islam. In the days of the civil rights movement, Malcolm X emerged as the leading spokesman for black separatism, a philosophy that urged black Americans to cut political, social, and economic ties with the white community. After a pilgrimage to Mecca, the capital of the Muslim world, in 1964, he became an orthodox Muslim, adopted the Muslim name El Hajj Malik self-taught El-Shabazz, and distanced himself from the teachings of the black Muslims. He was assassinated in 1965. In the following excerpt from his autobiography (1965), coauthored with Alex Haley and published the year of his death, Malcolm X describes his self-education.

Why did mecca change his mind? Why killed? By whom? It was because of my letters that I happened to stumble upon starting to acquire some kind of a homemade education.

How is street smart diff from book smart? I became increasingly frustrated at not being able to express what I wanted to convey in letters that I wrote, especially those to Mr. Elijah Muhammad. In the street, I had been the most articulate hustler out there. I had commanded attention when I said something. But now, trying to write simple English, I not only wasn't articulate, I wasn't even functional. How would I sound writing in slang, the way I would say it, something such as, "Look, daddy, let me pull your coat about a cat, Elijah Muhammad—" talks slang can't write expressing oneself effectively

8th grade dropout!! Many who today hear me somewhere in person, or on television, or those who read something I've said, will think I went to school far beyond the eighth grade. This impression is due entirely to my prison studies. prison studies

I didn't know being good with words gained respect in prison. It had really begun back in the Charlestown Prison, when Bimbi first made me feel envy of his stock of knowledge. Bimbi had always taken charge of any conversations he was in, and I had tried to emulate him. But every book I picked up had few sentences which didn't contain anywhere from one to nearly all of the words that might as well have been in Chinese. When I just skipped those words, of course, I really ended up with little idea of what the book said. So I had come to the Norfolk Prison Colony still going through only book-reading motions. Pretty soon, I would have quit even these motions, unless I had received the motivation that I did. Bimbi motivation

Copy/imitate

starts with a such a dry book!

I saw that the best thing I could do was get hold of a dictionary—to study, to learn some words. I was lucky enough to reason also that I should try to improve my penmanship. It was sad. I couldn't even write in a straight line. It was both ideas together that moved me to request a dictionary along with some tablets and pencils from the Norfolk Prison Colony school.

gets dictionary

copying not long term learning

I spent two days just riffling uncertainly through the dictionary's pages. I'd never realized so many words existed! I didn't know which words I needed to learn. Finally, just to start some kind of action, I began copying.

copies words

leaf through hastily

so patient!

In my slow, painstaking, ragged handwriting, I copied into my tablet everything printed on that first page, down to the punctuation marks.

copied 1st page

I believe it took me a day. Then, aloud, I read back, to myself, everything I'd written on the tablet. Over and over, aloud, to myself, I read my own handwriting.

read aloud repeatedly

Symbolism?

I woke up the next morning, thinking about those words—immensely proud to realize that not only had I written so much at one time, but I'd written words that I never knew were in the world. Moreover, with a little effort, I also could remember what many of these words meant. I reviewed the words whose meanings I didn't remember. Funny thing, from the dictionary first page right now, that "aardvark" springs to my mind. The dictionary had a picture of it, a long-tailed, long-eared, burrowing African mammal, which lives off termites caught by sticking out its tongue as an anteater does for ants.

proud

remembered new words

Incredible. Is this true? What kept him going?

I was so fascinated that I went on—I copied the dictionary's next page. And the same experience came when I studied that. With every succeeding page, I also learned of people and places and events from history. Actually the dictionary is like a miniature encyclopedia. Finally the dictionary's A section had filled a whole tablet—and I went on into the B's. That was the way I started copying what eventually became the entire dictionary. It went a lot faster after so much practice helped me to pick up handwriting speed. Between what I wrote in my tablet, and writing letters, during the rest of my time in prison I would guess I wrote a million words.

copied entire dictionary!

can't be avoided

Can reading make you free? How?

I suppose it was inevitable that as my word-base broadened, I could for the first time pick up a book and read and now begin to understand what the book was saying. Anyone who has read a great deal can imagine the new world that opened. Let me tell you something: from then until I left that prison, in every free moment I had, if I was not reading in the library, I was reading on my bunk. You couldn't have gotten me out of books with a wedge. Between Mr. Muhammad's teachings, my correspondence, my visitors—usually Ella and Reginald—and my reading of books, months passed without my even thinking about being imprisoned. In fact, up to then, I never had been so truly free in my life.

became avid reader free!

good quote

The Norfolk Prison Colony's library was in the school building. A variety of classes was taught there by instructors who came from such places as Harvard and Boston universities. The weekly debates between inmate teams were also held in the school building. You would be astonished to know how worked up convict debaters and audiences would get over subjects like "Should Babies Be Fed Milk?"

inmates debate

prestigious East Coast colleges. Harvard Ivy League

Irony of old books giving him a new and untraditional education

Available on the prison library's shelves were books on just about every general subject. Much of the big private collection that Parkhurst had willed to the prison was still in crates and boxes in the back of the library—thousands of old books. Some of them looked ancient: covers faded; old-time parchment-looking binding. Parkhurst, I've mentioned, seemed to have been principally interested in history and religion. He had the money and the special interest to have a lot of books that you wouldn't have in general circulation. Any college library would have been lucky to get that collection.

extensive prison library

skin of sheep or goat prepared for writing on

restore to good condition or ability

As you can imagine, especially in a prison where there was heavy emphasis on rehabilitation, an inmate was smiled upon if he demonstrated an unusually intense interest in books. There was a sizable number of well-read inmates, especially the popular debaters, some were said by many to be practically walking encyclopedias.

many well-read inmates

Ironic - Hollywood stars not academics are the celebrities outside of prison.

They were almost celebrities. No university would ask any student to devour literature as I did when this new world opened to me, of being able to read and understand.

educated are celebrities

I read more in my room than in the library itself. An inmate who was known to read a lot could check out more than the permitted maximum number of books. I preferred reading in the total isolation of my own room.

read alone

When I had progressed to really serious reading, every night at about ten P.M. I would be outraged with the "lights out." It always seemed to catch me right in the middle of something engrossing.

hated lights out

Amazingly determined

Fortunately, right outside my door was a corridor light that cast a glow into my room. The glow was enough to read by, once my eyes adjusted to it. So when "lights out" came, I would sit on the floor where I could continue reading in that glow.

completely taking up attention

read by glow

Symbolism: blacks controlled struggling to learn

At one-hour intervals the night guards paced past every room. Each time I heard the approaching footsteps, I jumped into bed and feigned sleep. And as soon as the guard passed, I got back out of bed onto the floor area of that light-glow, where I would read for another fifty-eight minutes—until the guard approached again. That went on until three or four every morning. Three or four hours of sleep a night was enough for me. Often in the years in the streets I had slept less than that.

pretend

read through night

Are blacks still left out? What results from this?

The teachings of Mr. Muhammad stressed how history had been "whitened"—when white men had written history books, the black man simply had been left out... I never will forget how shocked I was when I began reading about slavery's total horror. It made such an impact upon me that it later became one of my favorite subjects when I became a minister of Mr. Muhammad's. The world's most monstrous crime, the sin and the blood on the white man's hands, are almost impossible to believe... I read descriptions of atrocities, saw those illustrations of black slave women tied up and flogged with whips; of black mothers watching their babies being dragged off, never to be seen by their mothers again; of dogs after slaves, and of the fugitive slave catchers, evil white men with whips and clubs and chains and guns...

blacks left out of history books horrors of slavery

must be why he didn't include whites at first. still going on?

Book after book showed me how the white man had brought upon the world's black, brown, red, and yellow peoples every variety of the sufferings of exploitation. I saw how since the sixteenth century, the so-called "Christian trader" white man began to ply the seas in his lust for Asian and African empires, and plunder, and power. I read, I saw, how the white man never has gone among the non-white peoples bearing the Cross in the true manner and spirit of Christ's teachings—meek, humble, and Christlike...

to beat or thrash

whites exploited others not Christian

* Thesis good quote

I have often reflected upon the new vistas that reading opened to me. I knew right there in prison that reading had changed forever the course of my life. As I see it today, the ability to read awoke inside me some long dormant craving to be mentally alive. I certainly wasn't seeking any degree, the way a college confers a status symbol upon its students. My homemade education gave me, with every additional book that I read, a little bit more sensitivity to the deafness, dumbness, and blindness that was afflicting the black race in America. Not long ago, an English writer telephoned me from London, asking questions. One was, "What's your alma mater?" I told him, "Books." You will never catch me with a free fifteen minutes in which I'm not studying something I feel might be able to help the black man.

use for profit or selfish reasons

asleep/inactive

reading changed life gave him goal of black empowerment

so is he saying traditional education has made blacks oblivious to their own oppression? How does what we read and learn shape our own identities and how we treat others?

Reading Strategy III: KWL+

*"Critical reading is an active process of discovery. You discover an author's view on a subject; you enter a dialogue with the author; you discover the strengths and weaknesses of the author's thesis or argument; and you decide if you agree or disagree with the author's views...By questioning and analyzing what the author says with respect to other experiences or views of the issue-- including your own-- you actively enter a dialogue or a debate and **seek the truth** on your own."*

-- Gary Goshgarian, *The Contemporary Reader*

| | |
|--|---|
| (Before reading): What do I KNOW ? | (Before reading): What do I WANT to learn? |
| (After reading): What did I LEARN ? | (After reading): What MORE do I want to learn? |

Reading Strategy IV: Levels of Reading Comprehension

Literal Level—What did the author say?

At the literal level you understand the facts that are clearly stated within the material. This is the beginning and also the least sophisticated level of reading. At this level you might be able to answer detail questions such as *who*, *what*, *when*, and *where*, but not understand the overall purpose of the message (the *why*).

Interpretive Level—What did the author mean by what was said?

At this level you make assumptions and draw conclusions by considering the stated message, the implied meaning, the facts, and the author's attitude toward the subject. You combine the stated and unstated clues in order to answer *why* questions to figure out relationships, connections between ideas and events, character development, figurative language, and complex sequences of events.

Applied Level—How does the author's message apply to other situations?

This level calls for reaction, reflection, and critical thinking. This highest, most sophisticated level involves analyzing, synthesizing, and evaluating. You integrate what is said with what is meant and apply it to new situations and experiences, thus making wider use of what you have just learned. You are aware of the author's style and technique and of your own level of appreciation. You judge the value of the information and of the writing as a piece of literary work.

APPLYING THE LEVELS OF READING TO A TEXT:

Literal Level—What did the author say?

Interpretive Level—What did the author mean by what was said?

Applied Level—How does the author's message apply to other situations?

Reading Strategy V: Learning Prefixes, Roots, and Suffixes

Prefixes – Set One

| Prefix: | Meaning: | Add an example under each given: | Use one of the examples in a sentence: |
|---------------------|------------------------|----------------------------------|--|
| 1. a- | without, not, opposite | atypical | |
| 2. ab- | away, from | abnormal | |
| 3. ad- | toward | advance | |
| 4. ambi- | both | ambiguous | |
| 5. anti- | against | antisocial | |
| 6. bene- | well, good | benefit | |
| 7. bi-, du-, di- | two or twice | bicycle, duplex, dichotomy | |
| 8. cent- | hundred | century | |
| 9. con-, com-, syn- | with, together | convene, complex, synthesize | |
| 10. de- | down, from | detract | |
| 11. dec, deca- | ten | decade, decadence | |
| 12. dia- | through | diameter | |
| 13. dis- | not, opposite of | dislike | |
| 14. ex- | out, from | exhale | |
| 15. hyper- | above, excessive | hyperactive | |
| 16. il-, im-, in- | not | illogical, immature, inability | |
| 17. im-, in- | in, into | import, inside | |
| 18. inter- | between | interrupt | |
| 19. intra- | within | intramurals | |
| 20. juxta- | next to | juxtaposition | |

Prefixes – Set Two

| Prefix: | Meaning: | Add an example under each given: | Use one of the examples in a sentence: |
|--------------------|-----------------|---|---|
| 1. mal-, mis- | wrong, ill | malformed, mistake | |
| 2. nove, non- | nine | novena, nonagon | |
| 3. oct-, octo- | eight | octet, octopus | |
| 4. omni- | all | omnipotent | |
| 5. per- | through | pervade | |
| 6. peri- | around | perimeter | |
| 7. poly- | many | polygamy | |
| 8. post- | after | postscript | |
| 9. pre- | before | prepared | |
| 10. quad-, quadra- | four | quadrilateral, quadrant | |
| 11. quint- | five | quintuplet | |
| 12. re- | back, again | review | |
| 13. retro- | backward | retrospect | |
| 14. sequ- | follow | sequence | |
| 15. sex- | six | sextet | |
| 16. sub- | under | submarine | |
| 17. temp- | time | tempo | |
| 18. trans- | across | translate | |
| 19. tri- | three | triangle | |
| 20. uni- | one | unicorn | |

Roots – Set One

| Root: | Meaning: | Add an example under each given: | Use one of the examples in a sentence: |
|---------------|-------------------|---|---|
| 1. anima | breath, spirit | animate | |
| 2. aqua | water | aquarium | |
| 3. auto | self | autonomy | |
| 4. bio | life | biology | |
| 5. dent | teeth | dental | |
| 6. derma | skin | dermatologist | |
| 7. duc, duct | to lead | conducive, conduct | |
| 8. err, errat | to wander | error, erratic | |
| 9. ethno | race, tribe | ethnocentrism | |
| 10. fac, fact | to do, make | manufacture, deface | |
| 11. gene | race, kind, sex | genetics | |
| 12. grad | to go, take steps | graduation | |
| 13. gyn | woman | gynecologist | |
| 14. hab, habi | to have, hold | habitual, habitat | |
| 15. lith | stone | monolith | |
| 16. log | speech, science | dialogue | |
| 17. lum | light | illuminate | |
| 18. meter | to measure | barometer | |
| 19. miss, mit | to send, let go | missile, admit | |
| 20. mut, muta | to change | commute, mutation | |

Roots – Set Two

| Root: | Meaning: | Add an example under each given: | Use one of the examples in a sentence: |
|----------------|------------------|---|---|
| 1. neg, negat | to say no, deny | neglect, negative | |
| 2. ortho | right, straight | orthodox | |
| 3. pater | father | paternal | |
| 4. path | disease, feeling | pathology | |
| 5. phobia | fear | claustrophobia | |
| 6. phon, phono | sound | phonics, phonograph | |
| 7. plic | to fold | duplicate | |
| 8. pon, pos | to place | ponder, position | |
| 9. port | to carry | portable | |
| 10. psych | mind | psychology | |
| 11. pyr | fire | pyromaniac | |
| 12. quir | to ask | inquire | |
| 13. scrib | to write | prescribe | |
| 14. sol | alone | solitude | |
| 15. soph | wise | sophomore | |
| 16. soror | sister | sorority | |
| 17. tact | to touch | tactile | |
| 18. tele | distant | telephone | |
| 19. therm | heat | thermometer | |
| 20. tort | twist | torture | |

Suffixes

| Suffix: | Meaning: | Add an example under each given: | Use one of the examples in a sentence: |
|-------------------|-----------------------|---|---|
| 1. -able, -ible | capable of | durable, tangible | |
| 2. -age | act of, state of | breakage | |
| 3. -al | pertaining to | rental | |
| 4. -ant | quality of, one who | servant | |
| 5. -arium, -orium | place for | auditorium, aquarium | |
| 6. -ate | cause to be | activate | |
| 7. -esque | like in manner | picturesque | |
| 8. -fic | making, causing | scientific | |
| 9. -form | in the shape of | chloroform | |
| 10. -ful | full of | beautiful | |
| 11. -fy | to make, cause to be | magnify | |
| 12. -hood | condition or state of | childhood | |
| 13. -ics | art, science | mathematics | |
| 14. -itis | inflammation of | appendicitis | |
| 15. -latry | worship of | idolatry | |
| 16. -less | without | homeless | |
| 17. -oid | in the form of | tabloid | |
| 18. -tude | quality or degree of | solitude | |
| 19. -wards | in a direction of | backwards | |
| 20. -wise | way, position | clockwise | |

What clues help unlock the meaning of new words?

To unlock the meaning of a new word, first try to figure out the definition from the context of the sentence and paragraph in which it is used. Next, look for a familiar root, prefix, or suffix in the structure of the word itself. The following suggestions can help you unlock word meanings.

Use context clues: In some cases, words are defined directly in the sentences in which they appear; in other instances, the sentences offer clues or hints that enable you to arrive indirectly at the meaning of the word.

- **Definition:** The unknown word is defined within the sentence or paragraph. For example, the hungry campers started to *devour* the pizzas after having been in the wilderness for the past week, eagerly eating every crumb.
- **Elaborating Details:** Descriptive details suggest the meaning of the unknown word. For example, the young man in the photo had a striking and *gaunt* appearance. His clothes hung loosely on his thin body, as if he had not eaten in weeks.
- **Elaborating Examples:** An anecdote or example before or after the word suggests the meaning. For example, after three days at sea, the fishermen were *famished*. They said they could eat an entire whale if catching one were still allowed.
- **Comparison:** A similar situation suggests the meaning of the unknown word. For example, before being offered a generous five-year contract, the quarterback underwent more *scrutiny* than a fugitive being investigated by the FBI.
- **Contrast:** An opposite situation suggests the meaning of the unknown word. For example, even though she appears *indefatigable* during the workday, she is generally exhausted by 6 p.m.

Use word parts:

- **Roots:** The root is the stem or basic part of the word. The roots that we use are derived primarily from Latin and Greek. For example, *port* is a root derived from Latin meaning "to carry," as in the word *porter*.
- **Prefixes:** A prefix is a group of letters with a special meaning that is added to the beginning of a word. For example, *ex* means "out of" and *im* means "into." Adding these two prefixes to *port* gives two words that are opposite in meaning. *Export* means to "send something out of the country" whereas *import* means "to bring something in."
- **Suffixes:** A suffix is a group of letters with a special meaning that is added to the end of a word. A suffix can alter the meaning of a word as well as the way the word can be used in the sentence. For example, the *er* in *porter* means "the person who" and makes the word into the name of a person. On the other hand, adding *able*, which means "capable of," to *port* does not change the meaning as much as it changes the way the word can be used in the sentence. Some suffixes, therefore, have more meaning than others, but all alter the way the word can be used in a sentence.

Figuring Out Words in Context: Prefixes—Set One

Read the paragraph below. Afterwards, without using a dictionary give the definition of the italicized words using the context clues. Also give the definition of the prefix used.

Once there was a ruler of a country who was asked to *abdicate* her position because she had become unpopular with the people. A group of nobles *interceded* on her behalf arguing that she was a very *beneficent* ruler and that the reasons given by those asking for her removal were *illogical* and violated the sacred traditions of the country. They also argued that if she were removed, then *anarchy* would sweep the land. Those who demanded that she step down *congregated* in the main square of the capital and decided that if she would not willingly abdicate, then they would need to seek *expel* her but they knew this would be very difficult because the country’s laws on the issue of abdication were *ambiguous* and could therefore be manipulated by those sympathetic to the ruler. The people felt that not only did they want to remove the ruler herself but also the *dichotomous* system of government that gave only the ruler and the nobles any power or decision-making. They proposed more of a *synthesis* of power between the upper as well as lower classes.

| | |
|--|---|
| Define the prefix ab-: What is the meaning of <i>abdicate</i> : What context clues did you use: | Define the prefix con-: What is the meaning of <i>congregated</i> : What context clues did you use: |
| Define the prefix inter-: What is the meaning of <i>interceded</i> : What context clues did you use: | Define the prefix ex-: What is the meaning of <i>expel</i> : What context clues did you use: |
| Define the prefix bene-: What is the meaning of <i>beneficent</i> : What context clues did you use: | Define the prefix ambi-: What is the meaning of <i>ambiguous</i> : What context clues did you use: |
| Define the prefix il-: What is the meaning of <i>illogical</i> : What context clues did you use: | Define the prefix di-: What is the meaning of <i>dichotomous</i> : What context clues did you use: |
| Define the prefix a-: What is the meaning of <i>anarchy</i> : What context clues did you use: | Define the prefix syn-: What is the meaning of <i>synthesis</i> : What context clues did you use: |

Figuring Out Words in Context: Prefixes Set Two

Read the paragraph below. Afterwards, without using a dictionary give the definition of the italicized words using the context clues. Also give the definition of the prefix used.

Maria and Anthony tried for many years to have children. With her *perennial* courage, Maria endured many corrective surgeries and treatments but to no avail. Finally, she tried fertility drugs even though she knew a woman who had done the same and her child came out *malformed*. Maria told Anthony that she wished she were *omnipotent* so that she could fix her difficulties without the use of medication. Maria had many negative *preconceptions* about the use of fertility drugs, but Anthony helped her learn the actual risks and benefits. Therefore, she began treatment and they became pregnant. They were both overjoyed. In Maria's second *trimester*, the doctor told her that she was carrying *quadruplets*. The doctor explained about *polyembryony* and how this was a common occurrence for women who use fertility drugs. At first, Maria did not tell Anthony, and she felt very *subversive* and guilty about it. A few weeks passed, and she finally told him the news and to her surprise he was overjoyed as he had always wanted a very large family. With his support and her strength, she delivered all the babies and they were all healthy. She suffered a small amount of *postpartum* depression, but once she began the full-time job of talking care of all her beautiful children when she looked in *retrospect* at her choices, she was very pleased.

| | |
|--|---|
| Define the prefix per-: What is the meaning of <i>perennial</i> : What context clues did you use: | Define the prefix quad-: What is the meaning of <i>quadruplets</i> : What context clues did you use: |
| Define the prefix mal-: What is the meaning of <i>malformed</i> : What context clues did you use: | Define the prefix poly-: What is the meaning of <i>polyembryony</i> : What context clues did you use: |
| Define the prefix omni-: What is the meaning of <i>omnipotent</i> : What context clues did you use: | Define the prefix sub-: What is the meaning of <i>subversive</i> : What context clues did you use: |
| Define the prefix pre-: What is the meaning of <i>preconceptions</i> : What context clues did you use: | Define the prefix post-: What is the meaning of <i>postpartum</i> : What context clues did you use: |
| Define the prefix tri-: What is the meaning of <i>trimester</i> : What context clues did you use: | Define the prefix retro-: What is the meaning of <i>retrospect</i> : What context clues did you use: |

Figuring Out Words in Context: Roots—Set One

Read the paragraph below. Afterwards, without using a dictionary give the definition of the italicized words using the context clues. Also give the definition of the root used.

When Jeannine began college, she was convinced that she wanted to become a *gynecologist* because she was from a family of doctors. However, in class one day as they were looking at a *biopsy* of infected cells, she felt nauseous. Besides, she never liked her *genetics* class, so she could now drop this course which was bringing down her G.P.A.. When she told her mother she was changing her major, her mother supported her but warned her not to make such drastic changes *habitual*. Her mother recommended that she consider instead *dermatology* because her uncle George who had his own practice enjoyed a good income and complete *autonomy*. Jeannine, however, said she was done with all medically related fields. She considered the classes she had taken and liked so far. She considered becoming an *ethnographer* but was not sure if she wanted to take all the required Anthropology classes for that field of work. She had also enjoyed her Marine Biology class but decided it was not for her as she was not very *aquatic*. Her mother *deduced* Jeannine’s indecision from her troubled expression and told her not to worry so much because choosing a major much less a career was a very *gradual* process and that she still had lots of time.

| | |
|--|---|
| Define the root gyn: What is the meaning of <i>gynecologist</i> : What context clues did you use: | Define the root auto: What is the meaning of <i>autonomy</i> : What context clues did you use: |
| Define the root bio: What is the meaning of <i>biopsy</i> : What context clues did you use: | Define the root ethno: What is the meaning of <i>ethnographer</i> : What context clues did you use: |
| Define the root gene: What is the meaning of <i>genetics</i> : What context clues did you use: | Define the root aqua: What is the meaning of <i>aquatic</i> : What context clues did you use: |
| Define the root habi: What is the meaning of <i>habitual</i> : What context clues did you use: | Define the root duc: What is the meaning of <i>deduced</i> : What context clues did you use: |
| Define the root derma: What is the meaning of <i>dermatology</i> : What context clues did you use: | Define the root grad: What is the meaning of <i>gradual</i> : What context clues did you use: |

Figuring Out Words in Context: Roots—Set Two

Read the paragraph below. Afterwards, without using a dictionary give the definition of the italicized words using the context clues. Also give the definition of the root used.

Off in a small, remote village, lived a little old inventor. He lived at the edge of town all by himself and had no children, but he was very *paternal*. He suffered from *agoraphobia* so instead of going out, he would invite the children of the town into his workshop and teach them about his inventions. One of the children’s favorite inventions was a *polyphonic* instrument that when *contorted* could be heard throughout the village. Another favorite was a machine that would record a speaker’s *soliloquy* and *transcribe* what he or she said. The inventor even had a painting that changed colors when *tactilely* triggered and a lamp that produced *pyrotechnics* when someone sneezed. The adults of the town thought that the inventor was very *unorthodox* and perhaps a little *pathetic* for his hermit-like ways, but they respected him...from a distance.

| | |
|---|--|
| Define the root pater: What is the meaning of <i>paternal</i> : What context clues did you use: | Define the root scribe: What is the meaning of <i>transcribe</i> : What context clues did you use: |
| Define the root phobia: What is the meaning of <i>agoraphobia</i> : What context clues did you use: | Define the root tact: What is the meaning of <i>tactilely</i> : What context clues did you use: |
| Define the root phonic: What is the meaning of <i>polyphonic</i> : What context clues did you use: | Define the root pyr: What is the meaning of <i>pyrotechnics</i> : What context clues did you use: |
| Define the root tort: What is the meaning of <i>contorted</i> : What context clues did you use: | Define the root ortho: What is the meaning of <i>unorthodox</i> : What context clues did you use: |
| Define the root sol: What is the meaning of <i>soliloquy</i> : What context clues did you use: | Define the root path: What is the meaning of <i>pathetic</i> : What context clues did you use: |

LITERARY TERMS:

(From *Writing Essays about Literature* by Kelley Griffith)

To best understand, interpret, and enjoy literature, one must know certain terms and concepts. Also, one of the best ways to strengthen your reading comprehension is to write about the text.

FICTION AND DRAMA:

PLOT: Put simply, *plot* is what happens in the narrative. But this definition is too simple. A mere listing of events, even in the order in which they occur, is not plot. Rather, writers of fiction arrange fictional events into patterns. They select these events carefully, they establish causal relationships among events, and they enliven these events with conflict. A more complete and accurate definition, then, is that plot is a pattern of carefully selected, casually related events that contain conflict.

There are two general categories of conflict: *internal conflict*, takes place within the minds of the characters and *external conflict*, takes place between individuals or between individuals and the world external to the individuals (the forces of nature, human created objects, and environments).

The forces in a conflict are usually embodied by characters, the most relevant being the *protagonist*, the main character, and the *antagonist*, the opponent of the protagonist (the antagonist is usually a person but can also be a nonhuman force or even an aspect of the protagonist—his or her tendency toward evil and self-destruction for example).

QUESTIONS ABOUT PLOT: Probably the most revealing question you can ask about a work of literature is: What conflicts does it dramatize? For fiction, this is a crucial question. You can break it down into sub-questions, each of which might produce interesting ideas:

- | | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What is the main conflict?• What are the minor conflicts?• How are all the conflicts related?• What causes the conflicts?• Which conflicts are external, which are internal? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who is the protagonist?• What qualities or values does the author associate with each side of the conflict?• Where does the climax occur? Why?• How is the main conflict resolved?• Which conflicts go unresolved? Why? |
|--|---|

THINKING ON PAPER ABOUT PLOT:

- (1) List the key conflicts. For each conflict, analyze what makes it a conflict. What are the causes?
- (2) Describe the turning point or climax. Explain what conflicts are resolved. List the conflicts that are left unresolved and why.
- (3) List the major structural units of the work (chapters, scenes, parts). Summarize what happens in each unit.
- (4) List the qualities of the protagonist and antagonist.
- (5) Describe one important scene in detail. Explain how the characters' actions and dialogue reveal conflict. How is this scene important to the larger work?
- (6) List the main plot and the subplots. Explain the relationship of the subplots to the main plot.
- (7) Describe the qualities and causes that make the situation at the beginning unstable. Describe the qualities that make the conclusion stable.

CHARACTERIZATION: Characters are the people in narratives, and *characterization* is the author's presentation and development of characters. There are two broad categories of character development: simple and complex. *Simple characters* have only one or two personality traits and are easily recognizable as stereotypes—the shrewish wife, the lazy husband, the egomaniac, etc. *Complex characters* have multiple personality traits and therefore resemble real people. They are much harder to understand and describe than simple characters. No single description or interpretation can fully contain them.

QUESTIONS ABOUT CHARACTERS: You can ask many revealing questions about characters and the way they are portrayed:

| | |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are they simple, complex, dynamic or static?• Do they change?• How and why do they change?• What steps do they go through to change?• What events or moments of self-realization produce these changes?• What do they learn?• Does what they learn help or hinder them? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What problems do they have?• How do they attempt to solve them?• If they are complex, what makes them complex?• Do they have traits that contradict one another or cause internal conflicts?• Do they experience epiphanies?• How do they relate to one another? |
|---|---|

THINKING ON PAPER ABOUT CHARACTERIZATION:

- (1) List the traits of the main characters in the story.
- (2) Describe the ways the author reveals the traits of the character.
- (3) Write a description of a complex character in which you try to account for every trait of the character.
- (4) Describe the emotional reaction a character has to an important event or events.
- (5) Write a paragraph explaining why a character changes.
- (6) Describe the scene in which a character has an epiphany. Explain what happens and what the character comes to see.
- (7) Mark the places in which the author or other characters make revealing statements about a character.

THEME: Theme is a central idea in the work—whether fiction, poetry, or drama. It is a comment the work makes on the human condition. It deals with four general areas of human experience: the nature of humanity, the nature of society, the nature of humankind’s relationship to the world, and the nature of our ethical responsibilities. Theme answers questions such as these: Are human beings innately “sinful” or “good”? Does fate (environment, heredity, circumstance) control us, or do we control it? What does a particular social system or set of social practices (capitalism, socialism, feudalism, middle class values and practices, urban life, etc) do for—and to—its members? What is right conduct and wrong conduct, and how do we know?

QUESTIONS ABOUT THEME: Theme deals with four areas of human experience. A strategy for discovering a work’s theme is to apply questions about these areas to the work:

| | |
|--|---|
| <p><u>The nature of humanity:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What image of humankind emerges from the work? • From the way the author presents characters, can you tell if the author thinks people are bad or do they have redeeming traits? • If people are good, what good things do they do? If they are flawed, how and to what extent are they so? | <p><u>The nature of humankind’s relationship to the world:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What control over their lives do the characters have? • Do they make choices in complete freedom? • Are they driven by forces beyond their control? • Does Providence or some grand scheme govern history, or is history simply random or arbitrary? |
| <p><u>The nature of society:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Does the author portray a particular society or social scheme as life-enhancing or life-destroying? • Are characters we care about in conflict with their society? • Do they want to escape from it? • What causes and perpetuates this society? • If the society is flawed, how is it flawed? | <p><u>The nature of our ethical responsibilities:</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the moral conflicts in the work? • Are they clear cut or ambiguous? That is, is it clear to us exactly what is right and exactly what is wrong? • What rights are in opposition to one another? If right opposes wrong, does right win in the end? • To what extent are characters to blame for their actions? |

THINKING ON PAPER ABOUT THEME:

- (1) List the subject or subjects of the work. For each subject, see if you can state a theme. Put a check next to the ones that seem most important.
- (2) Explain how the title, subtitle, and names of characters may be related to theme.
- (3) Describe the work’s depiction of human behavior.
- (4) Describe the work’s depiction of society. Explain the representation of social ills and how they might be corrected or addressed.
- (5) List the moral issues raised by the work.
- (6) Name the character who is the moral center of the work. List his or her traits.
- (7) Mark statements by the author or characters that seem to state themes.

SYMBOLISM: In the broadest sense, a symbol is something that represents something else. Words, for example, are symbols. But in literature, a *symbol* is an object that has meaning beyond itself. The object is concrete and the meanings are abstract.

QUESTIONS ABOUT SYMBOLS: Not every work uses symbols, and not every character, incident, or object in a work has symbolic value. You should ask fundamental questions in locating and interpreting symbols:

| | |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What symbols does the work seem to have?• Are you sure you are not finding a “symbol” where none was intended?• How do you know it is a symbol?• What does the author do that gives symbolic meaning to this element? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is there evidence in the text that can be used to understand and develop this symbol?• What does the symbol mean?• What larger meaning can be understood through this symbol? |
|--|---|

THINKING ON PAPER ABOUT SYMBOLISM:

- (1) List the symbols in the work.
- (2) Mark the descriptions or episodes that give symbols meaning.
- (3) List each symbol’s possible meanings.

OTHER TERMS TO KNOW IN LITERATURE:

SETTING: The social mores, values, and customs of the world in which the characters live; the physical world; and the time of the action, including historical circumstances.

POINT OF VIEW: The author’s relationship to his or her fictional world, especially to the minds of the characters. Put another way, point of view is the position from which the story is told. There are four common points of view:

- * ***Omniscient point of view***—the author tells the story and assumes complete knowledge of the characters’ actions and thoughts.
- * ***Limited omniscient point of view***—the author still narrates the story but restricts his or her revelation—and therefore our knowledge—to the thoughts of just one character.
- * ***First person point of view***—one of the characters tells the story, eliminating the author as narrator. The narration is restricted to what one character *says* he or she observes.
- * ***Objective point of view***—the author is the narrator but does not enter the minds of any of the characters. The writer sees them (and lets us see them) as we would in real life.

TONE: The narrator’s predominant attitude toward the subject, whether that subject is a particular setting, an event, a character, or an idea.

IRONY: Generally irony makes visible a contrast between appearance and reality. More fully and specifically, it exposes and underscores a contrast between (1) what is and what seems to be, (2) between what is and what ought to be, (3) between what is and what one wishes to be, (4) and between what is and what one expects to be. Incongruity is the method of irony; opposites come suddenly together so that the disparity is obvious.

POETRY:

Poetry shares many elements with its sister genres, fiction and drama such as characterization, plot, and theme. Most poems, however, do not offer a “story” in the conventional sense. They are usually brief and apparently devoid of “action.” Even so, a plot of sorts may be implied, a place and time may be important, a specific point of view may be operating, and characters may be dramatizing the key issues of the poem.

SPEAKER: In any poem there is always one “character” of the utmost importance which is the speaker, the “I” of the poem. Often the speaker is a fictional personage, not at all equivalent to the poet.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SPEAKER:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Who is speaking?• What characterizes the speaker?• To whom is he or she speaking?• What is the speaker’s tone?• What is the speaker’s emotional state?• Why is he or she speaking? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What situation is being described?• What are the conflicts or tensions in the situation?• How is setting—social situation, physical place, and time—important to the speaker?• What ideas is the speaker communicating? |
|---|--|

THINKING ON PAPER ABOUT CHARACTERIZATION, POINT OF VIEW, PLOT, SETTING AND THEME IN POETRY:

- (1) Paraphrase the poem (put it in your own words). This is one way to make sure you understand every sentence.
- (2) Identify the speaker of the poem. Underline the words and phrases that help characterize the speaker and bring out the speaker’s concerns. Describe in detail the traits of the speaker and of any other characters in the poem.
- (3) Describe the situation of the poem: where the speaker is, what time of day it is, what season of the year, what historical occasion, to whom the speaker is speaking, why. List the external and internal conflicts of the poem.
- (4) State the issues that concern the speaker (what the poem is about). Explain the speaker’s ideas (the themes of the poem). Note any changes in the speaker’s mood or ideas as the poem moves from unit to unit. Explain what the speaker is trying to accomplish.

IMAGERY: Descriptive Language: Although the word imagery calls to mind the visual sense, poetic imagery appeals to all the senses. Sensuous imagery is pleasurable for its own sake, but it also provides a concreteness and immediacy. Imagery causes the reader to become personally, experientially involved in the subject matter of the poem.

IMAGERY: Figurative Language: The conscious departure from normal or conventional ways of saying things. This could mean merely a rearrangement of the normal word order of a sentence. A much more common category of figurative language is tropes. *Tropes* (literally “turns”) extend the meaning of words beyond their literal meaning, and the most common form of trope is metaphor. A *metaphor* is a type of *analogy* which is a similarity between things that are basically different.

QUESTIONS ABOUT IMAGERY:

| | |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What senses does the poet appeal to?• What analogies are implied or stated directly? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Why does the poet use these particular images and analogies? |
|---|--|

THINKING ON PAPER ABOUT DESCRIPTIVE LANGUAGE:

- (1) Mark the descriptive images. For each image, name the sense appealed to. Characterize the dominant impression these images make.
- (2) Explain the relationship of descriptive images to the speaker’s state of mind.
- (3) Explain how the descriptive images help to create atmosphere and mood. Slow movements, for example, are conducive to melancholy; speed to exuberance and excitement.

THINKING ON PAPER ABOUT FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE:

- (1) Mark the analogies in the poem. Underline or circle the words and phrases that signal comparisons. Explain the implications of the analogies (that is, what they contribute to the meaning of the poem).
- (2) List the senses appealed to in each analogy. Describe the dominant sensuous impression created by these analogies.

OTHER TERMS TO KNOW IN POETRY:

DICTION: Refers to the poet's choice of words. Poets are sensitive to the subtle shades of meaning of words, to the possible double meanings of words, and to the *denotative* (the object or idea that the word represents) and *connotative* (the subjective, emotional association of a word) meanings of words.

RHYTHM: All human speech has rhythm, but poetry regularizes that rhythm into recognizable patterns. These patterns are called *meters*. Metrical patterns vary depending on the sequence in which one arranges the accented and unaccented syllables of an utterance. The unit that determines that arrangement is the foot. A *foot* is one unit of rhythm in verse.

SOUND: Poets delight in the sound of language and consciously present sounds to be enjoyed for themselves. They also use them to emphasize meaning, action, and emotion, and especially to call the reader's attention to the relationship of certain words. Rhyme, for example, has the effect of linking words together. Among the most common sound devices are the following:

- * *Onomatopoeia*—the use of words that sound like what they mean (“buzz,” “boom,” “hiss”)
- * *Alliteration*—the repetition of consonant sounds at the beginning of words or at the beginning of accented syllables (“the woeful woman went wading Wednesday”)
- * *Rhyme*—the repetition of accented vowels and the sounds that follow.

STRUCTURE: Poets give structure to their poems in two overlapping ways: by organizing ideas according to a logical plan and by creating a pattern of sounds. Perhaps the most common sound device by which poets create structure is end rhyme, and any pattern of end rhyme is called a *rhyme scheme*. Rhyme scheme helps to establish another structural device, the *stanza*, which is physically separated from other stanzas by extra spaces and usually represents one idea.

FREE VERSE: One sometimes puzzling form of poetry is free verse. It is puzzling because it is hard to see obvious structural elements in it. It avoids strict adherence to metrical patterns and to fixed line lengths. But it is not entirely “free,” for it uses other ways of creating rhythm and sound patterns.

IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS (not online):

WHY PRESENTATIONS? For each text we read, students will form presentation teams to provide a context for the reading beforehand. This is a form of “building schema,” which is adding to what you know on a given topic. With a clear context set up before one begins to read, reading comprehension is strengthened. Also, you learn something better when you actually teach it, so for each text we’ll have a group of experts.

PRESENTATION REQUIREMENTS:

- **Provide the following information:**
 - biographical information on the author(s)
 - information on the relevant setting/time/location(s) of the text
 - historical context for the topic/time/place covered
 - political context for the topic/time/place covered
 - social and cultural context for the topic/time/place covered
 - a larger and probing look at the topic(s) being raised
- **Present the material and information through a variety of methods. Here are some suggestions:**
 - PowerPoint slideshow
 - Visual aids: poster boards, overheads, posters, pictures
 - Handouts that the students can take with them is an excellent way to convey information
 - Show short videos or parts of documentaries, shows, films
 - Bring in “artifacts” connected with the topic: show and tell items
 - Play relevant music or recordings
 - Performances: skits, plays, costumes
 - Bring food related to the topic/culture
- **Make part of the presentation interactive.** Do not spend the entire presentation talking at the students. Include at least one interactive element. Interactive activities could include:
 - Pose questions and involve the class in discussion.
 - Involve the students in learning games (perhaps provide prizes to get the students engaged).
 - Create projects the students complete individually or in teams.
- **Involve every member of your group.** Each person must participate equally and spend approximately the same amount of time each presenting material (a minimum of 5 minutes per student. Any students not fulfilling the minimum of 5 minutes will receive a 0% on the presentation).
- **Be creative!** Think of interesting ways to impart the information that will interest and engage your fellow students. Don’t be boring.

PRESENTATION DON'Ts:

- Don’t teach the text itself—students do not even need to read the text ahead of time.
- Don’t present dry “encyclopedia” information unless relevant (i.e. GNP, imports/exports, country bird).
- Don’t just read off your notes or off PowerPoint slides. Notes cards are fine but know the information, make eye contact with the students, engage your audience.
- Don’t finish before the required time. Groups will not get full credit or perhaps not even get a passing grade if the presentation is under the required time length.
- Don’t show up late—your presentation time begins when class begins. Do not spend any of your presentation time in technical set up. You must test your technical set up before the class and familiarize yourself with the overhead projection system before the presentation date.

SAMPLE GRADES AND FEEDBACK FOR IN-CLASS PRESENTATIONS:

Here are some examples of feedback and grades past in-class groups have received:

Presentation on *The Eaves of Heaven* and Andrew X. Pham

It was a good approach to begin with a map of Vietnam. You included some very interesting facts and visuals about Vietnam. The information at first seemed a little all over the map and there wasn't sustained or detailed information about any one topic in particular. The section on Vietnamese holidays was colorful and visual and the personal pictures were a nice touch. The timeline was interesting but reading the information off Powerpoint slides isn't the best way for students to connect with it and remember it. After the presentation, I don't think the students had very much information or knowledge about the three wars the book centers around. It would have been very helpful if you had created handouts for the students so they had information they could take home with them and use as they read the book. It was nice that you included a video that was helpful and informational. The information on the author was useful but a little brief. It would have been good to include the students more with some interactive parts.

GRADE: 73% C

Presentation on *The White Tiger* and Aravind Aiga

Nice lead-in with the meditation video set in India. You presented a wide range of information with a good variety of methods: the PowerPoint slideshow, the videos, and the handout. The handout was helpful in that the students could follow where you were in the presentation, but it could have contained more information that they could have referenced after the presentation. I liked how you switched back and forth between presenters and that everyone appeared to provide equal contributions. Some very interesting historical background, but one of the most important figures, Gandhi, wasn't very developed and how he was instrumental in getting the British out of India could have been clearer. Overall the presenters made good eye contact and seemed to know their information which kept the students engaged. Great inclusion of the cultural elements of the Naan bread and the Indian costumes. The Jeopardy game was fun and challenging. Overall, you provided some solid context to help the students better understand the book.

GRADE: 85% B

Presentation on *Enrique's Journey* and Sonia Nazario

You presented the materials through an engaging variety of methods that kept everyone's attention throughout. Impressive and creative way to begin with Punta music and dance visuals along with live guitar accompaniment. The music throughout the presentation kept the feeling of the culture present as well and the national anthem was a nice touch. Excellent and delicious inclusion of food and drink. Each segment of the presentation was vivid as you included actual items like the bags and jewelry and excellent visuals with the use of poster boards, short videos, handouts and Powerpoint. I especially liked that you included a clip of the author reading her work—this will help the students connect well with the reading. Each presenter also made good eye contact, knew the material well and kept the students engaged. The finale with the Jeopardy game was fun. The content of the presentation though was a bit light for a heavy book and topic. You brought the country vividly to life with the cultural aspects but could have included information on the central topic in the book of the migration of Central Americans to the U.S. and the obstacles and controversies surrounding this. You touched on some of the reasons Hondurans might want/need to leave their homeland but the reasons and motivations could have been clearer. Overall, a great presentation that prepared the students well for the book.

GRADE: 92% A

ONLINE PRESENTATIONS:

WHY PRESENTATIONS?

For each text we read, students will form presentation teams to provide a context for the reading beforehand. This is a form of “building schema,” which is adding to what you know on a given topic. With a clear context set up before one begins to read, reading comprehension is strengthened. Also, you learn something better when you actually teach it, so for each text we’ll have a group of experts.

ONLINE PRESENTATION REQUIREMENTS:

- **Provide the following information in a PowerPoint presentation:**
 - biographical information on the author(s)
 - information on the relevant setting/time/location(s) of the text
 - historical context for the topic/time/place covered
 - political context for the topic/time/place covered
 - social and cultural context for the topic/time/place covered
 - a larger and probing look at the topic(s) being raised
- **Involve every member of your group.** Each person must participate and contribute equally. Students should create and contribute approximately 5-10 slides each to the PowerPoint presentation. Any students not fulfilling the minimum will receive a 0% on the presentation.
- **Be creative!** Think of interesting ways to impart the information that will interest and engage your fellow students. Creative elements you could include in the presentation:
 - Vivid images and pictures
 - Short video clips and parts of relevant films, documentaries, shows
 - Discussion questions for students to think about the material
 - Useful links
 - Music and other sound recordings
- **Cite your sources.** Also, don't simply cut and paste from the web. Present it in your own way.
- **Create a quiz that your peers will take and be graded on.** You will create a 10-question quiz and email it to me at bellr@smccd.edu. Do NOT post the quiz in the presentation forum as students will be taking this quiz for a grade. The questions can be multiple choice, true/false, fill in the blank, or matching. This will count as part of your peers’ quiz grade, so be fair in the questions that you ask. Each team must email me the 10 quiz questions along with the answers by midnight the same day the presentation is due.
- **Complete and submit a [Team Evaluation form](#).** Each student will evaluate and grade each member of his/her presentation team as well as him/herself. I will assign an overall grade for the presentation itself. However, your participation grade will be based on the average of the scores your peers assign you. You must submit this completed form to me via email (bellr@smccd.edu) by midnight the day after the presentation is due. Your team members will not see these evaluations. If there is a team member that did not fairly participate in the project, s/he will not receive a grade.

Online Presentation Team Evaluations

Your name:

To ensure that working as a team is a productive experience for everyone involved, it is important to evaluate your team members as well as yourself.

The scores that your team members give you as well as the score you give yourself will be averaged together to form your overall participation score for this project. You must submit this completed form to me via email (bellr@smccd.edu) by **midnight the day after the presentation is due**. Your team members will not see these evaluations. If there is a team member that did not fairly participate in the project, s/he will not receive a grade.

Rate each person's participation using the following scale:

| |
|-------------------|
| 90-100 = A |
| 80-89 = B |
| 70-79 = C |
| 60-69 = D |
| 50-59 = F |

Consider these aspects as you decide on a grade for each participant:

- Did this team member...
- complete assigned tasks?
 - meet the team's deadlines?
 - behave in a cooperative and helpful manner?
 - share information and materials to help others?
 - contribute to the quality and success of the team's project?
 - complete his/her fair share of work?

Provide a PERCENTAGE GRADE for each person using the scoring system above of 0% to 100%

Team Member 1: %

Team Member 2: %

Team Member 3: %

Team Member 4: %

Team Member 5: %

Team Member 6: %

Team Member 7: %

Team Member 8: %

Team Member 9: %

Team Member 10: %

Grade you would assign yourself: %

SAMPLE GRADES AND FEEDBACK FOR ONLINE PRESENTATIONS:

Here are some examples of feedback and grades past online groups have received:

Presenters on collected essays on “Gender Differences”

I like how you started out by grouping the readings thematically as was described in the introduction to the unit. The *Friends* clip was a humorous way to begin the topic and the clip with the kids showed early notions of gender stereotyping well. It’s not entirely clear what information you want to convey on the slide on gender differences. You present some valid stereotypes of men/women and boys/girls but you could have added to these lists as there are many more gender stereotypes. Also, it would have been interesting to include some research on the impact of some of these stereotypes—so what results from this stereotypical thinking? You included some interesting images like “female stereotypes,” the Rosie the Riveter image, the joke about male/female brains, but it could be clearer what you want the students to learn from these images. Interesting clip on “Gender on TV” but don’t let clips and images do your speaking for you. Be sure to follow these things with further information you provide. Interesting slides on the authors and nice inclusion of their pictures, but you could have also connected the titles of the assigned readings with the authors so the students could see the connection more directly. Overall, some interesting clips and images, but there wasn’t a lot of content here. There could have been more in depth historical background on gender movements in the U.S., struggles for equal rights, key figures in gender studies and research. There could have been more facts and statistics about the realities for men and women today politically, economically, socially. This doesn’t really prepare the students very thoroughly for the complex issues of difference, equality, prejudice, treatment, etc. that go along with the topic of gender.

Presentation score: 73% C

Presenters on Chekhov: The Essential Plays and Anton Chekhov

You addressed the main required categories well but some more thoroughly than others. The biographical information was a little on the brief side but the pictures you included there were excellent. The information on the classes and the history was nicely detailed and very relevant to the plays we are going to read. The political and cultural/social sections were also a bit brief but there was some useful information there along with good images. The last part where you looked at the themes in Chekhov was excellent. Looking at theme is a great way to prepare the students to read the plays. You could have further developed the creative elements of the presentation though and included clips from Chekhov plays, links to videos on Russian culture, history, added Russian music. Visual, auditory and interactive elements would have brought Russia more to life for the students. Overall a very informative presentation that will prepare the students well to read Chekhov’s plays.

Presentation score for group: 84% B

Presentation Grade on Tennessee Williams and Streetcar Named Desire

Great opening with a synopsis of the film version of *A Streetcar Named Desire*. Sets the tone nicely and prepares the students for the story. I like the quote you follow the video clip with from Williams. This and the picture of Williams set the tone of the play and introduce the author well. Excellent musical selections! The music really added another dimension to the presentation and all the different selections you integrated were impressive. Great biography on Williams; it showed the connection between his life and his writing very well. The timeline and the other historical information were very useful and provided an excellent historical context. The background on New Orleans and how the city relates to the play was really well done. Excellent information on the Old South and the conflicts with the industrialized south; this will be helpful later in understanding the character of Blanche. The detailed character descriptions along with the pictures from the film version will really help the students connect well to and remember the characters. I was very glad to see that you included a clip of one of the most famous scenes of when Stanley is calling for Stella. When the students read the play, this will make this scene come to life more. The plot overview you provided was great. The inclusion of *The Simpsons* version was also a really a nice touch! Overall, a really top notch and well crafted presentation!

PRESENTATION GRADE: 96% A

Easy Guide for Creating PowerPoint Presentations

Before Starting the Presentation:

- Make sure you create one folder for your presentation that you will put all your audio/video clips in and put it onto your desktop. Every audio/movie file should be saved or moved into that folder before adding it into your presentation. (This will just save you a lot more time in the end.)

Images:

- To obtain a picture from the internet, right click on image and click Save As and save into a special folder.
- Click Insert, Scroll down to Picture, then choose either Clip Art or From File.
- You can adjust the size by putting the cursor on the edge of the picture and dragging it.
- If you want the picture behind text, right click your mouse on the image and scroll down to Order, then click Send to Back.
- By clicking Slide Show and scrolling down to Custom Animation, you can alter your images. You can add special effects by making the pictures fade in and out or rotating.

Music/Audio:

- Click Insert, scroll down to Movies and Sounds, and then choose either Sound from Clip Organizer or Sound from File.
- If you want the music file to play for more than one slide, right click your mouse on the music file (image should be a gold horn) and click Custom Animation. Next, click on the down arrow next to the file name and click on Effect Options. Under Stop Playing, click After: (then insert how many slides you want it to play for).

Video Clips:

- Click Insert, scroll down to Movies and Sounds, and then choose either Movie from Clip Organizer or Movie from File.
- To obtain video clips from the internet, they must be downloadable. You cannot use video clips from YouTube either since you cannot save them onto your computer. Some clips you can right click and save as, while others will not let you. You can also right click on the link of the video clip and click Save Target As, and then save it onto your computer. Check if the files work by opening up the file that you saved and checking if the video clip will play.

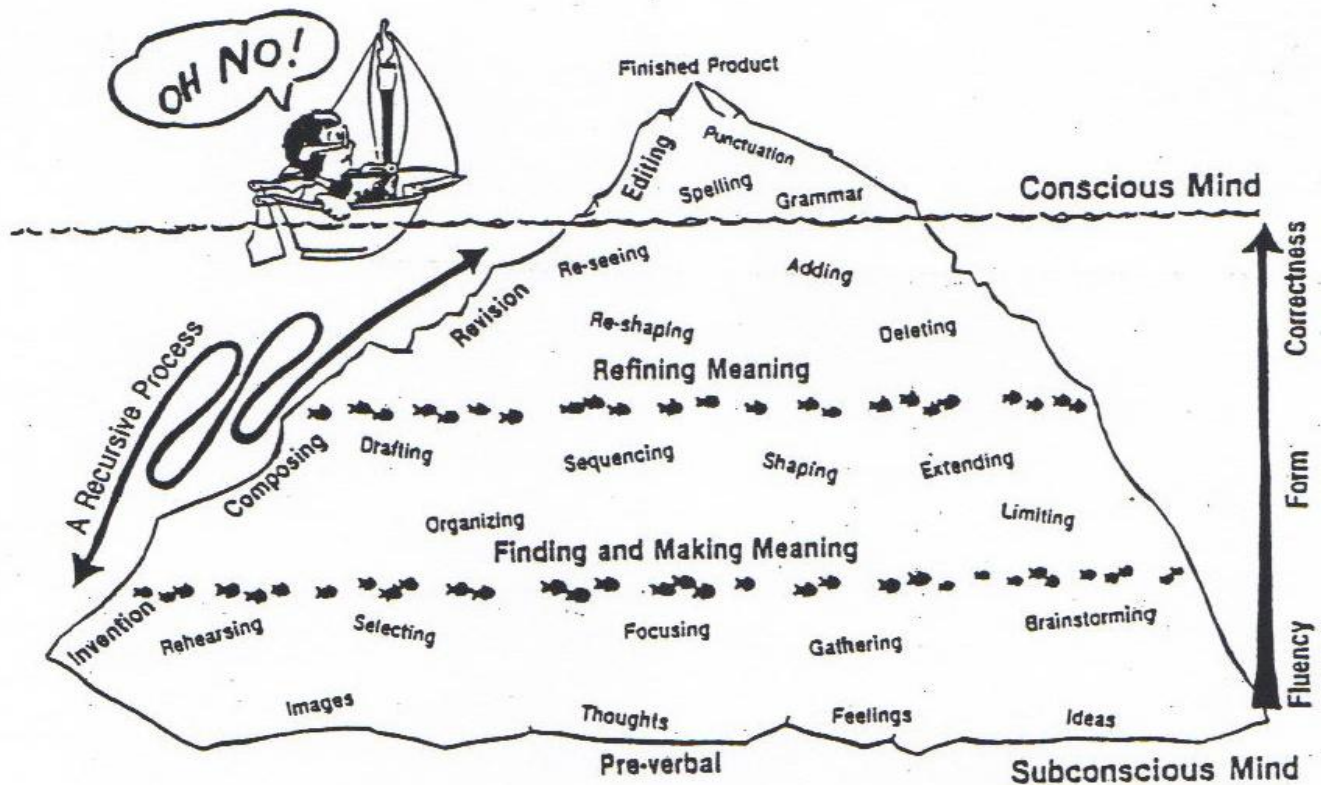
Uploading Presentation onto Forum:

- When you are all done, you need to make sure that every music, audio, and/or movie file that is in the presentation must all be kept in one specific folder. Also, include the PowerPoint presentation file if the memory of the folder is not too large (200 MB is the max). The video clips and audio will not play for others to see if this is not done correctly.
- Next, open up your Desktop Folder and right click on your presentation folder. Then, scroll down to Send To and click Compressed (Zipped) Folder. This allows you to upload everything onto the forum in one single file. Remember to check the size of the zipped folder. Upload and be patient as it will take some time to upload.

Writing Guideline #4:

THE WRITING PROCESS

(4) THE WRITING PROCESS:



WRITING AS A PROCESS NOT A PRODUCT:

The iceberg diagram above gives a visual image of the writing process. Unfortunately, many “wreck” themselves by just focusing on the final product rather than process. This can give you writer's block and non-process writing is not going to be your strongest or best effort.

Pre-verbal, subconscious stage: The writing process doesn't start when you begin typing up your paper. The writing process begins as you start examining your feelings, thoughts, and ideas on a topic.

Invention: You move on next to invention as you start focusing your topic in your mind, gathering information as you discuss the topic with others, doing research, and brainstorming your thoughts using words and phrases.

Composing/Drafting: Then, you move onto composing/drafting. At this stage, you start getting ideas down on paper, extending some ideas, limiting others that aren't panning out. Many writers say that they didn't know what they thought until they saw what they thought. You might discover what you think as you write on a topic and your focus and argument might change and evolve as you write.

Revising: Once you have a draft of a paper, the writing process isn't over. The most important step is next: revising. Ask any professional writer and s/he will tell you that "the best writing is rewriting" (E.B White). In revising, you get to rework the ideas into a logical, clear, and creative paper. Revising involves global changes like moving paragraphs, deleting whole sections of text that aren't working, and rewriting ideas to clarify them.

Editing: This is the final step. Unfortunately, many students have the false impression that this is the first and most important step. Editing is correcting sentence-level errors like spelling, punctuation and grammar. If you make the mistake and start out editing, you'll over-correct writing that may or may not make it into the final draft. Get your paper into the shape you want it and edit as a last step before you turn it in.

PLANNING:

A good early step in the writing process is planning. Access your writing situation by asking questions:

Subject: Is your subject worth writing about? How broadly can you cover the subject? Do you need to narrow it to a more specific topic? How detailed should you be?

Sources: Where will your information come from: Personal experience? Direct observation? Interviews? Questionnaires? Research? Course readings?

Purpose: Why are you writing: To inform readers? To persuade them? To entertain them? To call them to action? Some combination of these?

Audience: How well informed are your readers about the subject? What do you want them to learn about the subject? How interested and attentive are they likely to be? Will they resist any of your ideas? How sophisticated are your readers?

Length: Are you working with any length specifications? If not, what length seems appropriate given your subject, your purpose, and your audience?

Deadline: What is your deadline? How much time will you need to allow for the various stages of writing, including typing and proofreading the final draft?

FREEWRITING:

A great place to begin after accessing the writing situation is *Freewriting*. Freewriting is writing continuously letting thoughts unselfconsciously flow (often for about 10 to 20 mins) without regard to spelling, grammar, style etc., and no corrections are made. This is an excellent technique to push through writer's block and to explore a given topic.

Since writer's block means that you aren't writing, one of the quickest ways to get around it is to write anything at all. You can write whatever you are thinking, feeling, wondering about, or trying to get *out* of your mind—just start writing. The only rule here is that you must *not* stop to correct spelling, grammar, or punctuation, or other parts of your writing. Set a time limit for yourself and just keep writing. Let's say you were given the following writing assignment to write a paper on Malcolm X's "[Learning to Read](#)" (see the full article in the section "Annotating Your Text").

FREEWITING EXAMPLE:

To help you get started, you might try freewriting first. Here is how some freewriting might look:

Ok, what do I write about this? His story is impressive but I'm not sure what I could argue about it. What could I possibly write? I really don't know. How am I going to write a whole paper on this! I thought Malcolm X's story was inspiring, but I don't know what else to say about it. I'll bet some people are put off by him. What could I write? Maybe I could—no. Why do I find it interesting? Well, first off I can't believe he copied the entire dictionary by hand! I remember having to copy a page of sentences several times for punishment in 6th grade when I talked back to the teacher and it was so boring. I can't believe he did it by choice. I wonder what drove him. It doesn't seem like many people have that kind of motivation and discipline to do something like that. It seems like people today are more interested with what's on TV or the internet than in books. My little niece spends all day on social networking sites posting video clips and commenting on her friends' posts yet she says she hates to read and write and is not doing well in school. She says it's boring. Malcolm X is the opposite. He seems more and more excited as he reads more books. He says books made him free. Through his self-made education he achieves a lot and even after he becomes a powerful and respected leader, he continued to work hard. I think we would all benefit from having a work ethic like that.

FREEWITING PRACTICE:

Using the most recently assigned reading in this course, freewrite on it for 10-15 minutes. Do not stop to correct grammar or spelling; just write your reaction to and thoughts on what you have read:

BRAINSTORMING:

Brainstorming is like freewriting in that you write down whatever comes to mind without stopping, but it is different because it looks more like a list of words and phrases than a string of sentences. Here's an example using Malcolm X's "[Learning to Read](#)":

BRAINSTORMING EXAMPLE:

| | |
|--|--|
| homemade education street smart becomes book smart self-taught criticizes mainstream education motivation determination education in prison = respect power through words 8 th grade dropout learned love of reading untraditional education | blacks left out of history horrors of slavery whites exploiting others actions un-Christian reading changed life freedom through reading free from: racism, slavery/imprisonment, self hate focus on black race strong work ethic Nation of Islam and Elijah Mohammed deafness, dumbness, blindness books to uplift |
|--|--|

BRAINSTORMING PRACTICE:

Focusing on the assigned reading you just did a 10-15 minute freewrite on, brainstorm your reaction to it:

| | |
|--|--|
| | |
|--|--|

JOURNALISTS' QUESTIONS:

Asking questions: Another method used to gather ideas on a topic is to ask the “Journalists’ Questions” (who, what, when, where, why and how) which cause you to look at all aspects of your subject. Through answering these questions, you can discover interesting information that you can use for writing. For a paper on Malcolm X’s “[Learning to Read](#)” here are some potential questions:

Who was Elijah Mohammed?

What caused the deafness, dumbness and blindness Malcolm X claims afflicts the black race?

When else is power through words more effective than power through violence?

Where did the Civil Rights Movement mainly take place?

Why was Malcolm X so angry at whites?

How did reading about things he wasn’t taught in school, like slavery, shape Malcolm X’s beliefs?

JOURNALISTS' QUESTIONS PRACTICE:

Examine your particular writing topic and create questions using the following question words. Once you begin answering your questions, you will have even more material you can use to make your argument.

Who

What

When

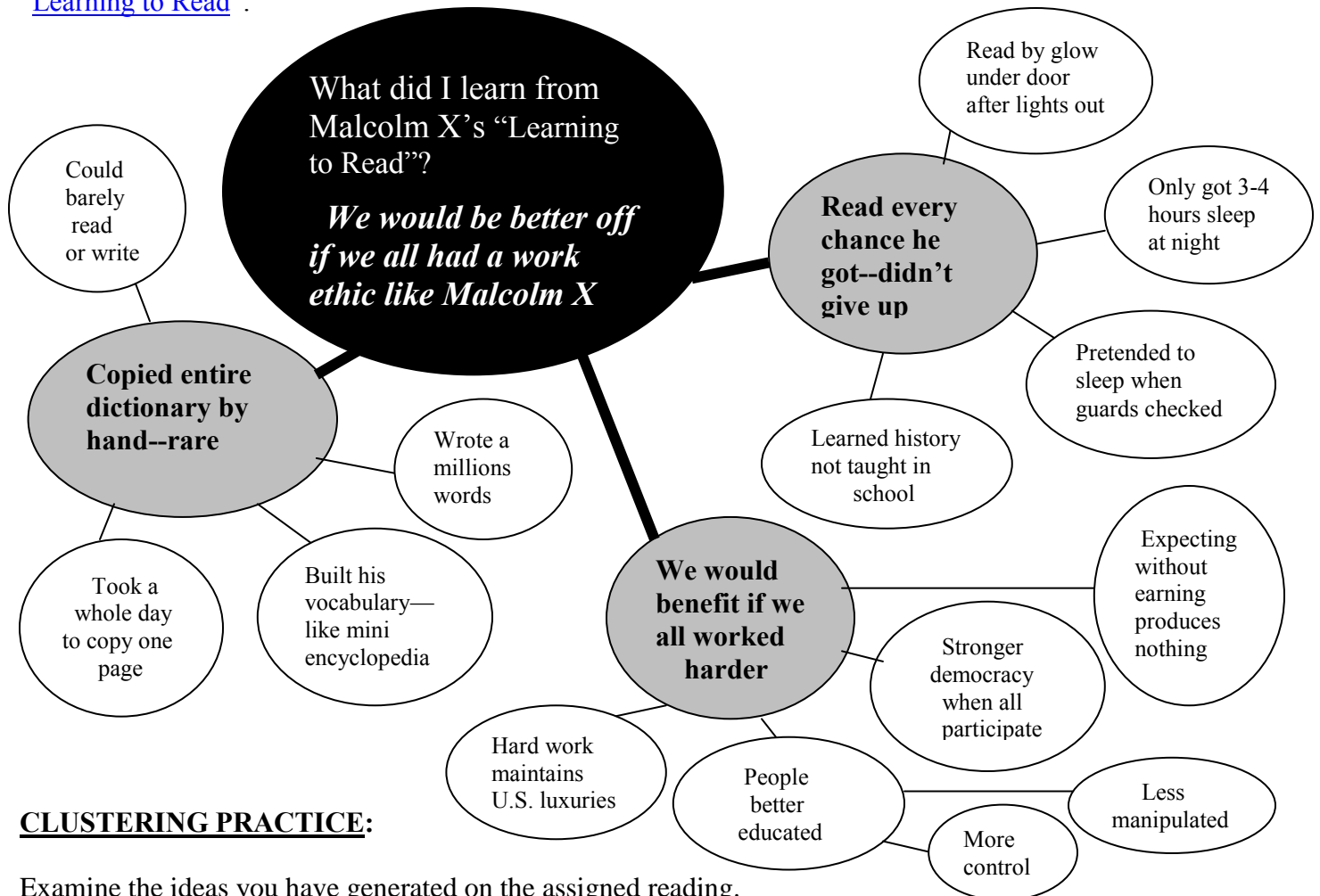
Where

Why

How

CLUSTERING:

After you generate ideas on your topic (using methods like freewriting and brainstorming) you will want to select certain ideas and then **category** and **organize** your information. One technique to help you group your ideas is called clustering which differs from brainstorming and freewriting in that what you create is an informal map. To create a cluster, first write down your writing prompt or your answer to the prompt (your rough thesis) and draw a big circle around it. Then write down ideas that respond to the writing prompt and draw a smaller circle around each new idea and connect them to the center. Clustering provides a mental picture organizing the ideas you generate and showing how they connect to one another. Here's an example using Malcolm X's "[Learning to Read](#)":



CLUSTERING PRACTICE:

Examine the ideas you have generated on the assigned reading.

Now, look for ways to group your information into shared categories to create a cluster:

LISTING:

Another method used to organize your ideas is called listing. This is the most informal kind of outline in which you jot down your main points and possible supporting examples and details. This kind of outline is for you only, and you don't need to worry about making it more comprehensive if it does the job for you. Many students find this kind of outline helpful in taking timed essay exams because it is brief enough to occupy a very small space, and it doesn't take much time to produce. If we list our ideas in regards to Malcolm X's "[Learning to Read](#)" instead of clustering them, here is how it might look:

What did I learn from and what do I want to argue about Malcolm X's "[Learning to Read](#)"?

Rough Thesis: *We would be better off if we all had a work ethic like Malcolm X*

1. Copied entire dictionary by hand--rare

- Could barely read or write
- Took a whole day to copy one page
- Built his vocabulary—like mini encyclopedia
- Wrote a million words

2. Read every chance he got--didn't give up

- Read by glow under door after lights out
- Only got 3-4 hours sleep at night
- Pretended to sleep when guards checked
- Learned history not taught in school

3. We would benefit if we all worked harder

- Hard work maintains U.S. luxuries
- People better educated leads to more control and being less manipulated
- Stronger democracy when all participate
- Expecting without earning produces nothing

LISTING PRACTICE:

Look at your freewriting and brainstorm and group your main ideas into shared categories to create a list below:

OUTLINING:

Why outline?

Once you have settled on a thesis statement and your main supporting ideas, you can write a formal outline, creating the “skeleton” of your essay. Looking at your ideas this way can help ensure:

- Your main points are on-topic and directly support your thesis
- You order your main points logically
- You emphasize more important ideas and subordinate less important ideas
- You have sufficient evidence for each of your main points

How to write a formal outline:

Before you begin:

- Double-check that your thesis statement makes a clear and specific claim about your topic, a claim you will then need to substantiate in the body of your essay. For more information on how to write a strong thesis statement, see the “[Thesis Statements](#)” section.
- Write out each of your supporting points in complete sentences or clear, unambiguous phrases.

Once you have everything ready, you can start to arrange your ideas into a formal outline.

- 1) Write your thesis statement at the top of the page.
- 2) Group related ideas and categorize them according to their level of generality—how general or specific they are. In a formal outline, this means:
 - Use Roman numerals (I, II, III, IV etc.) for your major points
 - Use capital letters (A, B, C) for sub-points
 - Use regular numbers (1, 2, 3, 4) for more specific supporting ideas
 - Use lower-case letters (a, b, c) for your most specific supporting details

Each time you move to a more specific level, indent.

- 3) Arrange your main points in a logical order.
- 4) Re-read and revise. Just like writing, constructing an outline is a process, and your first “draft” might need some adjustments to your ideas and organization.

Organizing your outline:

When deciding how to order your points, your first consideration should be logic. How does one point lead up to or build upon another? Additionally, you might also consider:

- *Climax*: Present your ideas so they build to a climax, ending with your most dramatic examples.
- *Complexity*: Start with simpler ideas and build to more complex ones.
- *Familiarity*: Start with more familiar ideas and move towards newer ones.
- *Audience appeal*: Start with “safe” ideas and move to more challenging ones.
- *Chronological*: Present ideas in the time order in which they occurred.
- *Compare/Contrast*: When looking at similarities or differences, it may be ordered in one of two ways:

| | |
|--|--|
| <p>Block style: look first at one item and then the next, using the same criteria each time. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">I. Malcolm X<ul style="list-style-type: none">A. PhilosophiesB. Religious influenceC. AccomplishmentsII. Martin Luther King, Jr.<ul style="list-style-type: none">A. PhilosophiesB. Religious influenceC. Accomplishments | <p>Point-by-point: Look at the two items simultaneously, comparing them on the same criteria. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">I. Philosophies<ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Malcolm XB. Martin Luther King, Jr.II. Religious influence<ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Malcolm XB. Martin Luther King, Jr.III. Accomplishments<ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Malcolm XB. Martin Luther King, Jr. |
|--|--|

Some other hints for using outlines effectively:

- Outlining is better for organizing ideas than generating them. It will be easier for you to construct a formal outline if you’ve first thoroughly explored your ideas through freewriting, brainstorming, clustering, etc.
- Print out your outline and have it next to you as you write so that you can reference it easily.
- Use your outline as a guide, but don’t be afraid to deviate from it if you find your ideas are changing as you write.

Outline Template Example: Here is a useful template to create an outline. Here's an example:

THESIS: *What do you want to convince your reader of? Is this an arguable assertion? Is this based on the reading? Can one disagree?*

We would be better off if we all had a work ethic like Malcolm X (this is arguable because one could disagree that we have a poor work ethic in the U.S. or one could argue Malcolm X isn't a good example of hard work)

PARAGRAPH 1:

TOPIC SENTENCE (Point): *What is an arguable point I can make to prove my thesis?*

From rough cluster/listing: Copied entire dictionary by hand—rare.

Revised: The hard work Malcolm X showed by copying the dictionary is not common.

SUPPORT (Information): *What examples and quotes in the reading can I use to prove and illustrate the claim in my topic sentence? Do I want to also include real life examples or research to strengthen my claim?*

From text: Description of how he copied dictionary and reread his work and what he learned (pages 1-2)

Outside research: Description of how Jean Twenge in *Generation Me* claims the current generation doesn't work hard anymore but expects reward--p. 63, p. 68, p. 72, p. 137, p. 140, p. 157, chapter 7 on race and racism

RELEVANCE (Explanation): *Why do I think this is important? What can be learned from this? What are the implications? Outcomes? Possible interpretations or deeper meaning?*

So what are the possible harms of feeling entitled but not working hard?
depression, violence, anxiety, higher crime rates, alienation, being easily controlled

PARAGRAPH 2:

TOPIC SENTENCE (Point): *What is another arguable point I can make to prove my thesis? How can I smoothly transition from the point I made before?*

From rough cluster/listing: Read every chance he got--didn't give up.

Revised: After learning to read, Malcolm X read every chance he got and continued to work hard to improve himself which is a lesson that would greatly help us today.

SUPPORT (Information): *What examples and quotes in the reading can I use to prove and illustrate the claim in my topic sentence? Do I want to also include real life examples or research to strengthen my claim?*

From text: Description of how he stayed up past lights out and read by glow under door. Hid from guards (page 2).
Description of all the things he learned from reading (about slavery, white oppression)—page 3.

Outside research: Alex Jones' explanation of how people don't work hard to stay informed in *Losing the News*

RELEVANCE (Explanation): *Why do I think this is important? What can be learned from this? What are the implications? Outcomes? Possible interpretations or deeper meaning?*

So what are the possible harms of not working hard to educate self? Government can control and manipulate us.

CONCLUSION:

How can I end the essay on a strong note? What would be a good "so what?" that explains: So what can we learn from this? So what is the larger significance or impact?

So what? So what are the outcomes of people not getting what they think they deserve even when they don't work for it? Causes many to feel cheated, perpetually angry, give up. Paralyzes people in inability.

So what is the impact of a populace with a poor work ethic? Increasingly uneducated, unmotivated, apathetic, and better controlled by politicians, advertisers, other countries. People turn to easy entertainment that has no true value for improving society. We lose our democracy when people aren't educated and participating.

Outline Template: If you are struggling with organizing an outline, here is a useful template:

THESIS: *What do you want to convince your reader of? Is this an arguable assertion? Is this based on the reading? Can one disagree?*

PARAGRAPH 1:

TOPIC SENTENCE (Point): *What is an arguable point I can make to prove my thesis?*

SUPPORT (Information): *What examples and quotes in the reading can I use to prove and illustrate the claim in my topic sentence? Do I want to also include real life examples or research to strengthen my claim?*

RELEVANCE (Explanation): *Why do I think this is important? What can be learned from this? What are the implications? Outcomes? Possible interpretations or deeper meaning?*

PARAGRAPH 2:

TOPIC SENTENCE (Point): *What is another arguable point I can make to prove my thesis? How can I smoothly transition from the point I made before?*

SUPPORT (Information): *What examples and quotes in the reading can I use to prove and illustrate the claim in my topic sentence? Do I want to also include real life examples or research to strengthen my claim?*

RELEVANCE (Explanation): *Why do I think this is important? What can be learned from this? What are the implications? Outcomes? Possible interpretations or deeper meaning?*

PARAGRAPH 3:

TOPIC SENTENCE (Point): *What is another arguable point I can make to prove my thesis? How can I smoothly transition from the point I made before?*

SUPPORT (Information): *What examples and quotes in the reading can I use to prove and illustrate the claim in my topic sentence? Do I want to also include real life examples or research to strengthen my claim?*

RELEVANCE (Explanation): *Why do I think this is important? What can be learned from this? What are the implications? Outcomes? Possible interpretations or deeper meaning?*

PARAGRAPH 4:

TOPIC SENTENCE (Point): *What is another arguable point I can make to prove my thesis? How can I smoothly transition from the point I made before?*

SUPPORT (Information): *What examples and quotes in the reading can I use to prove and illustrate the claim in my topic sentence? Do I want to also include real life examples or research to strengthen my claim?*

RELEVANCE (Explanation): *Why do I think this is important? What can be learned from this? What are the implications? Outcomes? Possible interpretations or deeper meaning?*

CONCLUSION:

How can I end the essay on a strong note? What would be a good “so what?” that explains: So what can we learn from this? So what is the larger significance or impact?

Sample outline on Malcolm X's "Learning to Read":

Thesis: The characteristics that Malcolm X shows in "Learning to Read" of not giving up even in the face of overwhelming odds and applying hard work and persistence have become frighteningly rare in the U.S. today and this causes us to become increasingly uneducated, unmotivated, apathetic, and better controlled by others.

I. Introduction

- A. Lead in with an overview of what "Learning to Read" is about
- B. State thesis
- C. Give example of lowered work ethics as seen in actors versus reality stars
- D. Repeat thesis in different words and add the "so what?" of harmful outcomes

II. The persistent effort Malcolm X showed in learning to read has become disappointingly rare.

- A. Copied dictionary word for word by hand
 - 1) At first took a day to write out each page (page 2)
 - 2) Retested himself on the words after completing each page memorizing them all
 - 3) Educated himself about the world as dictionary is as a "miniature encyclopedia" (2)
- B. Jean Twenge in *Generation Me* says we expect instant results without working hard to achieve them.
 - 1) Twenge states: "They are less likely to work hard today to get a reward tomorrow—an especially important skill these days, when many good jobs require graduate degrees" (157).
 - 2) Without hard work we'll be less educated so can be easily exploited by corporate America.

III. Once Malcolm X achieves his goal of literacy, he reads constantly and is tireless in his efforts of self-improvement which is a necessary lesson for us to apply today.

- A. Malcolm X pursues reading with the same diligence he put into learning to read and write.
 - 1) Use quote about how after lights out in prison, he read by the glow of the door (page 3)
 - 2) Hid from guards every hour so he could keep reading
 - 3) Only slept 3-4 hours per night so he could study
- B. Through his diligence, Malcolm X becomes educated and better able to defend the rights of blacks.
 - 1) Learns about the realities of slavery
 - 2) Learns about the repeated oppression of non-whites by whites around the world
- C. Alex S. Jones in *Losing the News* argues we don't put as much effort today into reading and educating ourselves and this is one reason we're losing good news reporting.
 - 1) Use quote: "Surveys show that there is a perhaps not so shocking lack of knowledge about government. A 2006 Zogby poll found that nearly three-quarters of Americans can correctly name the Three Stooges, but fewer than half know the three branches of government" (Jones 26).
 - 2) Dangers: we become controlled by a small elite and we are no longer a democracy run by the people for the people.

IV. Conclusion: Even after Malcolm X achieved success and fame, his work ethic did not wane and if we ourselves don't learn the value of this, our future as a true democracy is bleak. As we become more engrossed in lazy entertainment, our democracy erodes. As we become increasingly controlled by others, our strength and respect on a global scale disappears and we lose our valued freedoms.

Outlining Checklist:

*“By writing an outline you really are writing in a way,
because you’re creating the structure of what you’re going to do.
Once I really know what I’m going to write, I don’t find
the actual writing takes all that long.” --Tom Wolfe*

Please write feedback on your classmates’ outlines focusing on the following areas:

(1) **Thesis:**

Does the thesis make a statement that can be argued? Ask yourself, **can I disagree?** If you cannot disagree (if the thesis just states a fact), advise the author how to **add opinion**. Is the thesis specific and clear enough? Is the thesis **based on the reading**? Also, is there a clear “**so what?**” So what is important about this? So what is the significance?

(2) **Supporting Points:**

Does the outline list the supporting points in a **clear and logical order**? How can the order be clearer or improved? Does each supporting point **directly prove the thesis**? Are there any **additional supporting points** that should be included?

(3) **Evidence:**

Is there a clear example illustrating each of the supporting points? Is the author using examples **from the reading**? If not, suggest ideas the author could use to better prove his/her points. Could the author **improve or replace** any of the supporting points or textual examples? Has the author developed a clear **explanation** of why each supporting point is relevant?

DRAFTING:

(from Purdue University's writing advice)

The First Draft

Before you begin writing, you should have a thesis or question that you're comfortable with and an outline that gives you structure on what you need to say and where. Now just take pen to paper or fingers to keyboard and write. "Sure, easier said than done," you might be thinking. Fair enough, but you don't have to come up with polished prose. It can be as rough as you want it to be. And with practice, it does get easier and faster.

Believe it or not, drafting should be the least time-consuming step in the research paper process. Invention should take longer. Research should take longer. And revising should definitely take longer. If it's taking you a month of Sundays just to eke out a thousand words, two things could be happening:

1. you don't have any clue what you should be saying (in which case meet with a tutor or your instructor) or . . .
2. you're revising *while* you draft so that you end up with one sentence an hour.

If it's the latter (as it often is), separate your duties out. Within every writer, there is a Creator and a Critic. Tell your Critic to go to sleep for this step and wake up for the next one. Let your Creator shine for now.

If you are still having difficulties starting the draft, check out some more pointers below:

Symptoms and Cures for Writer's Block

Because writers have various ways of writing, a variety of things can cause a writer to experience anxiety, and sometimes this anxiety leads to writer's block. Often a solution can be found by speaking with your instructor. There are some common causes of writer's block, however, and when you are blocked, consider these causes and try the strategies that sound most promising:

Symptom

You have attempted to begin a paper without doing any preliminary work such as brainstorming or outlining...

Possible Cures

- Use invention strategies like freewriting, brainstorming, writing responses to the Journalists' questions
- Write down all the primary ideas you'd like to express and then fill in each with the smaller ideas that make up each primary idea. This can easily be converted into an outline.

Symptom

You have chosen or been assigned a topic which bores you....

Possible Cures

- Choose a particular aspect of the topic you are interested in
- Figure out how you can personalize a topic to make it more interesting

Symptom

You don't want to spend time writing or don't understand the assignment...

Possible Cures

- Resign yourself to the fact that you have to write
- Find out what is expected of you (consult a teacher, textbook, student, tutor)
- Look at some of the strategies for writing anxiety listed below

Symptom

You are anxious about writing the paper...

Possible Cures

- Focus your energy by rehearsing the task in your head.
- Consciously stop the non-productive comments running through your head by replacing them with productive ones.
- If you have some "rituals" for writing success (chewing gum, listening to jazz etc.), use them.

Symptom

You are so stressed out you can't seem to put a word on the page...

Possible Cures

- Stretch! If you can't stand up, stretch as many muscle groups as possible while staying seated.
- Try tensing and releasing various muscle groups. Starting from your toes, tense up for perhaps five to ten seconds and then let go. Relax and then go on to another muscle group.
- Breathe deeply. Close your eyes; then, fill your chest cavity slowly by taking four or five short deep breaths. Hold each breath until it hurts, and then let it out slowly.
- Use a calming word or mental image to focus on while relaxing. If you choose a word, be careful not to use an imperative. Don't command yourself to "Calm down!" or "Relax!"

Symptom

You're self-conscious about your writing, you may have trouble getting started. So, if you're preoccupied with the idea that you have to write about a subject and feel you probably won't express yourself well...

Possible Cures

- Talk over the subject with a friend or tutor.
- Assure yourself that the first draft doesn't have to be a work of genius; it is something to work with.
- Force yourself to write down something, however poorly worded, that approximates your thought (you can revise this later) and go on with the next idea.
- Break the task up into steps. Meet the general purpose first, and then flesh out the more specific aspects later.

Following the outline for Malcolm X's "[Learning to Read](#)," here is a rough draft for a paper:

ROUGH DRAFT

"Malcolm X Learns to Read"

In "Learning to Read" he describes how he taught himself to read and the benefits he gained. He also shows a level of determination that has become rare. The characteristics that he shows of not giving up even in the face of overwhelming odds and applying hard work and persistence have become increasingly rare in the U.S. today. I think people today often feel that things should be given to them rather than them earning it. Forget years of training in acting when you can become rich and famous overnight on a reality show with absolutely no talent. The concept that things should come easily is causing many to feel cheated, perpetually angry and not getting what they think they deserve. Paralyzes people in disappointment. Instant gratification of technology: Facebook, Netflix, DVRs, online gaming, smart phones, video games, Twitter, YouTube, iTunes, iPads have made us hooked on instant entertainment and gratification and forgetting the values of hard work and persistence. It is not entertaining for most to spend three hours reworking a math problem until you get the answer or sexy to work on shooting the same basket repeatedly for weeks, or practice any sport until you're in pain, or suffer the repeats of heart-wrenching failure for a glimmer of success if success follows at all but if we keep devaluing this, and keep appealing to people's laziness, we're going to become increasingly uneducated, unmotivated, apathetic, and better controlled by others.

Malcolm X showed diligence and hard work in learning to read. Malcolm X in his autobiography tells us that when he went to prison, he could hardly read or write. He decided the way to improve would be to copy the entire dictionary word for word by hand. Even though he had horrible penmanship, he spent hours copying each word. He said to copy just the first page alone took an entire day. The next day he reviewed all the words he did not remember, he slowly built his vocabulary but at the same time he started educating himself about the larger world as he describes the dictionary as a "miniature encyclopedia" (2). Malcolm X carried on until he copied the entire dictionary cover to cover. He said: "Between what I wrote in my tablet, and writing letters,

during the rest of my time in prison I would guess I wrote a million words” (2). In *Generation Me*, the author Jean Twenge she states: “They are less likely to work hard today to get a reward tomorrow—an especially important skill these days, when many good jobs require graduate degrees.”

Once Malcolm X learns to read, he continues to work hard reading more and more books. Which is not easy in a prison situation where you are not in control of your time. Malcolm X reads at night, “And as soon as the guard passed, I got back out of bed onto the floor area of that light-glow” (3). In *Losing the News* by Alex S. Jones, he discusses how one of the reasons we are losing important investigative journalism today is because, people in general are no longer as interested in reading a lot. Jones states: “Surveys show that there is a perhaps not so shocking lack of knowledge about government. A 2006 Zogby poll found that nearly three-quarters of Americans can correctly name the Three Stooges, but fewer than half know the three branches of government” (Jones 26). When Malcolm X reads, he also discovers the traditional history that had been taught was “whitened” (3) and that “the black man had simply been left out” (3). He reads about the horrors of slavery and the repeated oppression of non-whites by whites throughout history. Only through continual efforts and diligence like this do we keep ourselves free from oppression and injustice.

Malcolm X shares: “You will never catch me with a free fifteen minutes in which I’m not studying something I feel might be able to help the black man” (3). I often hear the excuse from people about being “too busy” to do things. This is a dumb excuse. We have to work hard to protect the things that we find valuable in the U.S. or else they will be taken away and we will lose our democracy.

REVISING:

“There is no such thing as good writing, only good rewriting” -- Louis Brandels

Revising: For experienced writers, revising is rarely a one-step process. When you *revise* a paper, the larger elements of writing generally receive attention first—the **focus, organization, paragraphing, content, and overall strategy**. Improvements in sentence structure, word choice, grammar, punctuation, and mechanics come later when you *edit* the paper.

Make Global Revisions: Global revisions address the larger elements of writing. Usually they affect chunks of text longer than a sentence, and frequently they can be quite dramatic. Whole paragraphs might be dropped, others added. Material once stretched over two or three paragraphs might be condensed into one. Entire sections might be rearranged. Even the content might change dramatically, for the process of revising stimulates thought.

IMPORTANT REVISION QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF . . .

TITLE

- Does your title give readers a good idea of what's to come? (Have you come up with one yet? Remember, "Assignment #3" is not a title!)

INTRODUCTION

- Is your thesis statement clearly stated?
- Is there enough lead-in in the introduction to establish the importance of and context for the statement/question? Is there too much? Too little? By the end of the introduction, is it clear to the audience what kind of material will follow? If so, are these expectations fulfilled?

BODY PARAGRAPHS

- Is it clear where your introduction ends and body begins and where the body ends and the conclusion begins? In other words, are your paragraph indents meaningful?
- Are there transitions between all sections and paragraphs to create flow and unity?
- Does each body paragraph have a topic sentence? If you took your thesis/question and all your topic sentences, would that correspond to what you want to say in your paper? If not, do you need to revise your thesis/question or re-examine your supporting points?
- Do the topic sentences (1) make a connection back to the thesis, (2) establish a link with the previous paragraph's content, and (3) give enough information that the audience could guess where a particular paragraph's development would lead?
- Does the order of paragraphs make sense?
- Are your paragraphs too short or too long? Can you combine or separate any content?
- Are your examples reliable, representative, and convincing? Are there enough of them or too many?
- Are your sources convincing? Is there enough balance between your own insights and expert opinions?
- Are all sources and direct quotations explained or have you left them standing on their own?
- Has anything that goes off topic or is not essential been cut?

CONCLUSION

- Does the conclusion say something different from your introduction?
- Does the conclusion leave a good lasting impression?
- Does the conclusion end the paper on a strong and interesting note?

**Here's revision advice on the rough draft on Malcolm X's "Learning to Read."
For each paper, you will give and receive peer feedback using this format:**

Peer Workshop Feedback

| | |
|---|-------------------------------------|
| For (author of paper): Rachel B. | From (evaluator): Prof. Bell |
|---|-------------------------------------|

I. Read the essay for the first time and then freewrite your general impressions for 2 minutes:

What were the strong points? Confusing points? Organizational choices? Your overall impression?

I like the points you bring up in the opening about how we waste our time with technology and don't really like to invest our time into things that are more valuable. You used the text well to show how Malcolm X had a really strong work ethic unlike the average American. I like how you brought in your outside research but that part felt like it could have been more developed as I wasn't completely sure how those sources proved your overall thesis about hard work. I recently heard on the radio about a study that said Japanese students do better than American students not because they are smarter but because they don't give up. Perhaps you could use something like this for your outside research to prove Americans have a weaker work ethic. The conclusion seemed really short. You started to talk about some great ideas there that you could have developed further. It left me wondering what better things we could be doing with our time and how this puts our democracy in danger. On a formatting note, you need to use MLA format, one inch margins, and the paper is under length.

II. Read the essay for a second time and answer these questions. Be as specific as possible:

**(1) What are your overall impressions of the introduction? Is it clear? Attention-grabbing?
Does it contain a clear argument? How can it be improved?**

The title of the paper "Malcolm X Learns to Read" is nearly identical to the original title: "Learning to Read." Add more of your own creativity into the title and draw your reader in to want to keep reading. In the opening, I like the different ideas you present but it could flow a little more smoothly. First, the opening sentence begins sort of mid-discussion referring to a "he" who has not been introduced. You begin: "In "Learning to Read" he describes how he taught himself to read and the benefits he gained." Then there seems to be some wordiness and repetition that could be tightened up. For instance, the two sentences after the first sentence say the same thing. Next, you bring in some good real life examples of people not working hard: reality shows, wasting time with technology, and not dedicating time on task. These are a lot of different examples and they don't flow together as well as they could. Perhaps try choosing one and focus on developing that one example more thoroughly and convincingly. Finally, your thesis is somewhat buried in a very long sentence at the end of the paragraph. Try restating your argument more directly and clearly.

Explain the thesis in your own words:

The thesis is that we should have a hard work ethic like Malcolm X's which is interesting and creative. You also spell out the "so what?" dimension to your thesis very well explaining the harms of a poor work ethic on a larger scale.

(2) Is the organization of ideas fluid and easy to follow? Are there strong topic sentences focusing each of the paragraphs? Are transitions present from paragraph to paragraph? Sentence to sentence?

Your paragraphs are well organized and center nicely on proving one claim each. However, in paragraph 2, you begin with a fact rather than an argument: “Malcolm X showed diligence and hard work in learning to read.” This is hard to disagree with. Instead of leading with a plot fact which then often leads into plot summary, lead with the argument that you want to make. In the introduction, you argued that Malcolm X’s work ethic was rare. This is arguable so add it to your topic sentence: “Malcolm X showed diligence and hard work in learning to read and this is rare.” This is now arguable because many could disagree and argue that we do have a strong work ethic in the U.S. In other words, a topic sentence should contain the opinion you want to convince your reader of.

In paragraph 3, again you begin with a plot fact rather than an argument: “Once Malcolm X learns to read, he continues to work hard reading more and more books.” Again, ask yourself: What do I want to convince my reader of? In paragraph 2 you focused on proving that Malcolm X’s work ethic was rare. In this paragraph you seem to continue to focus on the rarity of this work ethic but in the end you say: “Only through continual efforts and diligence like this do we keep ourselves free from oppression and injustice,” so it seems you want to argue that we need to learn from and apply this work ethic. If this is what you want to argue, add this to your topic sentence. For example: “Once Malcolm X learns to read, he continues to work hard reading more and more books which a lesson we should all learn from.” This ties directly back to your thesis and leads this paragraph with an argument rather than just summarizing. Next, the order of the paragraph is a little confusing. You briefly discuss how Malcolm X read after lights out, then you mention Alex Jones, and then you go back to what Malcolm X learned from reading. Since you begin the paragraph discussing Malcolm X, focus on him first and group all of your discussion of him together.

(3) Is there sufficient development of the paragraphs with evidence and analysis? Which ideas need to be developed with specific examples, quotes and explanations?

You use paraphrasing and quotes from the reading well to prove and illustrate your claims. In paragraph 2, you use the example of Malcolm X copying the dictionary very well to prove your point of his unusual hard work ethic. You selected some excellent quotes and chose two fascinating outside sources. However, your outside example of Jean Twenge is very brief and it is not clear how it applies to the point you want to make about Malcolm X’s rare work ethic. You select a good quote from Twenge but need more explanation and analysis to show how it is relevant to your thesis. You end the paragraph with the quote but you need to add more of your own “so what?” analysis.

In paragraph 3, develop more how Malcolm X’s night reading showed his strong work ethic and perhaps show how he sacrificed sleep to read. Then tell what he learned by reading and “so what?” So what does this teach us about the benefits of hard work? Then when you introduce Alex Jones, again make it clearer how your outside research connects directly to your argument about strong work ethics. You again provide a quote without enough of your own analysis to show how this proves your point. Overall, add more of your own analysis which will also help you lengthen your paper as right now it is under the required minimum.

For your paragraphs, look again at the PIE paragraph approach: (P)oint, (I)nformation, (E)xplanation. For your two body paragraphs, you pulled good (I)nformation from the book to illustrate your points. However, the (P)oint for each body paragraph needed to be clearer with more arguable topic sentences (not plot facts). Also, the (I)nformation from your outside research could be more convincingly developed. Finally, you are largely missing the (E)xplanation in each body paragraph which is your own analysis telling the “so what?” of the issues you raised here. So what is the relevance? The outcomes? The harms? In your introduction you stated clear harmful outcomes of our poor work ethic, “we’re going to become increasingly uneducated, unmotivated, apathetic, and better controlled by others,” so prove how these statements are true in the body of the essay.

(4) Does the essay end on a strong note? Does the conclusion tie up the points well? Is there a strong “so what?” that explains: So what can we learn from this? So what is the larger significance or impact?

It looks like you lost steam in your conclusion. Your introduction was half a page and then your conclusion is a few sentences. The conclusion is the last impression your reader is left with of the paper so you want to end on a strong and thought-provoking note. You raise several good points that each could be further developed. You claim that people say they are “too busy” to do things. What things do you feel they should be doing and why? Then you state in the U.S. we have to work hard to protect the things we find valuable. Again, “things” is not descriptive. Instead be more specific: What precisely are we in danger of losing? Make this more concrete so your reader can share your fears and be convinced. Finally you make the interesting assertion that we’re in danger of losing our democracy. How is this true? Make it clearer what the connection is to losing our democracy and having a poor work ethic. Make the cause-effect relationship of this clearer so you can end by convincing your reader of your argument.

The Components of a Successful Essay

Put an “X” in the box responding to each aspect of the essay

| Criteria | needs work | adequate | good | excellent |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Assignment Fulfillment Was the essay an analysis of/argument about the reading? | | X | | |
| Thesis/Controlling Idea Does the thesis make an arguable assertion of opinion and have a strong “so what?” Is the thesis a response to and an analysis of the reading? | | | X | |
| Organization/Coherence/Focus Is there a logical order of ideas with clear transitions? Are there strong topic sentences? Does the writer stay on topic within each paragraph? Is the overall essay unified around one clear argument? | X | | | |
| Development/Support Are the body paragraphs fully developed with reasons, illustrations, examples, details, evidence, explanations, analysis, and/or interpretations? Are inferences and claims supported with evidence from the text? | X | | | |
| Sentence Craft Is the writing fluent or choppy? Does the writer join sentences to show relationships between ideas? | | X | | |
| Surface Issues/Proofreading Grammar, usage, punctuation, spelling. | 4 or more errors/page | 3 or fewer errors/page | 2 or fewer errors/page | 1 or fewer errors/page |
| | | X | | |
| Basic Research & Documentation Skills Does the writing integrate relevant sources and quotes to substantiate claims? Does the writer consistently use MLA format? | X | | | |

Using the advice on the draft, here's a revision of the essay on Malcolm X's "Learning to Read":

Rachel Bell

Professor Lucia Lachmayr

English 100

21 June 2011

Added MLA formatting

Revised title

Added course info

Added MLA numbering:
last name and page
number

One inch margins (on all sides)

Lazy Americans: Learning a Lesson from Malcolm X

In the excerpt "Learning to Read," he shows that reading and writing are paths to self-confidence, empowerment and liberation. He also shows a level of determination that has become increasingly rare.

The characteristics that he shows of not giving up even in the face of overwhelming odds and applying hard work and persistence have become increasingly rare in the U.S. today. I think that people today

often feel that things should be given to them rather than them earning it. No need to study acting for years, act in play after play honing your craft, or learn different dialects and accents to play diverse and

convincing characters. Instead, you can become rich and famous overnight by starring in a reality show without any talent. The repeated message that we should be richly rewarded for doing nothing

or for just being ourselves causes people to not pursue the healthy and character building paths of hard work. Paralyzes people in disappointment. When we don't get what we think we deserve, we become

a nation of discontents that do nothing and don't care. If we keep devaluing the slow path of hard work, we're going to become increasingly uneducated, unmotivated, apathetic, and better controlled

by advertisers, politicians, and in the changing global climate, other countries.

The diligence and persistent effort Malcolm X showed in learning to read has become disappointingly rare. Malcolm X in his autobiography tells us that when he went to prison, he could

hardly read or write. He decided the way to improve would be to copy the entire dictionary word for word by hand. Even though he had horrible penmanship, he spent hours copying each word. He said to copy just

the first page alone took an entire day. The next day he reviewed all the words he did not remember, he

Narrowed to one example. Moved tech examples to conclusion

Clearer thesis

Revised to an arguable topic sentence

slowly built his vocabulary, and at the same time he started educating himself about the larger world as he describes the dictionary as a “miniature encyclopedia” (2). Malcolm X carried on until he copied the entire dictionary cover to cover. However, the time he dedicated to his writing was not confined to this amazing achievement alone: “Between what I wrote in my tablet, and writing letters, during the rest of my time in prison I would guess I wrote a million words” (2). The dedication to his own education and how he strengthened his own intelligence and abilities through sheer force of will is impressive but unfortunately is the exception rather than the norm. In *Generation Me*, the author Jean Twenge addresses the present generation of people who have been taught to put themselves first and expect instant results without working hard to achieve them. Twenge states: “They are less likely to work hard today to get a reward tomorrow—an especially important skill these days, when many good jobs require graduate degrees.” If people are less willing today to work hard, then we are going to have increasingly uneducated, lazy people who spend more time complaining than achieving. With a lack of education we won’t be strong critical thinkers so will be easily taken in by people who want to exploit us for profit like advertisers and corporate America. Instead of defining who we are, people who want to sell us things will continue to shape our wants, desires and perceptions of ourselves.

Revised intro to quote

Added transition from Malcolm X to Twenge

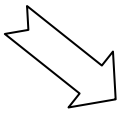
Expanded discussion of Twenge and added “so what?” discussion after quote

Revised to an arguable topic sentence

Once Malcolm X achieves his goal of literacy, he reads constantly and is tireless in his efforts of self-improvement which is a necessary lesson for us to apply today. He reads a book every chance he can get which is not easy in a prison situation where you are not in control of your time. Even with the daunting obstacle of the lights being turned out at night, Malcolm X’s persistence towards his own education is not stopped:

Added to the quote and since it was longer than 3 lines, entire quote needed to be indented

At one-hour intervals the night guards paced past every room. Each time I heard the approaching footsteps, I jumped into bed and feigned sleep. And as soon as the guard passed, I got back out of bed onto the floor area of that light-glow, where I would read for another fifty-eight minutes—until the guard approached again. That went on until three or four every morning. Three or four hours of sleep a night was enough for me. (3)



Reordered the discussion in this paragraph to group discussion of Malcolm X all together and then moved onto outside example with Alex Jones after

As a result of Malcolm X forging his own education, he learns many things that are not taught in the typical classroom which inspires him to fight for change. He discovers the traditional history that had been taught was “whitened” (3) and that “the black man had simply been left out” (3). He reads about the horrors of slavery and the repeated oppression of non-whites by whites throughout history. Because he dedicates so much time to reading. He becomes a powerful and educated leader who was able to fight for African-Americans at a time when they were denied equal rights. Only through continual effort and diligence like this do we keep ourselves free from oppression and injustice. In *Losing the News* by Alex S. Jones, he discusses how one of the reasons we are losing important investigative journalism today is because people in general are no longer as interested in reading detailed, non-entertainment based reports. Newspapers and journalists once served as a watchdog protecting our citizens but through apathy and short attention spans, we are no longer interested in putting in the work it takes to remain educated, particularly about the very systems that control us: “Surveys show that there is a perhaps not so shocking lack of knowledge about government. A 2006 Zogby poll found that nearly three-quarters of Americans can correctly name the Three Stooges, but fewer than half know the three branches of government” (Jones 26). The dangers of this are clear. If we don’t educate ourselves like Malcolm X did about the ways in which a government can control and exploit it’s people, as he describes for blacks in the U.S., then we ourselves are in danger of being controlled and manipulated. When there are uneducated and uninterested masses that care more about the latest YouTube video and less about their elected leaders, then we become controlled by a small elite, and we are no longer a democracy run by the people for the people. History has shown repeatedly that when this happens the results are wars not supported by or fully understood by the citizens, and profit for a few is put before the welfare of the majority. We can see examples of this all around us today with the ongoing wars in the Middle East and the plummeting of the market that took the retirement of many lower and middle class Americans.

Expanded discussion of Jones and added “so what?” discussion after quote



Even after Malcolm X achieved success and fame, his work ethic did not wane, and if we ourselves don’t learn the value of this, our future as a true democracy is bleak. Malcolm X states: “You will never

catch me with a free fifteen minutes in which I'm not studying something I feel might be able to help the black man" (3). I often hear the excuse from people about being "too busy" to read the paper, or read books, or even to apply the time to get good at something that would improve their personal lives, career or health, and I too am guilty of this. It is hard to avoid the instant gratification of entertainment that surrounds us. We don't even have to leave the house, and at the touch of a button or keyboard we have streaming Netflix, Facebook updates, loaded DVRs, interactive online gaming, smart phones, Hulu, iTunes, and the list goes on and on. This has made us hooked on instant gratification at the cost of losing the values of hard work. As we become more engrossed in lazy entertainment, our democracy erodes. As we become increasingly controlled by others, our strength and respect on a global scale disappears. We pride ourselves on our independence and freedom but it takes hard work to maintain these luxuries. As we lull ourselves into a lazy stupor, we might not even notice when we have lost these values we hold so dear.



Greatly expanded discussion in conclusion. Added how people can better spend their time. Took the discussion of the distractions of technology from the introduction and put it in the conclusion. Deepened look at the harms and dangers of our weak work ethic and showed the dangers on a national as well as global scale

EDITING/PROOFREADING:

(from Purdue University's writing advice)

The final touches

Believe it or not, now that you've hopefully finished major revisions, the hardest part is really over! Your goal at this point is not so much to focus on content but on sentence level issues and careless mistakes that distract your readers from your main ideas.

Here's a checklist for some finishing touches:

- Check out your verb tenses. Don't feel you have to completely avoid the "passive" tense (e.g., "the ball was caught") but definitely try to have **MORE subject-verb "active" sentences**; they add power and agency to your writing (e.g., "Billy caught the ball").
- Also make sure your **verbs are in the right tense**. If you're talking about literature, keep the tense in what is called "the literary present." So a sentence in your essay to set up an example would read "When Hana *tells* Caravaggio about the English patient..." If you're writing a historical paper though, past tense is more suitable.
- **Read your essay out loud** to listen for either awkward or long sentences that could be clarified or broken up to read better.
- Check your **punctuation**. Fix any errors with quotation marks, commas, semicolons, colons, dashes, etc.
- Look for **grammatical flaws**. Be especially on the alert for mistakes you make often.
- Check your **diction (word choice)**. If you're looking for a better word, look up some possibilities in a thesaurus or if you're having usage problems (affect vs. effect for example), then check out a writer's handbook (there are many accessible online).
- Now you can check your **spelling** both with a computer spell-checker and with your own eyes to catch those words that are spelled right but used in the wrong context (like there vs. their vs. they're). Someone else's eyes are great at this point because you're probably too close to your own writing. You can also check words out the old-fashioned way--with a dictionary.
- Work on the **presentation** of your paper: use a laser-printer if you can (or else your best ink-jet) on 8.5 x 11 inch paper, double space your lines, maintain 1 inch margins, and prepare a title page with an original title and your vital student info. Also make sure your font is very readable (Times New Roman is the most common) and in 12 point. For other formatting tips, see: [Paper Formatting](#).

Here is an example of editing for the essay on Malcolm X's "Learning to Read":

Bell 1

Rachel Bell

Professor Lucia Lachmayr

English 100

21 June 2011 [CHANGED TITLE FROM: Lazy Americans: Learning a Lesson from Malcolm X]

America's Weak Work Ethic: Learning a Lesson from Malcolm X

[ADDED FULL NAME OF AUTHOR AND TEXT TITLE] Malcolm X in the excerpt "Learning to Read" from *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* shows that reading and writing are paths to self-confidence, empowerment and liberation. He also shows a level of [ADDED DESCRIPTIVE WORDS—ALL IN BOLD] **dogged** determination that has become increasingly atypical [CHANGED "RARE" TO ATYPICAL TO GET RID OF REPETITION IN NEXT SENTENCE]. The characteristics that he shows of not giving up even in the face of overwhelming odds and applying **good old-fashioned**, and **often tedious and repetitive**, hard work and persistence have become **frighteningly** rare in the U.S. today where people have **bloated senses of entitlement**. [REMOVED WORDINESS—CHANGE FROM: "I think that people today often feel that things should be given to them rather than them earning it" TO THE FOLLOWING] People today often feel that things should be given rather than earned. No need to study acting for years, act in play after play honing your craft, or learn different dialects and accents to play diverse and convincing characters. Instead, you can become rich and famous overnight by starring in a reality show without **a shred of** talent. The repeated message that we should be richly rewarded for doing nothing or for just being ourselves causes people to not pursue the healthy and character building paths of hard work. [REPLACED FRAGMENT SENTENCE "Paralyzes people in disappointment" WITH THE FOLLOWING COMPLETE SENTENCE] As a result, we become paralyzed in disappointment when we don't get what we think we deserve, and we become a nation of discontents that do nothing and don't care. If we keep devaluing the slow path of hard work, we're going to become increasingly uneducated, unmotivated, apathetic, and better controlled by advertisers, politicians, and in the

changing global climate, other countries.

The diligence and persistent effort Malcolm X showed in learning to read has become disappointingly rare. Malcolm X in his autobiography tells us that when he went to prison, he could hardly read or write. He decided the way to improve would be to copy the entire dictionary word for word by hand. [REMOVED CROSSED OUT SENTENCE: WORDY AND REPETITIVE] ~~Even though he had horrible penmanship, he spent hours copying each word.~~ He said to copy just the first page alone took an entire day. The next day he reviewed all the words he did not remember, so [ADDED “so” BECAUSE SENTENCE WAS RUN-TOGETHER WITH A COMMA SPLICE BEFORE] he slowly built his vocabulary, and at the same time he started educating himself about the larger world as he describes the dictionary as a “miniature encyclopedia” (2). Malcolm X carried on until he copied the entire dictionary cover to cover. However, the time he dedicated to his writing was not confined to this amazing achievement alone: “Between what I wrote in my tablet, and writing letters, during the rest of my time in prison I would guess I wrote a million words” (2). The dedication to his own education and how he strengthened his own intelligence and abilities through sheer force of will is impressive but unfortunately is the exception [FIXED MISSPELLING “acception”] rather than the norm. In *Generation Me*, the author Jean Twenge addresses the present generation of people who have been taught to put themselves first and expect instant results without working hard to achieve them. Twenge states: “They are less likely to work hard today to get a reward tomorrow—an especially important skill these days, when many good jobs require graduate degrees” (157). [ADDED MISSING PAGE NUMBER FOR QUOTE] If people are less willing today to work hard, then we are going to have increasingly uneducated, lazy people who spend more time complaining than achieving. With a lack of education we won’t be strong critical thinkers so will be easily taken in by people who want to exploit us for profit like advertisers and corporate America. Instead of defining who we are, people who want to sell us things will continue to shape our wants, desires and perceptions of ourselves.

Once Malcolm X achieves his goal of literacy, he reads constantly and is tireless in his efforts of self-improvement which is a necessary lesson for us to apply today. He reads a book every chance he can

get which is not easy in a prison situation where he was not in control of his time [FIXED PRONOUNS—CHANGED FROM “you are not in control of your time”]. Even with the daunting obstacle of the lights being turned out at night, Malcolm X’s persistence towards his own education is not stopped:

At one-hour intervals the night guards paced past every room. Each time I heard the approaching footsteps, I jumped into bed and feigned sleep. And as soon as the guard passed, I got back out of bed onto the floor area of that light-glow, where I would read for another fifty-eight minutes—until the guard approached again. That went on until three or four every morning. Three or four hours of sleep a night was enough for me. (3)

As a result of Malcolm X forging his own education, he learns many things that are not taught in the typical classroom which inspires him to fight for change. He discovers the traditional history that had been taught was “whitened” (3) and that “the black man had simply been left out” (3). He reads about the horrors of slavery and the repeated oppression of non-whites by whites throughout history. Because he dedicates so much time to reading, [FIXED FRAGMENT BY REPLACING THE PERIOD WITH A COMMA AND COMBINING THESE TWO SENTENCES] he becomes a powerful and educated leader who was able to fight for African-Americans at a time when they were denied equal rights. Only through continual effort and diligence like this do we keep ourselves free from oppression and injustice. In *Losing the News* by Alex S. Jones, he discusses how one of the reasons we are losing important investigative journalism today is because people in general are no longer as interested in reading detailed, non-entertainment based reports. Newspapers and journalists once served as a watchdog protecting our citizens but through apathy and short attention spans, we are no longer interested in putting in the work it takes to remain educated, particularly about the very systems that control us: “Surveys show that there is a perhaps not so shocking lack of knowledge about government. A 2006 Zogby poll found that nearly three-quarters of Americans can correctly name the Three Stooges, but fewer than half know the three branches of government” (Jones 26).

The dangers of this are clear. If we don’t educate ourselves like Malcolm X did about the ways in which government can control and exploit its [FIXED “it’s” TO THE POSSESSIVE “its”] people, then we

ourselves are in danger of being manipulated and our rights can be abused. When there are uneducated and uninterested masses that care more about the latest YouTube video and less about their elected leaders, then we become controlled by a small elite, and we are no longer a democracy run by the people for the people. History has shown repeatedly that when this happens the results are wars not supported by or fully understood by the citizens, and profit for a few is put before the welfare of the majority. We can see examples of this all around us today with the ongoing wars in the Middle East and the plummeting of the market that took the jobs, homes, and retirement [ADDED “jobs, homes” TO MAKE MORE EMPHATIC] of many lower and middle class Americans.

Even after Malcolm X achieved success and fame, his work ethic did not wane, and if we ourselves don't learn the value of this, our future as a true democracy is bleak. Malcolm X shares [REPLACED “states” WITH MORE EXPRESSIVE VERB “shares”]: “You will never catch me with a free fifteen minutes in which I'm not studying something I feel might be able to help the black man” (3). I often hear the excuse from people about being “too busy” to read the paper, or read books, or even to apply the time to get good at something that would improve their personal lives, career or health, and I too am guilty of this. It is hard to avoid the instant gratification of the [ADDED “the”] entertainment that surrounds us. We don't even have to leave the house, and at the touch of a button ~~or keyboard~~ [REMOVED WORDINESS] we have streaming Netflix, Facebook updates, loaded DVRs, interactive online gaming, smart phones, Hulu, iTunes, and the list goes on and on. This has made us hooked on instant gratification at the cost of losing the values of hard work. As we become more engrossed in lazy entertainment, our democracy erodes. As we become increasingly controlled by others, our strength and respect on a global scale disappears. We pride ourselves on our independence and freedom but it takes hard work to maintain these luxuries. As we lull ourselves into a lethargic [REPLACED “lazy” AS IT WAS USED BEFORE] stupor, we might not even notice when we have lost these values we hold so dear.

Here's the final revision of the essay on Malcolm X's "Learning to Read"—now it's
time to use the "[Essay Checklist](#)" to make sure it is complete:

Bell 1

Rachel Bell

Professor Lucia Lachmayr

English 100

21 June 2011

America's Weak Work Ethic: Learning a Lesson from Malcolm X

Malcolm X in the excerpt "Learning to Read" from *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* shows that reading and writing are paths to self-confidence, empowerment and liberation. He also shows a level of dogged determination that has become increasingly atypical. The characteristics that he shows of not giving up even in the face of overwhelming odds and applying good old-fashioned, and often tedious and repetitive, hard work and persistence have become frighteningly rare in the U.S. today where people have bloated senses of entitlement. People today often feel that things should be given rather than earned. No need to study acting for years, act in play after play honing your craft, or learn different dialects and accents to play diverse and convincing characters. Instead, you can become rich and famous overnight by starring in a reality show without a shred of talent. The repeated message that we should be richly rewarded for doing nothing or for just being ourselves causes people to not pursue the healthy and character building paths of hard work. As a result, we become paralyzed in disappointment when we don't get what we think we deserve, and we become a nation of discontents that do nothing and don't care. If we keep devaluing the slow path of hard work, we're going to become increasingly uneducated, unmotivated, apathetic, and better controlled by advertisers, politicians, and in the changing global climate, other countries.

The diligence and persistent effort Malcolm X showed in learning to read has become disappointingly rare. Malcolm X in his autobiography tells us that when he went to prison, he could hardly read or write. He decided the way to improve would be to copy the entire dictionary word for word by

hand. He said to copy just the first page alone took an entire day. The next day he reviewed all the words he did not remember, so he slowly built his vocabulary, and at the same time he started educating himself about the larger world as he describes the dictionary as a “miniature encyclopedia” (2). Malcolm X carried on until he copied the entire dictionary cover to cover. However, the time he dedicated to his writing was not confined to this amazing achievement alone: “Between what I wrote in my tablet, and writing letters, during the rest of my time in prison I would guess I wrote a million words” (2). The dedication to his own education and how he strengthened his own intelligence and abilities through sheer force of will is impressive but unfortunately is the exception rather than the norm. In *Generation Me*, the author Jean Twenge addresses the present generation of people who have been taught to put themselves first and expect instant results without working hard to achieve them. Twenge states: “They are less likely to work hard today to get a reward tomorrow—an especially important skill these days, when many good jobs require graduate degrees” (157). If people are less willing today to work hard, then we are going to have increasingly uneducated, lazy people who spend more time complaining than achieving. With a lack of education we won’t be strong critical thinkers so will be easily taken in by people who want to exploit us for profit like advertisers and corporate America. Instead of defining who we are, people who want to sell us things will continue to shape our wants, desires and perceptions of ourselves.

Once Malcolm X achieves his goal of literacy, he reads constantly and is tireless in his efforts of self-improvement which is a necessary lesson for us to apply today. He reads a book every chance he can get which is not easy in a prison situation where he was not in control of his time. Even with the daunting obstacle of the lights being turned out at night, Malcolm X’s persistence towards his own education is not stopped:

At one-hour intervals the night guards paced past every room. Each time I heard the approaching footsteps, I jumped into bed and feigned sleep. And as soon as the guard passed, I got back out of bed onto the floor area of that light-glow, where I would read for another fifty-eight minutes—until the guard approached again. That went on until

three or four every morning. Three or four hours of sleep a night was enough for me. (3)

As a result of Malcolm X forging his own education, he learns many things that are not taught in the typical classroom which inspires him to fight for change. He discovers the traditional history that had been taught was “whitened” (3) and that “the black man had simply been left out” (3). He reads about the horrors of slavery and the repeated oppression of non-whites by whites throughout history. Because he dedicates so much time to reading, he becomes a powerful and educated leader who was able to fight for African-Americans at a time when they were denied equal rights. Only through continual effort and diligence like this do we keep ourselves free from oppression and injustice. In *Losing the News* by Alex S. Jones, he discusses how one of the reasons we are losing important investigative journalism today is because people in general are no longer as interested in reading detailed, non-entertainment based reports. Newspapers and journalists once served as a watchdog protecting our citizens but through apathy and short attention spans, we are no longer interested in putting in the work it takes to remain educated, particularly about the very systems that control us: “Surveys show that there is a perhaps not so shocking lack of knowledge about government. A 2006 Zogby poll found that nearly three-quarters of Americans can correctly name the Three Stooges, but fewer than half know the three branches of government” (Jones 26). The dangers of this are clear. If we don’t educate ourselves like Malcolm X did about the ways in which government can control and exploit its people, then we ourselves are in danger of being manipulated and our rights can be abused. When there are uneducated and uninterested masses that care more about the latest YouTube video and less about their elected leaders, then we become controlled by a small elite, and we are no longer a democracy run by the people for the people. History has shown repeatedly that when this happens the results are wars not supported by or fully understood by the citizens, and profit for a few is put before the welfare of the majority. We can see examples of this all around us today with the ongoing wars in the Middle East and the plummeting of the market that took the jobs, homes, and retirement of many lower and middle class Americans.

Even after Malcolm X achieved success and fame, his work ethic did not wane, and if we ourselves

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Essay Checklist: For a strong, unified essay that also fits all the requirements for the course, **check off all of the following:**

Student Name(s):

PAPER TOPIC:

- The essay is focused on and analyzes the reading
- The essay is an argument not a summary

MLA PAPER FORMATTING:

- The essay is double spaced with 1 inch margins at the top, sides and bottom of each page
- There is no extra spacing between paragraphs; just 10-15 space indents at start of each paragraph
- The essay meets the minimum page requirements
- There is a MLA formatted title page
- There is MLA style numbering on each page in the top right with your last name and page number
- The names of the texts are properly formatted (names of longer works like books and plays are italicized or underlined, and titles of shorter works like chapter titles and short stories are in quotes)

PAPER TITLES:

- The paper title is appropriate, creative and draws in reader interest

RESEARCH, IN-TEXT CITATIONS, AND WORKS CITED:

- I included a Work Cited page citing the primary text I wrote about as well as any outside research
- I used credible sources in the paper
- I included the required minimum of sources
- I used research to support my arguments not to take over the paper

PLAGIARISM:

- I have not plagiarized in this paper and know the repercussions if I have plagiarized
- I have cited all borrowed ideas and put all borrowed language in quotes

QUOTING and PARAPHRASING:

- I have included quotes and paraphrases from the reading
- All quotes are connected to phrases that introduce them—there are no “dropped” quotes
- I have followed all quotes with page numbers in parenthesis (and/or author depending on citation)
- All quotes fit in logically and are accompanied with analysis that expresses the quote’s significance

INTRODUCTION:

- My introduction names the text(s) I am analyzing (title & author)
- My introduction contains a clear, original, effective thesis statement focused on the reading
- My introduction is engaging, draws my reader in, and provides necessary context

BODY PARAGRAPHS:

- Each paragraph has a clear topic sentence stating a claim that directly supports the thesis
- Each paragraph focuses on proving one clear point
- Each paragraph contains supporting information (evidence) and explanation (So what?)

CONCLUSION:

- The conclusion is engaging and does not simply summarize the points already made in the paper

STYLE:

- I have eliminated any unnecessary wordiness and used sentence combining and parallelism for conciseness, fluidity, and logical coherence.

GRAMMAR-PUNCTUATION-SPELLING:

- The paper is carefully proofread and the sentence-level errors have been corrected

Essay Checklist: For a strong, unified essay that also fits all the requirements for the course, **check off all of the following:**

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GRAMMAR-PUNCTUATION-SPELLING:

- The paper is carefully proofread and the sentence-level errors have been corrected

Writing Guideline #5:

WORKSHOPPING

(5) WORKSHOPPING:

Your writing instructor is not the only person who can give you advice on your writing, help you grow as a writer, and stretch your ideas and understanding on a topic. Your classmates are also a valuable source of writing advice. Peer response is valuable because it enables you to expand your writing audience and receive a broader range of ideas and perspectives on your writing. You also become stronger as a writer as you develop your skills of offering writing advice to others. For peer response to be a positive and helpful process for everyone, here are some useful guidelines:

Overall “Good Practices” for Peer Response:

- When you get advice from your peers, there is **no need to feel pressured**. You are the author so ultimately if you do not agree with someone’s point, you do not need to incorporate that change.
- When giving advice, remember that it is difficult hearing criticism from others so **be tactful and never insulting**. Instead of saying for instance, “That part was completely confusing,” try a more tactful approach: “I was a little lost in paragraph 3; perhaps you could expand on your example to make it clearer.”
- When giving advice, also **be honest**. It actually is not helpful to simply tell someone, “Yeah, it was good; I liked it.” This gives the student no avenues for revision. If you are confused someplace or if an example seems off topic, or if the thesis is weak, be honest and tell them your opinion. Not doing so and letting a student think everything is “fine as is” can be more hurtful than the truth.
- **Balance your criticism with praise**. Do not forget to tell the author what you liked about the essay as well. Sometimes we get too focused on “fixing” things and forget to tell people what we liked or what they did well. Be sure to do both as you give feedback and you’ll find people are more receptive when you tell them positive comments along with suggestions for improvement.

WORKSHOPPING GUIDELINES

- (1) **Read Aloud**--Students having their papers workshopped will read their papers aloud twice while their group members listen attentively. (For online class, read the papers you are workshopping out loud).
- (2) **Freewrite**--After the first reading, students will freewrite their general impressions on the essay (in Section I) focusing on overall cohesiveness, clarity, and areas of confusion.
- (3) **Second Reading**--Read the paper aloud a second time. After, the group members will answer the specific questions in Section II. Be thorough, honest and detailed. These evaluations are part of your participation grade, so give thorough and thoughtful responses to your classmates. Just to say that the paper was “good” is not very specific or helpful.
- (4) **Complete Essay Chart**--After completing Section II, complete “The Components of a Successful Essay” checklist chart on the second page of the “Peer Workshop Feedback” sheet.
- (5) **Group Discussion**--Discuss the paper by sharing constructive feedback. Remember: be tactful but honest and also specific and critical. Be sure to mention both the positive aspects of the essays, as well as the areas that need to be improved. **DO NOT** focus merely on grammar and spelling; look at the larger aspects of thesis clarity, paragraph development, transitions, and overall cohesiveness.
- (6) **Collect Sheets**--After your paper is workshopped, collect the evaluations from your group members, so you can use their comments to help you revise, and staple these evaluations to the back of the final draft of your paper when you turn it in. Remember: your classmates are going to be graded on their individual peer evaluations; therefore, losing their evaluation sheets affects their grade.

Peer Workshop Feedback

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|
| For (author of paper): | From (evaluator): |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------|

- I.** Read the essay for the first time and then freewrite your general impressions for 2 minutes:
What were the strong points? Confusing points? Organizational choices? Your overall impression?

II. Read the essay for a second time and answer these questions. Be as specific as possible:

- (1) What are your overall impressions of the introduction? Is it clear? Attention-grabbing? Does it contain a clear argument? How can it be improved?**

Explain the thesis in your own words:

- (2) Is the organization of ideas fluid and easy to follow? Are there strong topic sentences focusing each of the paragraphs? Are transitions present from paragraph to paragraph? Sentence to sentence?**

(3) Is there sufficient development of the paragraphs with evidence and analysis? Which ideas need to be developed with specific examples, quotes and explanations?

(4) Does the essay end on a strong note? Does the conclusion tie up the points well? Is there a strong “so what?” that explains: So what can we learn from this? So what is the larger significance or impact?

The Components of a Successful Essay

Put an “X” in the box responding to each aspect of the essay

| Criteria | needs work | adequate | good | excellent |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Assignment Fulfillment Was the essay an analysis of/argument about the reading? | | | | |
| Thesis/Controlling Idea Does the thesis make an arguable assertion of opinion and have a strong “so what?” Is the thesis a response to and an analysis of the reading? | | | | |
| Organization/Coherence/Focus Is there a logical order of ideas with clear transitions? Are there strong topic sentences? Does the writer stay on topic within each paragraph? Is the overall essay unified around one clear argument? | | | | |
| Development/Support Are the body paragraphs fully developed with reasons, illustrations, examples, details, evidence, explanations, analysis, and/or interpretations? Are inferences and claims supported with evidence from the text? | | | | |
| Sentence Craft Is the writing fluent or choppy? Does the writer join sentences to show relationships between ideas? | | | | |
| Surface Issues/Proofreading Grammar, usage, punctuation, spelling. | 4 or more errors/page | 3 or fewer errors/page | 2 or fewer errors/page | 1 or fewer errors/page |
| Basic Research & Documentation Skills Does the writing integrate relevant sources and quotes to substantiate claims? Does the writer consistently use MLA format? | | | | |

Instructor feedback for: (student name)

The Components of a Successful Essay

| Criteria | needs work | adequate | good | excellent |
|--|-----------------------|------------------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Assignment Fulfillment Was the essay an analysis of/argument about the reading? | | | | |
| Thesis/Controlling Idea Does the thesis make an arguable assertion of opinion and have a strong "so what?" Is the thesis a response to and an analysis of the reading? | | | | |
| Organization/Coherence/Focus Is there a logical order of ideas with clear transitions? Are there strong topic sentences? Does the writer stay on topic within each paragraph? Is the overall essay unified around one clear argument? | | | | |
| Development/Support Are the body paragraphs fully developed with reasons, illustrations, examples, details, evidence, explanations, analysis, and/or interpretations? Are inferences and claims supported with evidence from the text? | | | | |
| Sentence Craft Is the writing fluent or choppy? Does the writer join sentences to show relationships between ideas? | | | | |
| Surface Issues/Proofreading Grammar, usage, punctuation, spelling. | 4 or more errors/page | 3 or fewer errors/page | 2 or fewer errors/page | 1 or fewer errors/page |
| Basic Research & Documentation Skills Does the writing integrate relevant sources and quotes to substantiate claims? Does the writer consistently use MLA format? | | | | |

Comments:

Peer Workshop Feedback Scores:

Essay Grade:

Writing a Collaborative Paper

Writing a paper with another classmate can be a very rewarding, eye-opening as well as challenging experience. One thing is for sure is that you will work harder and learn more about your writing as well as the process of writing in general when you join your thoughts and ideas with another person.

Tips for successful collaborative writing projects:

- (1) Exchange contact information: phone numbers, cel phone numbers, email, etc.

- (2) Exchange schedules (class, work, free time) and select days and times when you can both meet. Schedule specific meeting times, stick to them, and come on time.

- (3) Set up an overall timeline for the project. Take into account when the paper is due and then schedule completion dates for each step of the writing process. Your schedule could include the following:

Final due date of paper:

Actual number of days until due date:

- Complete “Creating Your Own Argument” by:
- Complete outline by:
- Complete outside research by:
- Complete first draft by:
- See a tutor/the instructor by:
- Complete revision by:
- Complete proofreading and editing by:

Collaborative Partner Evaluation

To ensure that writing the collaborative paper is a productive experience for everyone involved, it is important to evaluate your team member as well as yourself.

Your name:

Your Collaborative Partner:

Rate each of the following statements using the following scale:

| |
|---|
| <p>5 = Strongly Agree 4 = Agree 3 = Neither Agree or Disagree 2 = Disagree 1 = Strongly Disagree</p> |
|---|

Evaluating Your Partner (underline or circle a rating for each):

- | | | | | | |
|--|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) This person provided appropriate leadership for our group | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (2) This person completed assigned tasks | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (3) This person arrived promptly at meetings and met the team's deadlines | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (4) This person used facilitative behavior (helping, listening, encouraging, sharing, providing directions) during cooperative work. | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (5) This person shared information and materials to help others | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (6) This person contributed to the quality and success of the team's project/activity | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

I would assign this team member the following grade: _____ because _____

Evaluating Yourself (underline or circle a rating for each):

- | | | | | | |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| (1) I was prepared to contribute to the group | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (2) I contributed my ideas | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (3) I asked others for their ideas | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (4) I encouraged others to participate in the group | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (5) I stayed on task | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (6) I helped others stay on task | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (7) I did my fair share of the work | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |
| (8) I met the group decided deadlines | 1 | 2 | 3 | 4 | 5 |

I would assign myself the following grade: _____ because _____

Evaluating the Collaborative Experience

(1) What was the best thing about your partner and why?

(2) What problems or obstacles did you encounter?

(3) How much effort did you and your partner put into the completion of this project? Was there an equal effort from everyone?

(4) What suggestions do you have to improve or streamline a project such as this one?

(5) Would you undertake a project such as this again? Why or why not?

(6) What did you gain or learn from this experience?

Writing Guideline #6:

GRADING

For each essay, I will complete an "Instructor Feedback" sheet commenting on aspects of the essay by category along with detailed written comments.

Here are the **Essay Grading Standards:**

| | |
|--|--|
| "A" essay: (90-100) | <u>Excellent</u> . The essay engages the reader in a thoughtful, insightful, and sophisticated response to the assigned topic. A clear, meaningful central idea is present and supported by specific details, relevant examples, and thought provoking discussion. The ideas in the essay are well organized, coherent, and unified. There are no significant errors in spelling, grammar or punctuation, and the essay adheres to all the standards in writing, including grammar, punctuation, spelling, formatting, and documentation. |
| "B" essay: (80-89) | <u>Good</u> . The essay fully addresses the assigned topic in an insightful and thoughtful manner. The central idea is supported with clear and relevant examples but may include some information that drifts off point or ideas that may not be fully developed. Competence in grammar, punctuation, spelling, and other written standards (as mentioned in "A" above) is demonstrated, but errors are present enough to be noted. |
| "C" essay: (70-79) | <u>Acceptable</u> . The essay addresses the assigned topic in a thoughtful but perhaps underdeveloped, disorganized, and/or incoherent manner. The central idea is apparent but may not be supported by sufficient details, examples, and/or explanations. Errors in grammar, spelling, punctuation, and/or other written standards occur frequently enough to distract the reader from writer's ideas. |
| "D" essay: (60-69) | <u>Unsatisfactory</u> . The essay only minimally addresses the assigned topic and/or may seriously lack in sophistication, organization, and/or depth in its ideas. The central idea tends to be unfocused, incoherent, and/or may not be supported by detailed examples and developed explanations. Errors in grammar, spelling or punctuation are excessive and distract the reader from the writer's ideas. |
| "F" essay: (59 and below) | <u>Not acceptable/failing</u> . All in all, an essay at the "F" level reveals ideas that do not demonstrate a sophisticated, planned, logical level of thought and appears to be more like a draft or free-written journal that does not follow the conventions of acceptable, essay writing standards. The "F" essay does not address the assigned topic, has no clear main idea and/or supporting ideas, and/or is seriously underdeveloped (far short of the required number of assigned pages), thus not meeting the minimum requirements. |

Writing Guideline #7:

**CREATING YOUR
OWN ARGUMENT**

CREATING YOUR OWN ARGUMENT:

EXAMPLE: Brainstorm the issues, ideas and themes raised in the reading (a minimum of 15):

| | |
|---------------------------------|--|
| homemade education | blacks left out of history |
| street smart | horrors of slavery |
| becomes book smart | whites exploiting others |
| self-taught | actions un-Christian |
| criticizes mainstream education | reading changed life |
| motivation | freedom through reading |
| determination | free from: racism, slavery/imprisonment, self hate |
| education in prison = respect | focus on black race |
| power through words | strong work ethic |
| 8 th grade dropout | Nation of Islam and Elijah Mohammed |
| learned love of reading | deafness, dumbness, blindness |
| untraditional education | books to uplift |

Creating a thesis: Remember: every thesis and topic sentence must contain not only a topic but also opinion words, which tell us the attitude of the writer toward the topic.

- (1) Form **questions** using words from the brainstorm → (2) Create a thesis; **answer** the questions → (3) Deepen the thesis by asking “**so what**”? So what is the significance? So what can be learned? So what is the impact?
(use the journalists’ questions: who, what, how, why, where, when) (seek opinions that need to be proven not unarguable facts)

Practice in creating a thesis:

- (1) Create **questions** using words from the brainstorm (a minimum of 3 complex questions):

What caused the deafness, dumbness and blindness Malcolm X claims afflicts the black race?

Why was Malcolm X so angry at whites and was this anger justified?

How did reading about things he wasn’t taught in school, like slavery, shape Malcolm X’s beliefs?

What can we learn by analyzing Malcolm X’s strong work ethic?

- (2) **Answer** your best questions (a minimum 2 well-reasoned answers):

What caused the “deafness, dumbness and blindness” of the black race seems to be that they have been taught false information which has made them unaware of the causes and solutions to the racism they suffer.

Malcolm X seems angry at whites because through his studies he has seen how whites seem to have repeatedly oppressed people of color throughout history and around the world.

Malcolm X’s work ethic is admirable but not very common as most people are lazy and give up easily.

- (3) **Deepen** your best answer to #2; take it a step further by asking “so what”? So what is the significance? So what can be learned? So what is the outcome or impact?

We are losing strong work ethics like Malcolm X had and the impact is that as a nation we are becoming less educated, less motivated but expect more.

GATHERING EVIDENCE FOR AN ARGUMENT:

Now that you have created a rough thesis statement, you can start to build the foundations of a paper by gathering strong supporting evidence. Below is a process to help you:

- (4) Revise your **potential argument**—improve what you arrived at for #3 and write it below (remember, it needs to be arguable, meaning that someone can disagree. It also needs to be directly related to the reading you are responding to):

The characteristics that Malcolm X shows of not giving up even in the face of overwhelming odds and applying hard work and persistence have become increasingly rare in the U.S. today where people have bloated senses of entitlement.

- (5) Go through the main text(s) you are writing on and **list all the passages** (using page numbers) that directly prove and/or illustrate your argument:

- Malcolm X copied the dictionary and reread his work and what he learned (pages 1-2)
- “I believe it took me a day. Then, aloud, I read back, to myself, everything I’d written on the tablet. Over and over, aloud, to myself, I read my own handwriting.” (page 2)
- He stayed up past lights out and read by glow under door. Hid from guards (page 2).
- “That was the way I started copying what eventually became the entire dictionary. It went a lot faster after so much practice helped me to pick up handwriting speed. Between what I wrote in my tablet, and writing letters, during the rest of my time in prison I would guess I wrote a million words (page 2)
- All the things he learned from reading (about slavery, white oppression)—page 3.
- “ I read, I saw, how the white man never has gone among the non-white peoples bearing the Cross in the true manner and spirit of Christ’s teachings—meek, humble, and Christlike... (page 3)
- “ You will never catch me with a free fifteen minutes in which I’m not studying something I feel might be able to help the black man. (page 3)

- (6) List potential **outside evidence**, such as real life examples, facts, personal knowledge, personal experience, research, etc. that could possibly further prove and/or illustrate your argument:

- Description of how Jean Twenge in *Generation Me* claims the current generation doesn’t work hard anymore but expects reward--p. 63, p. 68, p. 72, p. 137, p. 140, p. 157, chapter 7 on race and racism
- Alex S. Jones’ explanation of how people don’t work hard to stay informed in *Losing the News*, Chapter 7: Newspapers on the Brink, p. 151 and Chapter 2: Media and democracy, p. 28

- (7) Explain **the significance** of the evidence you have gathered. So what do these patterns reveal? So what can we learn from this information? So what is the larger impact of the issues you have raised?

So what is the impact of a populace with a poor work ethic? Increasingly uneducated, unmotivated, apathetic, and better controlled by politicians, advertisers, other countries. People turn to easy entertainment that has no true value for improving society. We lose our democracy when people aren’t educated and participating.

CREATING YOUR OWN ARGUMENT:

Brainstorm the issues, ideas and themes raised in the reading (a minimum of 15):

Creating a thesis: Remember: every thesis and topic sentence must contain not only a topic but also opinion words, which tell us the attitude of the writer toward the topic.

- | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|--|
| (1) Form questions using words from the brainstorm (use the journalists' questions: who, what, how, why, where, when) | → | (2) Create a thesis; <u>answer</u> the questions (seek <u>opinions</u> that need to be proven not unarguable facts) | → | (3) Deepen the thesis by asking "so what"? So what is the significance? So what can be learned? So what is the impact? |
|--|---|--|---|--|

Practice in creating a thesis:

(1) Create **questions** using words from the brainstorm (a minimum of 3 complex questions):

(2) **Answer** your best questions (a minimum 2 well-reasoned answers with your opinion):

(3) **Deepen** your best answer to #2; take it a step further by asking "so what"? So what is the significance? So what can be learned? So what is the outcome or impact?

GATHERING EVIDENCE FOR AN ARGUMENT:

Now that you have created a rough thesis statement, you can start to build the foundations of a paper by gathering strong supporting evidence. Below is a process to help you:

- (4) Revise your *potential argument*—improve what you arrived at for #3 and write it below (remember, it needs to be arguable, meaning that someone can disagree. It also needs to be directly related to the reading you are responding to):

- (5) Go through the main text(s) you are writing on and *list all the passages* (using page numbers) that directly prove and/or illustrate your argument:

- (6) List potential *outside evidence*, such as real life examples, facts, personal knowledge, personal experience, research, etc. that could possibly further prove and/or illustrate your argument:

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Now you are ready to organize your ideas into a formal outline—the next step in the process...

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- | | | | | |
|--|---|--|---|--|
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Practice in creating a thesis:

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Now that you have created a rough thesis statement, you can start to build the foundations of a paper by gathering strong supporting evidence. Below is a process to help you:

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Now you are ready to organize your ideas into a formal outline—the next step in the process...

CREATING GOOD QUESTIONS—QUESTIONING CIRCLES:

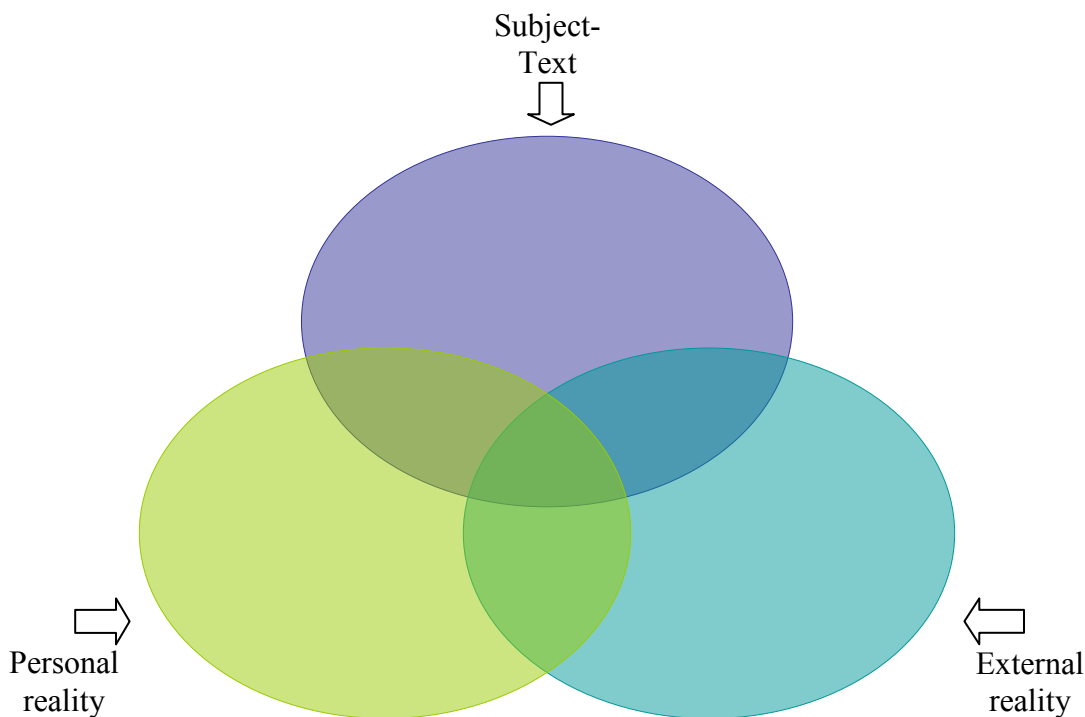
Learn to create complex questions so the answers to them can be turned into possible thesis statements.

The Three Circles:

- 1) **Subject-Text:** represents the subject and/or text(s) under discussion or questioning
- 2) **Personal reality:** represents the individual's experiences, values and ideas
- 3) **External reality:** represents the "world": the experience, history, and concepts of larger society and of other peoples and cultures

The Questioning Process:

While each circle represents a different domain of cognition, the circles overlap—as does knowledge—and are not ordered. Further, in one area where all three circles intersect lies the union of the subject being explored, the individual's response and experience, and the experience of others. The intersection of the three circles, the area we term "Dense," contains the most significant (higher-order) questions.



Single question: Non-Integrated question from one category only (no overlap of circles)

Double question: Integrated questions using two of the categories (overlap of 2 circles)

Dense question: Integrated questions using all three of the categories (overlap of all 3 circles)

QUESTIONING CIRCLES EXAMPLES:

Using *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

Single Questions

Subject-Text: What does Huck say when he decides not to turn Jim into the authorities?

Personal reality: When would you support a friend when everyone else thought s/he was wrong?

External reality: What was the responsibility of people who found runaway slaves?

Double Questions

Subject-Text/ Personal reality: Would you, like Huck, break the law for a friend?

Personal reality/External reality: Given the social and political circumstances, to what extent would you have done what Huck did?

Subject-Text /External reality: What were the issues during that time which caused both Huck's and Jim's action to be viewed as wrong?

Dense Question

Subject-Text/Personal reality/External reality:

When is it right to go against the social and/or political structures of the time as Huck did when he refused to turn Jim in to the authorities?

Writing Guideline #8:

PAPER FORMATTING

(8) MLA PAPER FORMATTING:

A well formatted essay sends a positive message to the reader that the writer has invested time and attention into crafting the essay. Here is a checklist to assure all of the following are present in each essay:

- Essay is double-spaced**
- There are 1 inch margins at the top, sides and bottom of the paper**
- There are no extra spaces between the paragraphs, just 10-15 indented spaces at the beginning of each paragraph**
- Essay meets the minimum page requirement**
- There is a MLA formatted title page**
- There is MLA style numbering on each page in the top right with student's last name and page number**
- The names of the texts are properly formatted (names of longer works like books and plays are italicized or underlined, and titles of shorter works like chapter titles and short stories are in quotes)**
- There's a title that's appropriate, creative and draws in reader interest**
- There is a MLA Works Cited page (citing the primary text and all outside sources used)**

MLA TITLE PAGE:

Use MLA formatting for title pages and page numbering

The diagram shows an MLA title page with the following content and annotations:

Top Right: Garcia 1
Annotation: Put your last name, then the page number in top right corner of each page ½ inch from top

Top Left: Romeo Garcia
Rachel Bell
English 110
16 October 2010
Annotation: Name, Instructor, Class and Date placed at top left, 1 inch down from top.

Center: Who Goes to the Races?
Annotation: Title of essay centered and placed above the introduction paragraph

Paragraph 1:
A favorite pastime of mine is watching people, and my favorite place to observe is the horse races. After many encounters with the racing crowd, I have discovered that there four distinct groups at the track: the once-a-year bunch, the professionals, the clubhouse set and the unemployed.

Paragraph 2:
The largest group at the track consists of those who show up once a year. They know little about horses or betting and reply strictly on race track gimmick sheets and newspaper predictions for selecting possible winners. If that doesn't work, they use intuition, lucky numbers, favorite colors or appealing names. When the once a year attendees win, this frustrates the professionals who treat figuring out the potential winners as a science. However, in the long run, the luck of these once a year attendees eventually runs out and they pay

Annotations on the right side:

- The Introduction, body and conclusion of the essay follow double-spaced, font 12
- No extra spacing needed between paragraphs; just indent 10-15 spaces at beginning of each paragraph
- For all papers using MLA format, the margins must be 1 inch at top, sides and bottom.
- Meet minimum page requirements: 5% deducted if half page under, 10% deducted if full page under

Writing Guideline #9:

TITLES AND AUTHORS

(9) CREATING YOUR OWN TITLE:

Creating a strong, clear, appealing title is an important part of any writing task. The title is the reader's *first* introduction to your piece of writing, and first impressions matter. Therefore, you want to create a title which pulls in your reader's interest and makes him or her want to keep reading. Your title should normally contain the following features:

- (1) It should convey the **topic** of the paper. In other words, your reader should know what the paper is going to be *about* from the title.
- (2) Many titles, but not all, reflect in some way, what **point** you are going to make about your topic. What *argument* are you presenting about your topic? Oftentimes, titles briefly reflect the argument or *thesis* of a writing piece.
- (3) A good title should also be **creative**, thought-provoking, and make the reader keep reading.

For their first writing assignment, a college writing class was posed with the following paper topic:

Take a look at the gender images that surround us in the media and analyze their various meanings. What roles and stereotypes are most commonly depicted? Do you find them accurate? Harmful? Limited? Helpful? Describe the affect you feel these gender images have on us as a society using specific examples, ads, etc. as evidence.

Here are the titles of the papers students created in response to this writing assignment:

Harmful Stereotypes
Male and Female Roles and Stereotypes
Advertising and Stereotypes
Harmful Stereotypical Views of Women
Stereotypes and Roles
Stereotypes: Silly and Harmless
The Roles of Males and Females
Today's Stereotypes on Opposite Genders
Differences in Gender
The Power of Society
How Society Categorizes Men and Women

Genders in Society
Stereotypes Between Genders
Man or Woman?
Stereotypes
Gender Images
Are you a Man or a Woman?
Societies' Stereotypes
Stereotyping
Stereotypes
Gender Stereotypes
Surrounded By Stereotypes

Most of these titles clearly conveyed the topic of the assignment but they are repetitive and unoriginal. Now let's try to refine a few of these titles so they are more individually tailored to the writer's argument. Below are several of the thesis statements for these papers. Create an effective title for each paper containing such a thesis statement:

(1) Thesis statement: In films, men are always portrayed as tough, macho figures, and this image ultimately harms men as they are forced to live up to this aggressive, emotionless "ideal."

Possible Title(s):

(2) Thesis statement: Because the media depicts men and women in such narrow and stereotypical roles, people get a distorted image of what careers they can and cannot pursue.

Possible Title(s):

(3) Thesis statement: Television, which seems to continuously show women as sexual objects, limits their potential and damages their sense of self worth.

Possible Title(s):

(9) TEXT TITLES and AUTHOR NAMES:

Put the titles of *shorter works in quotes*, like poems, chapter titles, web pages or short stories. For *longer works underline or italicize the title*, like plays, films and books.

| Italicize or underline: | Use Quotation Marks: |
|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Scientific names for genera or species• Titles of the following:<ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Art exhibitions○ Books○ Comic strips and webcomics○ Computer and video games○ Court cases○ Films○ Long or epic poems○ Multi-episode television serials○ Musical albums○ Musicals○ Orchestral works○ Paintings, sculptures and other works of visual art○ Periodicals (newspapers, journals, and magazines)○ Plays○ Television series | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Titles of short or minor works• Songs• Short Stories• Essays• Short Poems• One Act Plays• Other literary works shorter than a three act play or complete book• Titles of sections from longer works• Chapters in books• Articles in newspapers, magazines, or journals• Episodes of television and radio series |

- For titles, only quote them, underline them, OR italicize them—*never a combination of styles*.

WRONG: One of Gene’s favorite books is “Huckleberry Finn” because he relates to Huck.

CORRECT: One of Gene’s favorite books is *Huckleberry Finn* because he relates to Huck.

- When first introducing a text, also provide the *full name of the author*.

WRONG: In reading *The Argument Culture* it is clear how much aggression shapes our society.

CORRECT: In reading *The Argument Culture* by Deborah Tannen, it is clear how much aggression shapes our society.

- After introducing authors by full name, refer to them by last name after (never by first name).

WRONG: Deborah's book *The Argument Culture* reveals how journalism is compromised by aggressive, one-sided reporting.

CORRECT: Tannen's book *The Argument Culture* reveals how journalism is compromised by aggressive, one-sided reporting.

- Don't misspell an author's name or text title; it sends a wrong message to your reader.

WRONG: Deborrah Tanner's book *The Argument Culture* addresses the question if our legal system can provide citizens justice.

CORRECT: Deborah Tannen's book *The Argument Culture* addresses the question if our legal system can provide citizens justice.

- Don't confuse characters in stories and authors as being the same person as often they are not.

WRONG: In Mark Twain's book *Huckleberry Finn*, Mark tells of his adventures as a young man.

CORRECT: In Mark Twain's book *Huckleberry Finn*, Twain tells of the adventures of a young man named Huck.

- In reading-based writing (which is the type of writing we're doing in this class) introduce the text and the author that is being written about in the introductory paragraph.

WRONG: Although the United States of America was founded by devout Christians it was not intended to be a religious country. In fact, the founders of this country took great care to ensure that the government of the United States was a secular entity. These men knew all too well the negative aspects of a theocratic government. I contend that America was founded as a nation with true freedom of religion and, while religion may be essential to many individuals, government endorsement of it is neither essential nor beneficial to America.

CORRECT: Although the United States of America was founded by devout Christians it was not intended to be a religious country. In fact, the founders of this country took great care to ensure that the government of the United States was a secular entity. These men knew all too well the negative aspects of a theocratic government. In his essay entitled "Religion is Essential in America," Joe Lieberman falsely states that this country was founded as a Judeo-Christian nation, and attempts to convince the reader that religion is synonymous with morality and is essential to America. I contend, however, that America was founded as a nation with true freedom of religion and, while religion may be essential to many individuals, government endorsement of it is neither essential nor beneficial to America.

Writing Guideline #10:

**RESEARCH,
IN-TEXT CITATIONS,
and WORKS CITED**

(10) RESEARCH, IN-TEXT CITATIONS, AND WORKS CITED:

Research:

- Use *credible sources* (don't pull "facts" from sources the general public can alter like *Wikipedia*)
- Use research to support and strengthen your claims, *not to replace your own arguments*
- Use *Skyline's library page* for MLA formatting guides, research engines and advice:

<http://www.smccd.edu/accounts/skylib/>

In-Text Citations—crediting sources within the paper:

You have two options when you cite your sources within the text of your paper:

- (1) Provide the author's name and the page number on which you found the material you are citing:
Example: Forecasters agree that El Niño has "made for an unusual year" (Sampson 91).
- (2) Provide author's name in text of your sentence and include only page number after the sentence.
Example: Forecasters from across the country agree with John Sampson's statement that El Niño has "made for an unusual year" (91).

Note: Do not use commas, p., pgs., or any other such notation in the citation.
The period goes after parenthesis.

- When no author is given for a source, include the title of the article, web page or book instead of the author. If the title is long, you can shorten it in the parenthetical documentation.
- When you are citing online sources (from a webpage or an online database), and there are no page numbers, cite the author's name as usual, but don't include page numbers.
Example: Research shows that "supplementing a woman's diet early in pregnancy with folic acid can prevent up to 70% of neural tube defects" (Moore).
- When a writer's or a speaker's quoted words appear in a source written by someone else, begin the parenthetical citation with the abbreviation "qtd. in."
Example: According to Richard Retting, "As the comforts of home and the efficiency of the office creep into the car, it is becoming increasingly attractive as a work space" (qtd. in Johnson 23).

MLA Works Cited page:

Works Cited

Astin, Alexander W. *Achieving Educational Excellence*.
Washington: Jossey-Bass, 1985.

Cesarone, Bernard. "Television Violence and Children."
Childhood Education 75.1 (Fall 1998): 56+.
InfoTrac OneFile. Gale Group. 18 Oct. 2002.
<<http://infotrac.galegroup.com>>.

Fording, Laura. "Violent Media and its Discontents."
Newsweek 1 Dec. 2003. MSNBC News. 1 Dec.
2003. <[http://www.msnbc.com/news/999004.asp?
0cv=KB20&cp1=1](http://www.msnbc.com/news/999004.asp?0cv=KB20&cp1=1)>.

Gibeaut, John. "Deadly Inspiration." ABA Journal
June 1997: 62+.

"Money." *Compton's Precyclopedia*. 1977 ed., X, 80-91.

Mumford, Lewis. *The Highway and the City*. New
York: Harcourt Brace and World, 1963.

Redford, Robert. Personal Interview. 24 Sept. 1996.

— Works Cited title at top

— Double-space throughout entries,
font 12

— Entries are listed alphabetically
by author's last name or by title
if no author exists

— Margins must be 1 inch at top,
sides and bottom.

— Second line of each entry
indented 1 ½ inches from left
margin

The format of the source information will vary depending on if the source is a book, a website, an article, etc. For the proper format by type, visit:

<http://www.smccd.edu/accounts/skylib/citing.html>

You can use sites like this one to properly format citations for you: <http://citationmachine.net/>

A Quick MLA Guide for commonly used resources from Skyline Library's Citation web page. Visit the website for a full list of the different source types:

<http://www.smccd.edu/accounts/skylib/citing.html>

Citation Format for Books

Books with a single author:

Citation description:

Author's last name, First name Middle initial (if any). *Title*. Place of publication: Publisher, Year of publication. Medium of Publication.

Citation example:

Gamson, Joshua. R. *Claims to Fame: Celebrity in Contemporary America*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 1994. Print.

Books with two, three or more authors:

Citation description:

First author's last name, First name Middle initial (if any), and Second author's First name Middle initial (if any) Last name. *Title*. Place of publication: Publisher, Year of publication. Medium of Publication.

Note: For a book with three authors, list all three author's names. Only the first author's name should be listed last name first. For a book with more than 3 authors, list only the first author's name followed by a comma and the words **et al.**

Citation examples:

Stewart, David W., and David H. Furse. *Effective Television Advertising: A Study of 1000 Commercials*. Lexington: Lexington Books, 1986. Print.

Jonson, Albert, Thomas Gray, and Jessie Muncy. *Information Access*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992. Print.

Baker, Nellie, et al. *Book Publishing*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1992. Print.

Books with editor(s) rather than author(s):

Citation description:

Editor's last name, First name Middle initial (if any), ed. *Title*. Place of publication: Year of publication. Medium of Publication.

Citation example:

Baughman, Cynthia, ed. *Women on Ice: Feminist Essays on the Tonya Harding/Nancy Kerrigan Spectacle*. New York: Routledge, 1995. Print.

Essay, article, story or chapter in a book with an editor (if the book is an anthology of works by multiple writers):

Citation description:

Author's last name, First name Middle initial (if any). "Title of Chapter or Essay." *Title of Book*. Ed. Editor's first and last name. Place of publication: Publisher, Year of publication. Page numbers for the chapter. Medium of Publication.

Citation example:

Fox, Aaron A. "Split Subjectivity in Country Music and Honky-Tonk Discourse." *All That Glitters: Country Music in America*. Ed. George H. Lewis. Bowling Green, Ohio: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 1993. 131-139. Print.

Citation Format for Articles from Periodicals

Magazine article (the following information is for paper copies of articles)

Citation description:

Author's last name, First name Middle initial (if any). "Title of Article." *Title of Magazine* Day (if given) Month (abbreviated except May, June, and July) Year: Page numbers of article (if the article is not printed on consecutive pages, give the first page followed by a +). Medium of publication.

Citation examples:

Bazell, Robert. "Science and Society: Growth Industry." *New Republic* 15 Mar. 1993: 13-14. Print.

Frank, Michael. "The Wild, Wild West." *Architectural Digest* June 1993: 180+. Print.

Newspaper article (the following information is for paper copies of articles)

Citation description:

Author's last name, First name Middle initial (if any). "Article Title." *Title of Newspaper* Day Month (abbreviated except May, June, and July) Year: Section and page number(s) (if the article is not printed on consecutive pages, just give the first page followed by +). Medium of publication.

Citation example:

MacKenzie, Bill. "Packin' the Heat." *San Francisco Chronicle* 4 Nov. 1993: A16+. Print.

Citation Format for World Wide Web Pages

NOTE: The MLA format for online publications is not completely standardized. Various websites provide specific information on how to cite information from the Web according to their current interpretations of official citation formats.

General web page format:

Citation description:

- Author or editor's last name (if an author is given), first name, middle initial (if any).
- "Title of the Page." (in quotation marks)
- *Title of the Overall Website* (in italics)
- Version or edition used
- Publisher or sponsor of the site (if not given, use *n.p.*)
- Date of publication (day, month, and year, as available). If not given, use *n.d.*
- Medium of publication (Web)
- Date of access (day, month, and year)
- URL (optional – provide if it helps your reader locate the source or if your instructor requires it). Enclose the URL in angle brackets and end with a period.

NOTE : If you cannot locate any of the above components, leave it out.

NOTE : Each of the above sections of your citation is followed by a period, except the publisher or sponsor, which is followed by a comma

Citation example (basic web page):

Brenner, Eric. "Citing Sources." *Skyline College Library*. Skyline College, 28 May 2008. Web. 3 Dec. 2009.
<<http://www.skylinecollege.edu/library/citing.html>>.

Writing Guideline #11:

PLAGIARISM

(11) PLAGIARISM:

A Warning on Plagiarism:

To be fair and ethical, you must always acknowledge your debt to the writers of the sources you use. If you don't, you are guilty of plagiarism, a serious academic offense.

Four different acts are considered plagiarism:

- (1) Failing to cite quotations and borrowed ideas;
- (2) Failing to enclose borrowed language in quotation marks;
- (3) Failing to put summaries and paraphrases in your own words;
- (4) Mixing an author's phrases with your own without citation or quotes.

OVERVIEW AND CONTRADICTIONS:

(from Purdue University's writing advice)

Research-based writing in American institutions, both educational and corporate, is filled with rules that writers, particularly beginners, aren't aware of or don't know how to follow. Many of these rules have to do with research and proper citation. Gaining a familiarity of these rules, however, is critically important, as inadvertent mistakes can lead to charges of **plagiarism**, which is the uncredited use (both intentional and unintentional) of somebody else's words or ideas.

While some cultures may not insist so heavily on documenting sources of words, ideas, images, sounds, etc., American culture does. A charge of plagiarism can have severe consequences, including expulsion from college or loss of a job, not to mention a writer's loss of credibility and professional standing.

INTELLECTUAL CHALLENGES IN AMERICAN ACADEMIC WRITING:

There are some intellectual challenges that all students are faced with when writing. Sometimes these challenges can almost seem like contradictions, particularly when addressing them within a single paper. However, the ultimate goal is to successfully overcome these challenges and never resort to plagiarizing:

- Develop a topic based on what has already been said and written **but** write something new and original
- Rely on opinions of experts and authorities on a topic **but** improve upon and/or disagree with those same opinions
- Give credit to researchers who have come before you **but** make your own significant contribution
- Improve your English or fit into a discourse community by building upon what you hear and read **but** use your own words and your own voice

WHAT IS PLAGIARISM?

(from Plagiarism.org)

Many people think of plagiarism as copying another's work, or borrowing someone else's original ideas. But terms like "copying" and "borrowing" can disguise the seriousness of the offense:

According to the Merriam-Webster Online Dictionary, to "plagiarize" means

1. to steal and pass off (the ideas or words of another) as one's own
2. to use (another's production) without crediting the source
3. to commit literary theft
4. to present as new and original an idea or product derived from an existing source.

In other words, plagiarism is an act of fraud. It involves both stealing someone else's work and lying about it afterward.

But can words and ideas really be stolen?

According to U.S. law, the answer is yes. The expression of original ideas is considered intellectual property, and is protected by copyright laws, just like original inventions. Almost all forms of expression fall under copyright protection as long as they are recorded in some way (such as a book or a computer file).

All of the following are considered plagiarism:

- turning in someone else's work as your own
- copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- failing to put a quotation in quotation marks
- giving incorrect information about the source of a quotation
- changing words but copying the sentence structure of a source without giving credit
- copying so many words or ideas from a source that it makes up the majority of your work, whether you give credit or not

Most cases of plagiarism can be avoided, however, by citing sources. Simply acknowledging that certain material has been borrowed, and providing your audience with the information necessary to find that source, is usually enough to prevent plagiarism.

PLAGIARISM CONTRACT: *Instructor Copy*

The goal of taking a college English course is to strengthen your writing skills, so you can be a successful and confident writer and thinker. You can then apply your strong writing skills to thrive in your other courses, in your career, in personal communication, and in life. Plagiarizing the work of others undermines this goal. Also, an instructor is a student's ally; an instructor's only goal is to teach and guide the student to improve and feel successful. Plagiarizing destroys the trust and the relationship between the instructor and the student.

Instructor promise: As the instructor, I promise to respect all students in the course and provide detailed and thorough comments on their writing with the goal of guiding each student with concrete and specific ways to strengthen his/her writing. Even though providing detailed feedback for each student is very time-consuming, I commit to focusing on each piece of writing and providing the best and most constructive feedback that I am able.

Student promise: As the student, I promise to turn in writing that is entirely my own and is not plagiarized or copied from another source. All the work I will submit is my own and I will properly cite all borrowed words and ideas. I also understand the repercussions if I do plagiarize: I will receive a failing grade of "F," and my name will be submitted to the dean to be added to a list of students who have been guilty of plagiarizing, and this list can be shared with my current and future instructors; additionally, I may be referred to the College Disciplinarian for further sanctions which range from a warning to expulsion from Skyline College.

Student name:

G-Number:

Email:

Phone number:

Student signature:

PLAGIARISM CONTRACT: *Student Copy*

The goal of taking a college English course is to strengthen your writing skills, so you can be a successful and confident writer and thinker. You can then apply your strong writing skills to thrive in your other courses, in your career, in personal communication, and in life. Plagiarizing the work of others undermines this goal. Also, an instructor is a student's ally; an instructor's only goal is to teach and guide the student to improve and feel successful. Plagiarizing destroys the trust and the relationship between the instructor and the student.

Instructor promise: As the instructor, I promise to respect all students in the course and provide detailed and thorough comments on their writing with the goal of guiding each student with concrete and specific ways to strengthen his/her writing. Even though providing detailed feedback for each student is very time-consuming, I commit to focusing on each piece of writing and providing the best and most constructive feedback that I am able.

Student promise: As the student, I promise to turn in writing that is entirely my own and is not plagiarized or copied from another source. All the work I will submit is my own and I will properly cite all borrowed words and ideas. I also understand the repercussions if I do plagiarize: I will receive a failing grade of "F," and my name will be submitted to the dean to be added to a list of students who have been guilty of plagiarizing, and this list can be shared with my current and future instructors; additionally, I may be referred to the College Disciplinarian for further sanctions which range from a warning to expulsion from Skyline College.

Student name:

G-Number:

Email:

Phone number:

Student signature:

Writing Guideline #12:

QUOTING and PARAPHRASING

(12) QUOTING and PARAPHRASING:

WHY QUOTE?

- (1) To prove or illustrate an argument
- (2) To analyze the language or ideas of another writer

WHEN TO QUOTE?

Before you use a quotation, decide if you can use your own words (paraphrase) to express the author's ideas. If you include too many quotations, readers form the impression that you cannot think for yourself. Use quotations only:

- **When the original language is as important as the ideas it contains**, that is, when the author's words are so articulate or expressive that they deserve to be preserved
- **When the original language is concise** and a paraphrase would be too wordy
- **When the original language is from an established authority** who could lend extra credibility to your claims
- **When the original language itself is the object of analysis**, a situation that happens most commonly when writing about literature
- **When the original language contains technical vocabulary** whose meaning cannot be accurately reproduced in different words

If an author's ideas but not his/hers exact words are important to your point, you may wish to paraphrase rather than use a quote. A paraphrase should not change the ideas but it can eliminate or change words, often in order to condense a long sentence that contains details unnecessary to your point. For example:

Original: The solidarity that characterizes communities does not mean, however, that all is unity and harmony within. Many commentators err, I think, by insisting that absence of conflict, like the family conflict we all know, is real, though it differs from, say, market competition, in being mediated by emotional bonds. (from "The Meanings of Community" by Thomas Bender, page 67.)

Quote: According to Bender, "The solidarity that characterizes communities does not mean, however, that all is unity and harmony within" (67).

Paraphrase: While some people believe a lack of conflict characterizes community, Bender asserts that some communities may have and need conflict.

Partial Paraphrase: Unlike other forms of conflict, though, Bender believes that family conflict is "mediated by emotional bonds" (67).

PRACTICE PARAPHRASING AND QUOTING:

In writing you will use a mixture of direct quotations, paraphrases and partial paraphrases. Using the original quotes below, create one of each type:

Quote 1: "In my teaching I never concealed my political views: my detestation of war and militarism, my anger at racial inequality, my belief in a democratic socialism, in a rational and just distribution of the world's wealth. I made clear my abhorrence of any kind of bullying, whether by powerful nations over weaker ones, governments over their citizens, employers over employees, or by anyone on the Right or Left, who thinks they have a monopoly on the truth." (from Howard Zinn's book *You Can't Be Neutral on a Moving Train*, page 7).

Quote:

Paraphrase:

Partial Paraphrase:

Quote 2: "The eye-for-an-eye philosophy, the impulse to defend oneself when attacked, has always been held as the highest measure of American manhood. We are a nation that worships the frontier tradition, and our heroes are those who champion justice through violent retaliation against injustice. It is not simple to adopt the credo that moral force has as much strength and virtue as the capacity to return a physical blow; or that to refrain from hitting back requires more will and bravery than the automatic reflexes of defense." (from Martin Luther King's book *Why We Can't Wait*, page 24).

Quote:

Paraphrase:

Partial Paraphrase:

HOW TO QUOTE?

- (1) Properly cite all quotes and put all borrowed words inside quotation marks (or it is [Plagiarism](#)).
- (2) Smoothly integrate quotes into sentences of your own.
- (3) Include analysis with quotes.
- (4) Properly punctuate sentences that integrate quotes.

(1) Properly cite all quotes and put all borrowed words inside quotation marks (or it is [Plagiarism](#)).

Review the section [Research, In-Text Citations, and Works Cited](#) for detailed citation guidelines. However, here is a quick reminder of the basic in-text citation format:

You have two options when you cite your sources within the text of your paper:

FIRST: Provide the author's name and the page number on which you found the material you are citing:

Example: Forecasters agree that El Niño has "made for an unusual year" (Sampson 91).

SECOND: Provide author's name in text of your sentence and include only page number after the sentence.

Example: Forecasters from across the country agree with John Sampson's statement that El Niño has "made for an unusual year" (91).

Note: Do not use commas, p., pgs., or any other such notation in the citation. The period goes after parenthesis.

(2) Smoothly integrate quotes into sentences of your own.

AVOID DROPPING QUOTES

Sometimes writers will make the mistake of simply dropping a quotation into their paragraph without integrating it into a sentence of their own. For example:

Dropped quote: A number of journalists have been critical of genetic engineering. "The problem is, no one really knows the long-term effects of such complex genetic manipulation—and the potential dangers to humans and the environment are substantial" (Turner 21).

Why are dropped quotes so bad?

- An un-integrated direct quote **interrupts the flow** of your writing, as the reader must jump abruptly from your words to someone else's and back again
- If you're not integrating direct quotations into your own writing, you're probably **not giving your reader the context** they need to understand the quote.

In order to successfully integrate quotations into your writing, you need to introduce or in some way lead into the quotation so that readers know whose words are being quoted or can understand why the quotation is important. For example:

Integrated quote: A number of journalists have been critical of genetic engineering. Lisa Turner, in an article for the magazine *Better Nutrition*, targets the unpredictable nature of this new technology □: "The problem is, no one really knows the long-term effects of such complex genetic manipulation—and the potential dangers to humans and the environment are substantial" (21).

Different Methods to Integrate Quotes into Your Sentences:

1) Identify the speaker and context of the quote

Example: Dee protests to her mother that her sister does not know the true value of the quilts, “Maggie can’t appreciate these quilts! She’d probably be backward enough to put them to everyday use” (Walker 490).

2) Lead in with your own idea

Example: Miss Emily Grierson’s house is a reflection of her being out of sync with the times: “But garages and cotton gins had encroached and obliterated even the august names of that neighborhood; only Miss Emily’s house was left, lifting its stubborn and coquettish decay above the cotton wagons and gasoline pumps—an eyesore among eyesores” (Faulkner 459).

3) Formulas

- In (title of source), (author) writes/ argues/ explains/ describes, "quote" (#).
Example: In I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Maya Angelou writes, "In Stamps the segregation was so complete that most Black children didn't really absolutely know what whites looked like" (20).
- According to (author) in (title), "quote" (#).

To avoid monotony, try to vary your formulas. The following models suggest a range of possibilities:

In the words of researcher Herbert Terrace, “...”
Jason Applegate, Smith’s trainer, points out, “...”
“...,” claims linguist Noam Chomsky.
Psychologist H.S. Terrace offers an odd argument for this view, “...”

Also, by choosing an **appropriate verb**, you can make your stance clear:

| | | | | |
|---------------|--------------|---------------|------------|---------|
| acknowledges | condemns | distinguishes | observes | thinks |
| adds | confirms | emphasizes | objects | writes |
| admits | contends | endorses | points out | wonders |
| agrees | contrasts | explains | reasons | |
| argues | criticizes | grants | refutes | |
| asserts | declares | identifies | rejects | |
| believes | defends | illustrates | reports | |
| characterizes | demonstrates | implies | responds | |
| claims | denies | insists | shows | |
| comments | describes | justifies | suggests | |
| compares | disputes | notes | supports | |

PRACTICE INTEGRATING QUOTES:

For each quote below, create a sentence that smoothly integrates the quote. Try a few different methods:

Method #1: Identify the speaker and context of the quote:

Quote: "On this island, you walk too far and people speak a different language. Their own words reveal who belongs on what side"

Background information: From *The Farming of Bones* by Edwidge Danticat, the speaker is Senora Valencia, page 304. Senora Valencia is referring to the island of Hispanola, which the countries of Haiti and the Dominican Republic share. She is speaking during the times that the dictator Trujillo had many Haitians murdered in and exiled from the Dominican Republic.

Quote integrated into a sentence:

Method #2: Lead in with your own idea:

Quote: "They did not have the tanates to go up north and break through the wall of electric fences and enter the land of plenty, the U.S. of A., a land so rich that what garbage they throw away in one day could feed entire pueblos."

Background information: From *Macho!* By Victor Villasenor, page 31. The book tells the story of a young man named Roberto from Michoacan who risks himself to go north to California to work as an illegal alien picking fruit in California.

Quote integrated into a sentence:

Method #3: Formula (try using a good and dynamic verb):

Quote: "Racial targeting and abuse by police is costly. U.S. taxpayers have paid tens of millions of dollars in police brutality lawsuits. Between 1992 and 1993, Los Angeles county alone paid more than \$30 million to citizens victimized by police brutality."

Background information: From *The Color of Crime* by Katheryn K. Russell, page 45 who writes about the ways in which African-Americans are misrepresented by the media and mistreated within the criminal system.

Quote integrated into a sentence:

HOW TO QUOTE? ...continued

(3) Include analysis with quotes.

The Quote Sandwich

The quotation that you choose to support your point is important, but what you surround it with—your introduction and analysis—is equally important. Here’s one way to look at how you should set up the quotes in your essays.

THE INTRODUCTION

Introduce the quote by making a statement about the point that the quote supports. The quote is supplementary to your own ideas.

THE QUOTE ITSELF

Present the quote that supports your position, using the correct format. Make sure the quote is relevant and necessary.

THE FOLLOW-UP

Follow the quote with analysis that expresses the significance of the quote and why you chose to use it.

Example:

Although many people are willing to acknowledge the potential danger of keeping a handgun in the house, some of these same people now feel the need to keep a gun in their homes for self-defense. McCormick tells us that Elaine Jenkins has changed her mind about keeping a gun in the house because, “In this troubled era a handgun under the bed is an idea whose time has come. ‘I don’t think responsible people abuse guns at all,’ she said firmly” (Robinson 309). **As long as people are responsible, as Jenkins suggests, and receive proper training on how to store and use a gun, then accidents may decrease and the ability for ordinary citizens to stop intruders from entering their homes to commit crimes may increase.**

HOW TO QUOTE? ...continued

(4) Properly punctuate sentences that integrate quotes.

1. **Use quotations marks** at the beginning and end of any word, phrase, line, or passage you quote.
“A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds,” wrote Ralph Waldo Emerson.
2. **Commas and periods** go inside quotations marks.
After the professor stood up quietly and said, "I do not expect to continue at this position any longer," the other professors at the meeting stared at her in amazement.
3. **Periods** go outside of parenthetical citations.
Malcolm X asserted, “Most students are potential revolutionaries...when you have an illegal, immoral, and unjust situation, it should be changed” (54).
4. **Semi-colons, colons, and dashes** go outside quotation marks.
Baker focuses on two choices that cause young women "to be unclear about their goals": their interest in family life and their desire for professional success.
5. **Question marks and exclamation points** go: inside quotation marks, if they are part of the original quotation, but outside, if they are part of the sentence.
It was not all clear however, after the president exclaimed, “That is not an acceptable alternative!”
Did you ever hear of someone suggesting that we remove all windmills “super fast or immediately, whichever comes first”?
6. Use **square brackets** whenever you need to substitute or add words to a quotation. You can change individual words and then put them in brackets [] so that the quote fits your sentence grammatically.
Sonny would “as soon as he came in from school, or wherever he had been when he was suppose to be at school [go] straight to that piano and [stay] there until suppertime” (Baldwin 275).
7. **Single quotation marks** are placed inside regular quotation marks when you have a quote within a quote: Professor Stevens claimed that he "always asks his students Professor Begley's question about 'the meaning of a college education' in order to start off the discussion.”
8. Sometimes you will want to leave out material in the middle of a passage, quoting the most important words. When you do this, use an **ellipsis** (...). Use three dots if the omitted passage does not contain a period and four dots if it does:
Fadiman observes that the doctors at MCMC “could hardly be expected to ‘respect’ their patients’ system of health beliefs...since the medical schools they attended never informed them that diseases are caused by fugitive souls and cured by jugulated chickens” (61).

9. If you decide to use a **quotation of more than three lines**, set it off from the rest of your essay by indenting about ten spaces from either side and single spacing the quotation. You do not need to put quotation marks around this block quotation, unless it is actual dialogue.

In the essay "A Room Of One's Own," Woolf elaborates her argument for psychological androgyny:

And I went on amateurishly to sketch a plan of the soul so that in each of us two powers preside, one male, one female. . . . The normal and comfortable state of being is that when the two live in harmony together, spiritually cooperating. (Woolf 98)

This passage resonates distinctly with Freud's own theories on...

10. In deciding whether to **quote or underline text titles**, use the following guidelines:

- Use **quotation marks** (“ ”) around the titles of **shorter works** such as short stories, essays, articles, poems, chapter names, song names.

SHORT STORY: Richard Christian Matheson's "Red"

ESSAY: "A Tale of Two Sitcoms" by Steven D. Stark

ARTICLE: "Generation Next" by Chris Smith

POEM : Lois-Ann Yamanaka's "Haupu Mountain"

CHAPTER NAME: "Let's Go Mexico!" from How to Be a Chicana Role Model

SONG: "Livin' La Vida Loca" by Ricky Martin

- **Underline** or italicize the titles of **longer works** such as books, novels, periodicals, newspapers, plays, movies, TV series, and album names.

BOOK: *Errors & Expectations* by Mina Shaughnessy

NOVEL: *Island of the Sequined Love Nun* by Christopher Moore

PERIODICAL: *Newsweek*

NEWSPAPER: *The San Francisco Bay Guardian*

PLAY: *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* by Tom Stoppard

MOVIE: *Chicken Run*

TV SERIES: *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*

ALBUM: *Less Than Jake's Losing Streak*

PRACTICE FORMATTING:

Consider the rules for introducing and punctuating quotations and correct the following sentences. Please use the original passage as a reference as you are making your corrections.

Original passage:

Community, which has taken many structural forms in the past, is best defined as a network of social relations marked by mutuality and emotional bonds. This network, or what Kai T. Erikson refers to as the "human surround," is the essence of community, and it may or may not be coterminous with a specific, contiguous territory. The New England town was a community, but it was not a definition of a community. Similarly, a family, a neighborhood, a group of friends, or a class can be a community without providing a definition of the concept. One must keep an open stance toward the various structural norms that might be contained in a community. A definition of community must, therefore, be independent of particular structures.

- "The Meanings of Community" by Thomas Bender (page 67)

1. In *The Meanings of Community* from his book *Toward an Urban Vision* by Thomas Bender argues that communities take many forms.
2. He states one must keep an open stance toward the various forms that might contain community. A definition of community must, therefore, be independent of particular structures.
3. Bender makes the interesting statement that, "The New England town was a community, but it was not a definition of a community." (Bender, top of page 67).
4. Bender characterizes community as a network of social relations marked by mutuality and emotional bonds.
5. While other definitions of community exist, Thomas Bender believes that, "Community...is best defined as a network of social relations marked by mutuality and emotional bonds. This network, or what Kai T. Erikson refers to as the "human surround," is the essence of community."
6. As Bender writes, "Community, which has taken many structural forms in the past, is best defined as a network of social relations marked by mutuality and emotional bonds. This network ...is the essence of community, and it may or may not be coterminous with a specific, contiguous territory. The New England town was a community, but it was not a definition of a community. Similarly, a family, a neighborhood, a group of friends, or a class can be a community without providing a definition of the concept."

PRACTICE LOCATING THE APPLIED QUOTING ADVICE:

In this paragraph from the essay on Malcolm X’s “[Learning to Read](#)” locate the following features from the quoting advice in this section:

- | | |
|--------------------------------|---|
| 1. paraphrasing | 4. quote used to prove an argument |
| 2. quote analysis | 5. partial paraphrasing |
| 3. proper page citation | 6. phrases that integrate the quotes |

The diligence and persistent effort Malcolm X showed in learning to read has become disappointingly rare. Malcolm X in his autobiography tells us that when he went to prison, he could hardly read or write. He decided the way to improve would be to copy the entire dictionary word for word by hand. He said to copy just the first page alone took an entire day. The next day he reviewed all the words he did not remember, so he slowly built his vocabulary, and at the same time he started educating himself about the larger world as he describes the dictionary as a “miniature encyclopedia” (2). Malcolm X carried on until he copied the entire dictionary cover to cover. However, the time he dedicated to his writing was not confined to this amazing achievement alone: “Between what I wrote in my tablet, and writing letters, during the rest of my time in prison I would guess I wrote a million words” (2). The dedication to his own education and how he strengthened his own intelligence and abilities through sheer force of will is impressive but unfortunately is the exception rather than the norm. In *Generation Me*, the author Jean Twenge addresses the present generation of people who have been taught to put themselves first and expect instant results without working hard to achieve them. Twenge states: “They are less likely to work hard today to get a reward tomorrow—an especially important skill these days, when many good jobs require graduate degrees” (157). If people are less willing today to work hard, then we are going to have increasingly uneducated, lazy people who spend more time complaining than achieving. With a lack of education we won’t be strong critical thinkers so will be easily taken in by people who want to exploit us for profit like advertisers and corporate America. Instead of defining who we are, people who want to sell us things will continue to shape our wants, desires and perceptions of ourselves.

APPLYING THE QUOTING ADVICE:

Here's how the quoting advice was applied in the essay on Malcolm X's "Learning to Read":

The diligence and persistent effort Malcolm X showed in learning to read has become disappointingly rare. Malcolm X in his autobiography tells us that when he went to prison, he could hardly read or write. He decided the way to improve would be to copy the entire dictionary word for word by hand. He said to copy just the first page alone took an entire day. The next day he reviewed all the words he did not remember, so he slowly built his vocabulary, and at the same time he started educating himself about the larger world as he describes the dictionary as a "miniature encyclopedia" (2). Malcolm X carried on until he copied the entire dictionary cover to cover. However, the time he dedicated to his writing was not confined to this amazing achievement alone: "Between what I wrote in my tablet, and writing letters, during the rest of my time in prison I would guess I wrote a million words" (2). The dedication to his own education and how he strengthened his own intelligence and abilities through sheer force of will is impressive but unfortunately is the exception rather than the norm. In *Generation Me*, the author Jean Twenge addresses the present generation of people who have been taught to put themselves first and expect instant results without working hard to achieve them. Twenge states: "They are less likely to work hard today to get a reward tomorrow—an especially important skill these days, when many good jobs require graduate degrees" (157). If people are less willing today to work hard, then we are going to have increasingly uneducated, lazy people who spend more time complaining than achieving. With a lack of education we won't be strong critical thinkers so will be easily taken in by people who want to exploit us for profit like advertisers and corporate America. Instead of defining who we are, people who want to sell us things will continue to shape our wants, desires and perceptions of ourselves.

1. Paraphrasing

5. Partial paraphrasing

3. Page number in parenthesis after quote

6. Phrases that lead into and integrate the quotes

4. Quote used to prove argument

2. Analysis following the quote

Writing Guideline #13:

THESIS STATEMENTS

(13) THESIS STATEMENTS:

WHAT IS A THESIS STATEMENT?

The main idea of the whole essay is its thesis. A thesis is an assertion that you argue or support in the essay. Ask yourself: Can I disagree? You want to be able to answer YES because then you have a reason to write the paper in order to prove or defend the thesis. If you have problems with your thesis, try to follow these two conventions:

1. A thesis statement is often (but not always) one sentence and is most often placed in the introductory paragraph.
2. A thesis statement is an arguable assertion that can be proven with evidence and opinions.

WHY HAVE A THESIS STATEMENT?

- A thesis helps you narrow down the more general topic and find your own angle on the topic and express your opinion.
- A thesis is a reader strategy; it lets the reader know what to expect or look for in the essay.
- A well formed thesis is a writer strategy; it helps you develop and cover all parts of an assignment, helps you know when you are "done," and keeps you organized, helping you determine if you are wandering off in unrelated directions.

WHAT DO EFFECTIVE THESIS STATEMENTS LOOK LIKE?

An Effective Thesis: An effective thesis should be an opinion, not a fact; it should be limited, not too broad; and it should be sharply focused, not too vague.

Too Factual: The first polygraph was developed by Dr. John A. Larson in 1921.

Revised: Because the polygraph has not been proved reliable, even under controlled conditions, its use by private employers should be banned.

Too Broad: Many drugs are now being used successfully to treat mental illnesses.

Revised: Despite its risks and side effects, lithium is an effective treatment for depression.

Too Vague: Many of the songs played on station WXQP are disgusting.

Revised: Of the songs played on station WXQP, all too many depict sex crudely, sanction the beating or rape of women, or foster gang violence.

PRACTICE LOCATING OPINION WORDS IN THESIS STATEMENTS:

Thesis: As you explore your subject, you will begin to see possible ways to connect your ideas. A sentence that links all your main ideas and explains your opinion on those ideas is called a *thesis statement*. Generally, you will want to put your thesis in the opening paragraph of your essay.

Opinion: A thesis should contain a topic (*what* you are writing about), an opinion about the topic (what your *attitude* is toward the topic), and reasons why you hold that view (explanations answering “*why?*” or “*so what?*”). In other words, a thesis needs to be an arguable assertion that can be proven with facts and opinions. To check to see if a thesis is arguable, locate the opinion words.

Locating the Opinion in a Thesis: When you look for the opinion in a thesis, ask yourself: What is the writer’s attitude towards the topic? For example, in the sentence “Backpacking in the mountains last year was an exciting experience,” the topic is “backpacking” and the controlling idea is that this trip was “exciting.” Another person on the same trip might have had a different attitude and may have found the trip boring or exhausting. “Exciting” reveals the writer’s attitude and also indicates what the essay with this thesis statement will be focused on: demonstrating why it was “exciting.” This thesis statement limits the writer’s focus and clearly tells the reader what the essay will be about.

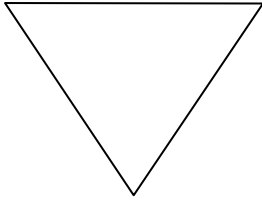
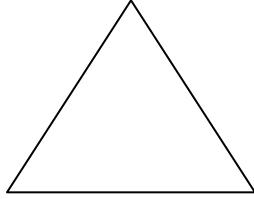
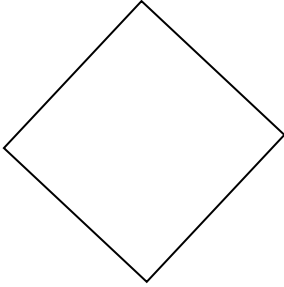
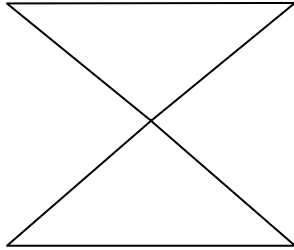
Underline the opinion words below. If there are no opinion words, it is not a thesis:

- 1) Much maligned and the subject of unwarranted fears, most bats are harmless and highly beneficial.
- 2) Vigorous exercise is a good way to reduce the effects of stress on the body.
- 3) Buffalo and Toronto differ in four major ways.
- 4) Developing color film is more complicated than developing black and white.
- 5) In this essay I will discuss abortion.
- 6) Television is destroying the unity of the modern family.
- 7) In her essay, Erlich shows that there is a balance of community and isolation in her hometown.


WHERE DO I PUT A THESIS STATEMENT?

Research shows that you comprehend better when the thesis is directly stated, particularly when it is stated at the beginning of a passage. Such an initial thesis statement offers a signpost briefing you on what to expect and overviews the author's message. Unfortunately, writers do not always follow this pattern. In a research study using psychology texts, the main idea was clearly stated in only 58 percent of the sampled paragraphs. Thus, you should be skilled in identifying stated and implied thesis statements.

Locations for Stated Thesis Statements:

| | |
|---|---|
| <p>An introductory statement of the thesis is given at the beginning of the paragraph:</p> <p>Thesis Detail Detail Detail Detail</p>  | <p>A concluding statement of the thesis appears at the end of the paragraph:</p> <p>Detail Detail Detail Detail Thesis</p>  |
| <p>Details are placed at the beginning and end to arouse interest, with a statement of the thesis in the middle of the paragraph:</p> <p>Detail Detail Thesis Detail Detail</p>  | <p>Both the introductory and concluding sentences state the thesis:</p> <p>Thesis Detail Detail Detail Detail Thesis</p>  |

For Implied Thesis Statements:

| |
|---|
| <p>Details combine to make a point but the thesis is not directly stated:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Detail2. Detail3. Detail4. Detail  |
|---|

PRACTICE FINDING THE THESIS:

Don't meddle with old unloaded firearms, they are the most deadly and unerring things ever created. You don't have to take any pains with them at all; you don't have to have a rest, you don't have to have any sights on the gun, you don't have to take aim even. No, you just pick out a relative and bang away, and you are sure to get him. A youth who can't hit a cathedral at thirty yards with a Gatling gun in three-quarters of an hour, can take up an old empty musket and bag his grandmother every time at a hundred.

---Mark Twain, "Advice to Youth"

In the warmth of the inner Solar System a comet releases clouds of vapor and dust that form the glowing head and then leak into the tail, which is the cosmic equivalent of an oil slick. Pieces of the dust later hit the Earth, as meteors. A few survivors among the comets evolve into menacing lumps of dirt in tight orbits around the Sun. For these reasons comets are, in my opinion, best regarded as a conspicuous form of sky pollution.

---Nigel Calder, *The Comet is Coming*

Malcolm X in the excerpt "Learning to Read" from *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* shows that reading and writing are paths to self-confidence, empowerment and liberation. He also shows a level of dogged determination that has become frighteningly atypical. The characteristics that he shows of not giving up even in the face of overwhelming odds and applying good old-fashioned, and often tedious and repetitive, hard work and persistence have become frighteningly rare in the U.S. today where people have bloated senses of entitlement. People today often feel that things should be given rather than earned. No need to study acting for years, act in play after play honing your craft, or learn different dialects and accents to play diverse and convincing characters. Instead, you can become rich and famous overnight by starring in a reality show without a shred of talent. The repeated message that we should be richly rewarded for doing nothing or for just being ourselves causes people to not pursue the healthy and character building paths of hard work. As a result, we become paralyzed in disappointment when we don't get what we think we deserve, and we become a nation of discontents that do nothing and don't care. If we keep devaluing the slow path of hard work, we're going to become increasingly uneducated, unmotivated, apathetic, and better controlled by advertisers, politicians, and in the changing global climate, other countries.

--Sample essay on Malcolm X's "[Learning to Read](#)"

A TV set stood close to a wall in the small living room crowded with an assortment of chairs and tables. An aquarium crowded the mantelpiece of a fake fireplace. A lighted bulb inside the tank showed many colored fish swimming about in a haze of fish food. Some of it lay scattered on the edge of the shelf. The carpet underneath was a sodden black. Old magazines and tabloids lay just about everywhere.

---Bienvenidos Santos, "Immigration Blues"

HOW DO I CREATE A THESIS STATEMENT?

Once you have chosen the topic of your paper and completed the necessary research, start thinking about the underlying themes and connections between your observations and larger issues at stake. If you're having trouble establishing an argument, here are some common approaches to help you build your thesis:

- **Make a Connection:** Compare your subject with something else you've learned in your class or something else you know about, or write a paper that asks the reader to look at a subject in light of something else (s)he wouldn't necessarily have connected to it.
- **Refute an Accepted Idea:** This can be an interesting approach if you either have new evidence or can interpret existing evidence in a new way.
- **Consider Different Angles:** Look at a subject from a new perspective, or find an aspect of the subject that's been overlooked.
- **Define:** Offer a definition of a key term that will get readers to see a controversial issue in a new way.
- **Evaluate:** Make an assessment about something's quality or utility.
- **Argue Cause and Effect:** You can argue that X will happen if we do Y, or X happened because we did Y. Remember, it has to be a statement of causation and not merely a correlation. Just because X happens prior to Y, does not mean that X is the cause of Y.
- **Propose a Change:** Suggest that something new be done to improve or resolve a specific problem.

Produced by the University of Texas

WHAT'S A SIMPLE WAY TO BUILD A THESIS?

You can also use this simple formula and it will lead you to a thesis:

WHAT IS YOUR TOPIC? _____

WHAT IS YOUR OPINION? _____

SO WHAT? _____

HOW DO I MAKE A THESIS STATEMENT STRONG?

How do you know if your thesis is effective? Here are some components and questions to think about when revising your thesis statement:

- **The Claim:** Your thesis must be more than a summary of your findings regarding a specific topic. To make sure your thesis is making a contestable claim, answer the questions how and/or why? Why are your observations and analyses significant? How does your argument cover new ground or move the conversation forward within your discipline? Does it compel the reader to think differently or act?
- **The Scope:** Is it focused enough? Are you tackling the history of western civilization in a 3-page paper? Focus on a sufficiently narrow aspect of your subject area so that you can make a complete argument. Consider whether your research will support your argument, and adjust your thesis accordingly.
- **The Tone:** Be aware that you are writing for an academic setting so adjust your tone and style accordingly. Avoid using overly informal or discriminatory language, both of which are inappropriate for academic writing. Will the reader believe your thesis? More importantly, do you believe your thesis? Avoid hedging phrases and words like "I think," "I believe," "might," "maybe," and "possibly." Be sure of yourself and take a clear stance.
- **The Focus:** Your thesis should map out your argument. The major sections of your paper should correspond to the logical progression you plan to use to support the argument. Explain those steps to the reader in the introduction so that he or she can find them easily in the paper. This will help you to maintain focus throughout the paper as well clarify your argument for the reader.
- **The Myths:** First, a thesis does not have to be confined to one sentence. You want to keep your thesis statement as concise as possible, but sometimes you need more than one sentence to do that. Second, your thesis is not set in stone. Don't be afraid to change your thesis. If while writing your paper you realize you have started arguing something different than what your thesis says, and you think it is better than what you had originally planned on doing, stick with it and revise the thesis. Get rid of what doesn't work, and find a way of expressing what you really want to talk about.

Produced by the University of Texas

Practice in Changing Ineffective Thesis Statements into Effective Thesis Statements:

1. **A strong thesis statement takes a stand:** your thesis needs to show your conclusions about a subject.

WEAK THESIS: There are some negative and positive aspects to the Banana Herb Tea Supplement.

This is a weak thesis statement. It fails to take a stand and the phrase *negative and positive aspects* is vague.

STRONGER THESIS: _____

2. **A strong thesis statement justifies discussion:** your thesis should indicate the point of the discussion.

WEAK THESIS: My family is an extended family.

This is a weak thesis statement because it merely states an observation, so your reader won't be able to tell the point of the statement.

STRONGER THESIS: _____

3. **A strong thesis statement expresses one main idea:** Readers need to be able to see that your paper has one main point. If your thesis statement expresses more than one idea, then you might confuse your readers about the subject of your paper.

WEAK THESIS: Companies need to exploit the marketing potential of the Internet, and Web pages can provide both advertising and customer support.

This is a weak thesis statement because the reader can't decide whether the paper is about marketing on the Internet or Web pages. To revise the thesis, the relationship between the two ideas needs to become clearer.

STRONGER THESIS: _____

4. **A strong thesis statement is specific:** A thesis statement should show exactly what your paper will be about, and will help you keep your paper to a manageable topic.

WEAK THESIS: World hunger has many causes and effects.

This is a weak thesis statement for two major reasons. First, *world hunger* can't be discussed thoroughly in a short essay. Second, *many causes and effects* is vague. You should be able to identify specific causes and effects.

STRONGER THESIS: _____

Possible answers to strengthen the thesis statements for exercises 1-4:

| | |
|---|--|
| <p>1. WEAK THESIS: There are some negative and positive aspects to the Banana Herb Tea Supplement.</p> <p>STRONGER THESIS: Because Banana Herb Tea Supplement promotes rapid weight loss that results in the loss of muscle and lean body mass, it poses a potential danger to customers.</p> <p>This is a strong thesis because it takes a stand, and because it's specific.</p> | <p>3. WEAK THESIS: Companies need to exploit the marketing potential of the Internet, and Web pages can provide both advertising and customer support.</p> <p>STRONGER THESIS: Because the Internet is filled with tremendous marketing potential, companies should exploit this potential by using Web pages that offer both advertising and customer support.</p> <p>This is a strong thesis because it shows that the two ideas are related. Hint: a great many clear and engaging thesis statements contain words like <i>because, since, so, although, unless, and however.</i></p> |
| <p>2. WEAK THESIS: My family is an extended family.</p> <p>STRONGER THESIS: While most American families would view blood-related marriage as a threat to the nuclear family structure, many Iranian families, like my own, believe that these marriages help reinforce kinship ties in an extended family.</p> <p>This is a strong thesis because it shows how your experience contradicts a widely-accepted view. A good strategy for creating a strong thesis is to show that the topic is controversial. Readers will be interested in reading the rest of the essay to see how you support your point.</p> | <p>4. WEAK THESIS: World hunger has many causes and effects.</p> <p>STRONGER THESIS: Hunger persists in Glandelinia because jobs are scarce and farming in the infertile soil is rarely profitable.</p> <p>This is a strong thesis statement because it narrows the subject to a more specific and manageable topic, and it also identifies the specific causes for the existence of hunger.</p> |

Writing Guideline #14:

INTRODUCTIONS

(14) INTRODUCTIONS:

WHAT'S THE PURPOSE OF AN INTRODUCTION?

- 1) To attract the reader's attention - get him/her interested in reading the paper.
- 2) To provide necessary or helpful background information about the topic - to create a context or "set the stage" for the essay so a reader can understand or appreciate your main point.
- 3) To state the core idea (thesis) of the essay.

WHEN WRITING AN INTRODUCTION, ASK YOURSELF...

- 1) Why am I writing about this subject?
- 2) What have I experienced or read that leads me to want to address this subject?
- 3) How does my main point relate to anything going on in the world?
- 4) Do I need to explain why I think this subject is significant?
- 5) Do I need to supply any background information?
- 6) Can I appeal to the reader's self interest?

HOW DO I BEGIN?

1) Research, take notes, and outline. Prepare before you actually start writing your introduction. First, do some initial research, which should establish what it is you will be writing about, what issue you will be addressing, and why you will take this position. Then actively research by taking notes on your topic. Outline the ideas and arguments that you will make so that you'll know what to include in your introduction.

2) Indicate your topic. When you write an introduction, you need to clearly indicate the topic (i.e., the subject matter) that you will be writing about.

3) Set the foundation for the structure. After you have clearly stated your topic, you will need to address how you've organized the body of your essay. You should use the notes and outline you made during your initial research and write a few sentences explaining the order in which your essay will be structured. This will be your readers' road map. They will know where they will be going as they read and in what order your ideas will be presented.

4) Writing the thesis. Every good introduction has a clearly stated thesis. The thesis statement is where you will let your readers know what position you will take on your topic. When you write your thesis, don't be shy: make a bold statement that expresses your position.

5) Keep it short. An introduction must not be so detailed that it includes everything you want to say. Remember that you're *introducing* an idea or topic, your structure of the essay, and your thesis statement. A general rule to follow is that the introduction should be about 10% (or less) of your whole paper.

6) Be creative! An introduction should be structured and follow a format, but that does not mean it has to be boring. Try one of the following techniques to draw people in and really make them want to read your entire essay...

Adapted from ENotes

HOW CAN I WRITE A CREATIVE AND ENGAGING INTRODUCTION?

There are many creative approaches you can use to draw in your reader's interest:

- 1) Relating a short, illustrative anecdote or example
- 2) Connecting your topic to a familiar experience the reader is likely to have had or a cultural reference they are likely to have shared
- 3) Posing a provocative question, one that will get your reader thinking
- 4) Including a short direct quote that illuminates the topic (be sure to give full names of writers, experts, and text titles when you first reference them)
- 5) Surprising your reader with striking facts or statistics
- 6) Defining key terms (Avoid defining commonly known words and using the overused dictionary approach, "According to *Webster's*...")
- 7) Providing background information and/or history on the topic
- 8) Stating a problem that will be analyzed or solved

Remember that there is no single all-purpose formula for successful introductions. You can use any strategy that you wish as long as you prepare the reader fully for what follows in the body of the paper.

WHAT SHOULD I AVOID IN AN INTRODUCTION?

- **Avoid The Generic** (an introduction that could be stuck onto any essay about any subject) "In this modern, complex world, we all face many daily problems"
- **Avoid The Mechanical** "In this essay, I am going to discuss..." (Note: This approach is not favored in most humanities courses, but may be encouraged in business or science courses)
- **Avoid Clichés:** Avoid worn out over-used phrases like "According to the dictionary..." and "Don't judge a book by its cover." Use language that is fresh, original and engaging.
- **Avoid Dawdling:** Get to it. Move confidently into your essay. Don't slow your essay down with too much information that doesn't lead directly up to your thesis.

PRACTICE LOCATING THE APPLIED INTRODUCTION ADVICE:

These introductions are taken from student essays analyzing the same book *Enrique's Journey* by Sonia Nazario. Analyze and describe the different approaches each one used:

The Destructive Impact on Children “Left-Behind”

Imagine children growing-up with their mother and father for the first few years of their life, seeing them daily and forming habits with both parents, when suddenly, one or both parents leave. Although this occurs all over the world, this is starting to become much more of a problem for children in Central America where their parents are leaving their homeland and families to come to the United States. They are leaving for the opportunity to provide a better quality of life for their children by sending money that will allow them to have food, clothing, and will pay for school related expenses. Often, the children that are left behind are not able to fully cope with this loss because of their feelings of abandonment, as was represented in *Enrique's Journey*, by Sonia Nazario. The child's relationship with the parent who has left is damaged and becomes more difficult to repair the longer they are separated from each other. Parents who migrate to the United States have the intent of providing a higher quality of life for the children who are left-behind. However, the benefits aren't worth the potentially devastating outcomes that children endure due to their feelings of abandonment.

A Resolution Long Overdue

The Federation for American Immigration Reform estimates that “Illegal immigration costs U.S. taxpayers about \$113 billion a year at the federal, state and local level” (FAIR). The U.S. government spends billions of dollars deporting illegal immigrants and billions more funding government programs to assist immigrants who are already in the U.S. Illegal immigration is hurting our borders and the economy. Sonia Nazario in her book *Enrique's Journey* makes vivid the devastating harms of illegal immigration by telling the story of Enrique and his mother. Pushed by the poverty and the lack of opportunities in their country, year after year, millions of people like Enrique and his mother risk their lives trying to escape the impoverished life in Latin America and enter the U.S illegally. After years of debates and reforms, clearly the U.S. policies to solve the illegal immigration issue have proved to be both costly and inefficient. However, so far the main solutions the U.S. employs are immediate deportation of illegal immigrants and border security. The U.S. government should do more than just deporting illegal immigrants and enforcing border security. Instead the U.S. government needs to encourage and pressure the Latin governments to provide more jobs, government assistance and help improve the quality of life in Latin America so that immigrants like Enrique and his mom are not so pressed to cross the U.S border illegally.

There's Always Another Choice

Throughout my childhood, my father had to leave my mother, my two sisters and me for weeks and often months at a time as a large part of his job involved travel. When he came home, we were often shy with him, like he was a stranger visiting and before we could bond with him, he was gone again. As a result, I don't think we ever formed a strong emotional attachment to him and to this day, he still feels somewhat like a stranger. I know he worked to support us but I can't let go of the resentment over the lost years. When I read Sonia Nazario's *Enrique's Journey*, I understood Enrique's deep resentment for his mother who left him to go to the U.S. when he was five years old to earn money for the family. Logically, I understood what drove her as they lived in extreme poverty and the future for her children was financially bleak, but emotionally, I didn't. I feel Lourdes, as a mother, could have made a better choice because when it comes to children, a parent's supportive presence should prevail over financial concerns.

A Mother's Choice, A Child's Longing

Would you rather leave your child to improve his living condition by illegally immigrating to another country for better work or stay by your child's side and watching him suffer from poverty and hunger? That hardly seems like a fair choice as it is a no-win situation. However, every year too many women throughout Central America are compelled to make this difficult decision, and that is where the story begins in the book *Enrique's Journey* by Sonia Nazario. A heartbreaking and moving story of a fifteen year old boy, Enrique, who follows his mother, Lourdes, to America eleven tumultuous years after she leaves him behind to find opportunity there. Through Nazario's work we experience the life of an immigrant child and mother and see up-close the strain endured by these families and the rejection that is felt by the children who are left behind. It is clear that unstable governments and economic policies in Central America must improve so that mothers won't be forced to make the horrible choice to leave. A rich country like the U.S must intervene so parents can take care of their children in their own countries or else there will continue to be generations of children turning to drugs, crime, and gangs which have a devastating impact on all of us.

Putting a Price on a Mother's Love

“The most terrible poverty is loneliness and the feeling of being unloved.” -- Mother Theresa.

When the family unit is sacrificed for the sole benefit of financial stability, it can only lead to the destruction of its main motivation – the family. Driven by extreme impoverished conditions, the once tightly knit families of Central America are being divided as immigrants leave for the United States in search of better opportunities. The rising numbers of abandoned children set out on their own to find their mothers in the United States. The journey is dangerous without any promises of survival or success. But for the children they leave behind, dealing with the emotional trauma of abandonment is more difficult than the physical pain of hunger. The permanent scar it leaves on a child will never heal. Maternal abandonment leaves the children to deal with significant emotional, mental and psychological after effects (Gerlach). For every mother deciding to leave her children behind, there comes the risk of losing the love of your children. In Lourdes' case in *Enrique's Journey* by Sonia Nazario, her choice and her many years of absence causes her to lose a part of her son, Enrique, permanently.

The Children of the Undocumented: A Struggle to Thrive

When you plant a seed, you must nurture it. You must provide it with the right amount of water, sunlight and a soil rich in nutrients. If any one of these elements is lacking, the plant will never grow properly. It may sprout initially, but it will become weaker until it withers and goes back into the earth. The same can be said for raising a child. To grow a well-rounded and secure human being one needs to provide food, shelter, and dedicated emotional guidance. *Enrique's Journey* by Sonia Nazario shows how the love and guidance a child needs from a parent is vital for healthy growth survival. Children are being left to grow wild, like weeds, so turn to hurtful nutrients like drugs and exist in harmful environments, like gangs. The sad truth is that Enrique's story is one of millions. As immigrants leave their families and children behind to migrate to the United States searching for economic stability, they are tearing apart the family structure for which they are making such huge sacrifices to preserve. By leaving their children behind, migrants are causing the deterioration of the Latin American culture and destroying its historically close family structure.

Writing Guideline #15:

TOPIC SENTENCES

(15) TOPIC SENTENCES:

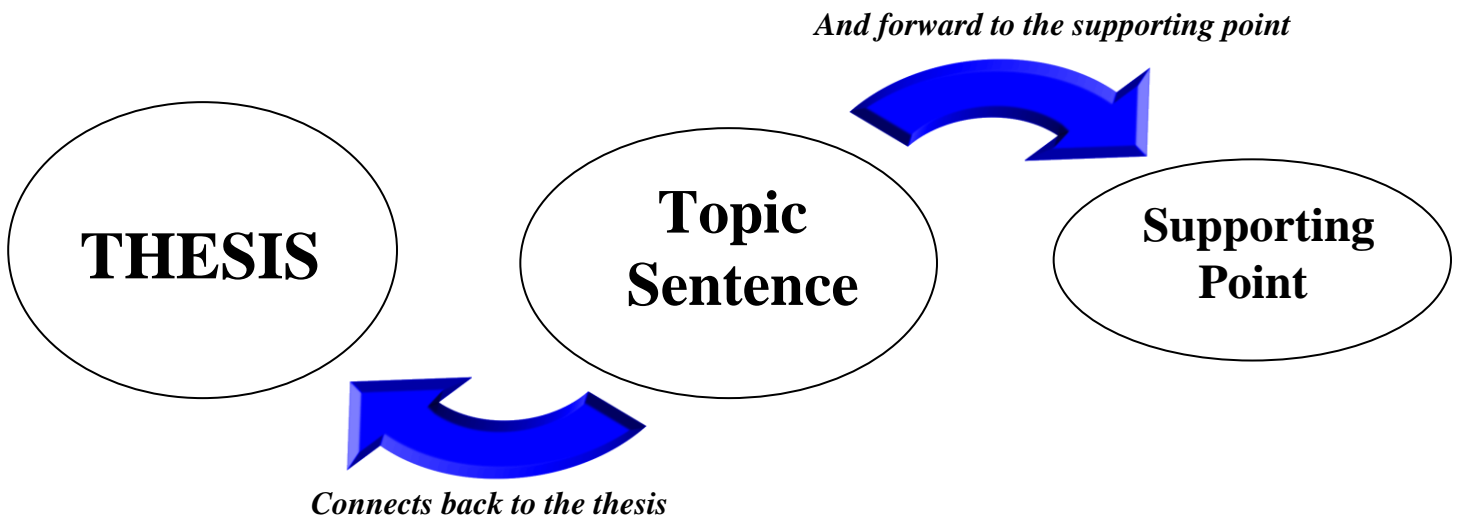
WHAT'S THE PURPOSE OF A TOPIC SENTENCE?

The main point (claim) of a paragraph is often indicated in a single sentence called the topic sentence. A topic sentence is like a thesis in that you can also ask yourself: Can I disagree? You want to be able to answer YES to show that there is an arguable claim that needs to be proven. While it is true that in published writing you'll sometimes find topic sentences in the middle or even at the end of a paragraph, placing your topic sentences at the beginning of each of your paragraphs is useful because:

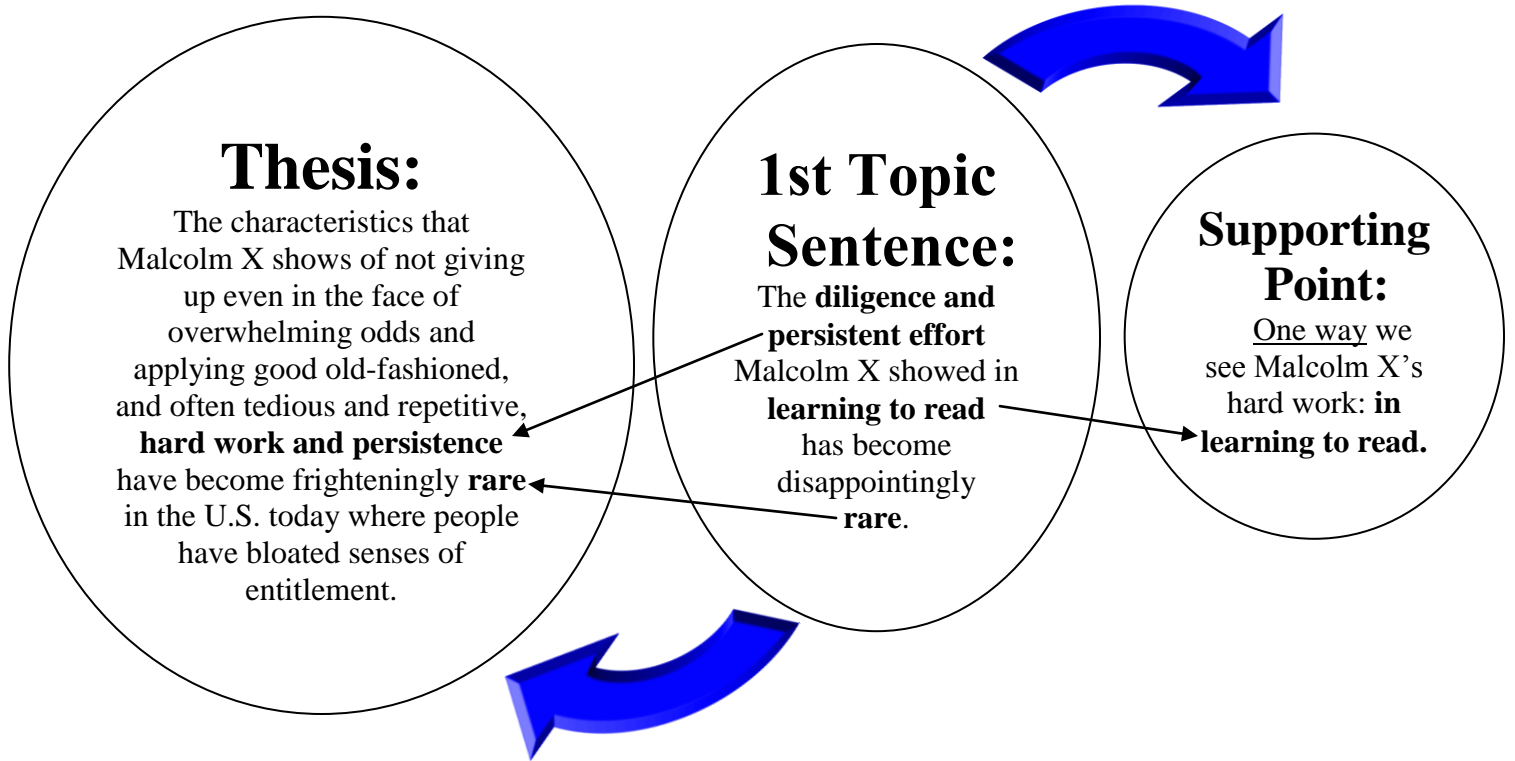
- A strong topic sentence can help you, the writer to focus each paragraph around one main point.
- A strong topic sentence can help your reader to see where you are headed with your ideas in a particular paragraph; topic sentences help your reader form a mental map of your essay.

WHAT DOES A TOPIC SENTENCE LOOK LIKE?

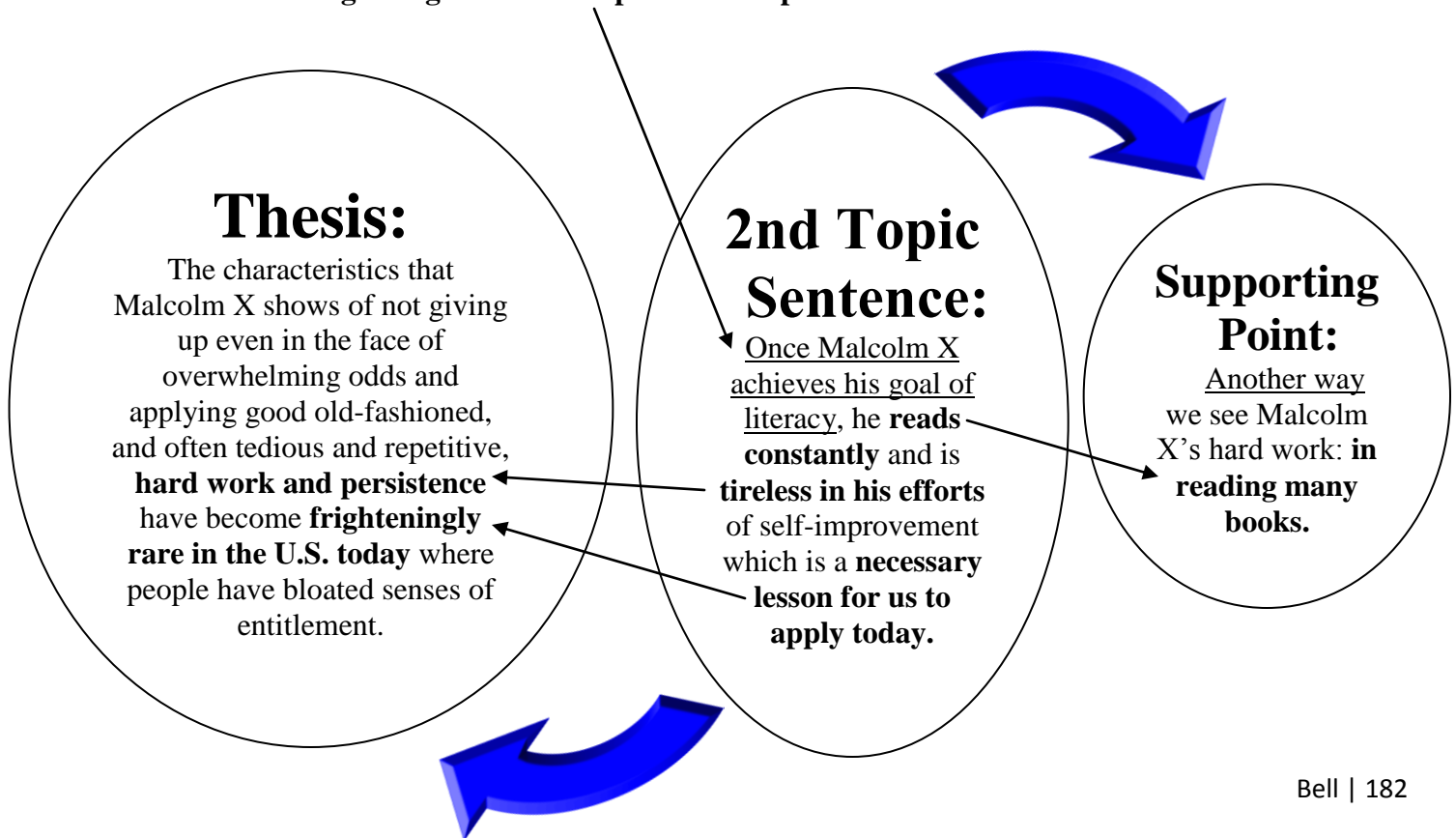
A strong topic sentence connects back to your overall thesis and connects forward to the specific supporting point you are making in the paragraph to prove and illustrate your thesis.



Looking again at the essay on Malcolm X’s “Learning to Read,” note how each topic sentence looks back at the thesis and forward to the supporting point that is being argued in the paragraph:



Note the underlined beginning of the 2nd topic sentence provides a transition from the above discussion



WHAT DIFFERENTIATES A STRONG TOPIC SENTENCE FROM A WEAK ONE?

The chart below points out some of the main differences between a topic sentence that is genuinely helpful to you and your readers, and one which is not:

| A weak topic sentence: | A strong topic sentence: |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Doesn't "fit" your paragraph—that is, it misleads your reader into thinking you will be writing about one thing, but the paragraph itself is about something else | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Fits" your paragraph, accurately reflecting what you've actually written |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is so general that your reader can't form a clear image about what is to come | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is specific enough that your reader can predict what you will cover in that paragraph |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Simply states a fact, a piece of information that can be confirmed with observation or reference to reputable sources. Your reader is left wondering, "What is the point of this paragraph? What is the writer trying to prove with this piece of information?" | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Like a thesis statement, it sets up the controlling idea of the paragraph, clearly indicating the point or claim the writer will illustrate, describe, explain, analyze in the body of the paragraph |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does not seem clearly related to your thesis | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helps your reader see how this paragraph relates to and advances/supports your thesis |

SOME GUIDELINES FOR WRITING STRONG TOPIC SENTENCES:

A topic sentence must predict or promise what follows, so it cannot be a question. To orient the reader, you may use a question as the first sentence, with the topic sentence as the answer to that question.

Weak: Should schools provide free computers for their students?

Strong: Schools must provide free computers for their students to assist them in their studies and prepare them for their future careers.

Phrases such as “I think” or “in my opinion” may muddle or weaken topic sentences. Your writing is always your opinion, so you don’t need these phrases unless they are central to the idea that you are trying to convey.

Weak: I think that it is important for every woman to carry pepper spray.

Strong: As violent criminals take over the city streets, women must carry pepper spray to protect themselves.

The topic sentence should provide clear relationships among all of its elements so that it can provide a framework for understanding the rest of the paragraph.

Weak: Historians record only dry statistics; we should read novels.

Strong: Accurate historical novels give us a deeper understanding of the past than do the dry collections of facts and statistics that pass for history texts.

A topic sentence needs to be clear and specific, so that it can predict and summarize the rest of the paragraph for the reader.

Weak: Public transit is terrible.

Strong: Incapable of providing reliable, comfortable service, the San Francisco Municipal Transit System is failing its ridership.

PRACTICE—TOPIC SENTENCE OR SUPPORTING INFORMATION?:

Read the sentences below, and determine which are **points/claims** that would make good topic sentences and which are **facts** that would work better as supporting information:

| Sample Sentence | This would work better as... |
|---|--|
| 1. Preserving local food traditions is an important component of maintaining cultural diversity even as world food production becomes more industrialized and standardized. | <input type="checkbox"/> Topic Sentence <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Info. |
| 2. The “locavores” are a San Francisco-based group that challenges people to try and eat food grown and produced within a 100-mile radius of their homes. | <input type="checkbox"/> Topic Sentence <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Info. |
| 3. Eating local, seasonal produce is better not only for the environment, but also for your taste buds. | <input type="checkbox"/> Topic Sentence <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Info. |
| 4. Alice Water’s restaurant Chez Panisse first opened in Berkeley, California in 1971. | <input type="checkbox"/> Topic Sentence <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Info. |
| 5. Alice Waters writes that “food is the one central thing about human experience which can open up both our senses and our consciences to our place in the world.” | <input type="checkbox"/> Topic Sentence <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Info. |
| 6. Joining a CSA(Community Supported Agriculture) program is an easy, cost-effective way to enjoy seasonal produce from local farms. | <input type="checkbox"/> Topic Sentence <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Info. |
| 7. The popularity of organic food is a good indication of the significant changes that are taking place in the American diet. | <input type="checkbox"/> Topic Sentence <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Info. |
| 8. Former weeds now considered delicacies include dandelions, ramps (wild leeks), and fiddlehead ferns. | <input type="checkbox"/> Topic Sentence <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Info. |
| 9. The CSA that I belong to, Eatwell Farms, is located in Winters, CA and is renowned for their heirloom tomatoes. | <input type="checkbox"/> Topic Sentence <input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Info. |

PRACTICE—CHOOSING THE BEST TOPIC SENTENCE:

The topic sentence of the paragraphs below has been removed. Read them carefully and then choose the best topic sentence among the four choices below. Be prepared to explain your choice.

Paragraph 1:

This belief is especially common among weight lifters who often consume large quantities of high protein foods and dietary supplements, thinking it will improve their athletic performance. Like weightlifters, football players consume too much protein, expecting it to produce additional muscle energy. Although it is true that muscles contain more protein than other tissues, there is no evidence that a high protein diet actually constructs more muscle tissue than a normal diet. Nutritionists point out that muscle cells grow not from excess protein but from exercise: when a muscle is used, it pulls in protein for its consumption. This is how a muscle grows and strengthens. If athletes want to increase their muscle mass, then they must exercise in addition to following a well-balanced, normal diet.

1. Many athletes have false ideas regarding proper nutrition.
2. My brother, a weightlifter, is an example of someone who consumes a lot of protein because he thinks it will make him bulky.
3. Many athletes falsely believe that protein improves athletic performance by increasing muscle mass.
4. The public is often confused by the seemingly conflicting advice nutritionists give us about our health.

Paragraph 2:

Lately parents and critics across the country have been making a bigger fuss about the number and content of commercials aimed at children, and it seems as though the media has become a scapegoat for adults who have set questionable health guidelines for their children. It is both logical and factual to state that parents are the number one authority for most everything in their child's life, which of course includes food choices. Recent studies from the Institute of Medicine found that the easiest and most reliable measure of understanding a child's health and diet is to look at the health and diet of the parents. It is very likely that a child's obesity did not come from the media, but from behaviors within the family. Even if advertisements became restricted or more limited, if parents do not enforce healthy diets or teach nutrition, the children will have learned nothing. Timothy J. Muris of *The Wall Street Journal* realizes that without addressing the issues of parental control, the ban on child food advertisements are "appealing on the surface, but ultimately useless."

1. Despite increasing rates of childhood obesity, we should not ban junk food ads aimed at children.
2. According to Andrew Martin of the *Chicago Tribune*, "... the rates of obesity among 6 to 11-year-olds more than tripling during the last three decades, doubling for children ages 2 to 5 and increasing even more for adolescents 12 to 19 years old."
3. The staggering figures regarding childhood obesity alone are alarming enough to generate a stir.
4. Although junk food advertisements are being blamed for children's poor dietary habits, regulating these ads would not address the real source of the problem: lack of parental guidance.

PRACTICE—CREATING YOUR OWN TOPIC SENTENCE:

Now try creating your own topic sentences for the following paragraphs:

1)

Famous inventor Thomas Edison, for instance, did so poorly in his first years of school that his teachers warned his parents that he'd never be a success at anything. Similarly, Henry Ford, the father of the auto industry, had trouble in school with both reading and writing. But perhaps the best example is Albert Einstein, whose parents and teachers suspected that he was retarded because he responded to questions so slowly and in a stuttering voice. Einstein's high school record was poor in everything but math, and he failed his college entrance exams the first time. Even out of school the man had trouble holding a job-until he announced the theory of relativity.

2) Eating disorders afflict as many as five to ten million women and one million men in the United States. But why?

Young girls not only play with Barbie dolls that display impossible, even comical, proportions, but they are also bombarded with images of supermodels. These images leave an indelible mental imprint of what society believes a female body should look like. Carri Kirby, a University of Nebraska mental health counselor, adds that there is a halo effect to body image as well: "We immediately identify physical attractiveness to mean success and happiness."

3) From Deborah Blum's "What's the Difference between Boys and Girls?"

Boys tend to gather in large, competitive groups. They play games that have clear winners and losers and bluster through them, boasting about their skill. Girls, early on, gather in small groups, playing theatrical games that don't feature hierarchy or winners. One study of children aged three to four found they were already resolving conflict in separate ways—boys resorting to threats, girls negotiating verbally and often reaching a compromise.

Topic Sentences Answer Key

PRACTICE—TOPIC SENTENCE OR SUPPORTING CLAIM?:

| Sample Sentence | This would work better as... |
|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| 1 | Topic Sentence |
| 2 | Supporting Info. |
| 3 | Topic Sentence |
| 4 | Supporting Info. |
| 5 | Supporting Info. |
| 6 | Topic Sentence |
| 7 | Topic Sentence |
| 8 | Supporting Info. |
| 9 | Supporting Info. |

PRACTICE—CHOOSING THE BEST TOPIC SENTENCE:

Paragraph 1: Many athletes falsely believe that protein improves athletic performance by increasing muscle mass (choice #3).

Paragraph 2: Although junk food advertisements are being blamed for children’s poor dietary habits, regulating these ads would not address the real source of the problem: lack of parental guidance (choice #4).

PRACTICE—CREATING YOUR OWN TOPIC SENTENCE:

Answers will vary

Writing Guideline #16:

PARAGRAPHS

(16) PARAGRAPHS:

WHAT DO PARAGRAPHS DO?

Paragraphs serve three important functions in an essay:

- They group related sentences in one place so that they can work together to develop a point.
- They provide visual breaks in the text that give readers a chance to pause and assimilate ideas.
- They signal the progression of ideas in the essay. Along with transitions, paragraph breaks help your reader understand you are moving on to a new point or aspect of your essay.

WHAT KINDS OF PARAGRAPHS ARE THERE?

In an essay, you'll have the following types of paragraphs:

- **Introductions** capture your reader's interest, establish a context for your topic, and smoothly lead your reader in to your thesis. You can read more about them in the "[Introductions](#)" section.
- **Body paragraphs** systematically develop each of the main points and sub-points you need to explain/prove in order for your thesis to be credible. You can read more about them below.
- **Conclusions** help you bring together the points you've made in the body of your essay and give your reader some final thoughts about the significance of your ideas. You can read more about them in the "[Conclusions](#)" section.

WHAT ARE THE QUALITIES OF A STRONG PARAGRAPH?

In order for body paragraphs to be useful to your reader, they need to be:

Relevant: Your reader should be able to clearly see how each of your body paragraphs is related to your thesis.

Focused: Your reader should easily be able to identify the one main idea your paragraph revolves around and how each of the sentences within that paragraph contributes to this main idea.

Developed: Your reader should be able to fully appreciate the implications of your ideas because you've provided sufficient supporting information and explanatory commentary.

ARE THERE STRATEGIES FOR WRITING STRONG PARAGRAPHS?

One way to ensure that each of your body paragraphs is clearly focused, convincingly developed, and connects back to thesis is to use the PIE strategy:

| P = Point | I = Information | E = Explanation |
|---|--|--|
| Essentially, the “P” part of your paragraph is your topic sentence: a clear statement of the main claim you are addressing in that paragraph. | The “I” fills out the body of your paragraph with concrete information that supports the main point. | The “E” is the writer’s explanation of the significance of the provided information, especially as it relates to the thesis. |
| From the reader’s perspective, another way to think of PIE is: | | |
| Tell me what your main point is. | Show me , with evidence and examples, how or why your point is true. | Answer the question “So what?” Help me understand so what is the significance of the information. |

See the PIE paragraph structure in the first body paragraph from the essay on Malcolm X’s [“Learning to Read”](#):

| | | |
|----------|---|---|
| P | { | <p>The diligence and persistent effort Malcolm X showed in learning to read has become disappointingly rare. Malcolm X in his autobiography tells us that when he went to prison, he could hardly read or write. He decided the way to improve would be to copy the entire dictionary word for word by hand. He said to copy just the first page alone took an entire day. The next day he reviewed all the words he did not remember, so he slowly built his vocabulary, and at the same time he started educating himself about the larger world as he describes the dictionary as a “miniature encyclopedia” (2). Malcolm X carried on until he copied the entire dictionary cover to cover. However, the time he dedicated to his writing was not confined to this amazing achievement alone: “Between what I wrote in my tablet, and writing letters, during the rest of my time in prison I would guess I wrote a million words” (2). The dedication to his own education and how he strengthened his own intelligence and abilities through sheer force of will is impressive but unfortunately is the exception rather than the norm. In <i>Generation Me</i>, the author Jean Twenge addresses the present generation of people who have been taught to put themselves first and expect instant results without working hard to achieve them. Twenge states: “They are less likely to work hard today to get a reward tomorrow—an especially important skill these days, when many good jobs require graduate degrees” (157). If people are less willing today to work hard, then we are going to have increasingly uneducated, lazy people who spend more time complaining than achieving. With a lack of education we won’t be strong critical thinkers so will be easily taken in by people who want to exploit us for profit like advertisers and corporate America. Instead of defining who we are, people who want to sell us things will continue to shape our wants, desires and perceptions of ourselves.</p> |
| I | | |
| E | | |

Of course, PIE paragraphs don’t always need to look exactly like this; while you want to start a paragraph with your main *Point*, you might alternate between *Information* and *Explanation*, so that your paragraph could look like this: P ⇒ I ⇒ E ⇒ I ⇒ E.

Strategies for writing your own PIE paragraphs:

P: *Ideas for developing a Point:*

- Choose one point you'll need to substantiate in order to develop your thesis
- Write this point out as a sentence or two
- Gather together the information relevant to that point and write the rest of the paragraph
- Return to your original point sentence(s) and make any necessary revisions so that it “fits” the paragraph

I: *Possible sources of supporting Information:*

- Short direct quotes/paraphrases from class readings and discussions
- Data (facts, statistics, examples, expert opinions) from other reputable sources
- Personal experiences
- Relevant examples from pop culture sources, including movies & ads

E: *Strategies for generating thoughtful Explanations:*

- Analyze the information, picking it apart to reveal what is significant
- Clarify any ambiguous ideas or information
- Comment on the credibility of the information, discussing its biases, assumptions, logic
- Relate the information explicitly to your thesis/controlling idea

PRACTICE—CREATING PARAGRAPHS USING THE PIE APPROACH:

Let’s practice creating paragraphs using the **PIE approach**. Select a topic from the box below and create a statement that makes a **Point**. Then brainstorm **Information** that could support that point. Then, brainstorm ways in which you could **Explain** the significance of that point. Finally, put it all together to write a complete paragraph.

First, select a topic by underlining one:

| | | |
|--------------------|------------------------|----------------------|
| illegal immigrants | the president | legalizing all drugs |
| gangsta rap music | the health care system | police profiling |
| music videos | the minimum wage | reality shows |

(P)oint: Second, using the topic you selected, write a **topic sentence** that makes a clear statement of the main claim you will be arguing in your paragraph:

Third, brainstorm both concrete information you can use to support your main claim, and also brainstorm an explanation of the significance of the information you are using.

| (I)nformation that can support the main claim (concrete evidence that proves/illustrates the claim) | (E)xplanations of the significance of the information. Answer the question “so what?” |
|---|--|
| | |

Using Transitions in your Paragraphs

WHAT IS THE FUNCTION OF TRANSITIONS?

Single words can signal levels of importance, connections, and the direction of thoughts. For example, after a friend begins a sentence with "I like you very much," would you prefer that the next word be "and" or "however"? The word "and" signals more of the same, hinting that you could anticipate another pleasant compliment. On the other hand, "however" signals a change of thought, so brace yourself for a negative remark. If the next words were "consequently" or "therefore," you could anticipate a positive result or reward for the positive feelings. Such words are transitions and lead readers to anticipate the direction of a writer's thoughts. Transitions also reveal organizational patterns.

PATTERNS OF ORGANIZATION AND THEIR TRANSITIONAL WORDS:

| | |
|--|---|
| <p>Addition (providing additional examples): furthermore, again, also, further, moreover, besides, likewise, and, indeed, in addition, too, next, first, second</p> | <p>Cause and Effect (showing one element as producing or causing a result or effect): because, for this reason, consequently, hence, as a result, thus, due to, therefore, if, so, since</p> |
| <p>Concession (acknowledging the merits of the counter argument before reasserting an opinion): whereas, granted that, even though, though, yet, while, although</p> | <p>Illustration (explaining using examples): that is, for example, to illustrate, for instance, in fact, specifically, as seen in</p> |
| <p>Comparison (listing similarities among items): in a similar way, similarly, parallels, likewise, in alike manner, also, in the same manner</p> | <p>Contrast (listing differences among items): on the other hand, more than, but, however, conversely, on the contrary, although, nevertheless, still, in contrast, yet, even though</p> |
| <p>Definition (defining a concept and expanding with examples and restatements): can be defined, means, for example, like, in short, specifically</p> | <p>Description (listing characteristics or details using vivid language): is, as, like, could be described (using adjectives, adverbs and language that touches on the senses)</p> |
| <p>Location or Spatial Order (identifying the whereabouts of objects or people): next to, near, below, above, close by, within, without, beside, around, to the right or left, opposite</p> | <p>Narration or Time Order (listing events in order of occurrence): first, second, finally, after, before, next, later, now, at last, until, at the same time, while, during, as, meanwhile, then, immediately</p> |
| <p>Simple Listing (randomly listing items in a series): also, another, several, for example</p> | <p>Summary (condensing major points): in conclusion, to restate, briefly, to sum up, in short, in a nutshell, in other words, therefore, in summary</p> |

PRACTICE WITH TRANSITIONAL WORDS:

I. Complete the following sentences with an appropriate transition:

(1) Many people think that heavy fishing of a lake will eventually cause a serious depletion of the stock of fish; _____ in a lake with a limited food supply, heavy fishing often increases the fish supply.

(2) I didn't finish my homework, I'm behind in the reading, and I didn't study for the exam today; _____ I think I'm going to fail the class and have to take it again.

(3) The torrential rains in the Los Angeles area were highly destructive to the economy; _____ the rains brought much needed water to the farmers, the destruction to property and crops was enormous.

(4) Today, college women are finding many acceptable alternatives to the "graduate and get married" pattern of the past. Many women _____ are pursuing graduate degrees or joining the military.

(5) She had acquired some bad habits over the years of impatience and procrastination; _____ she started smoking and stopped working out.

II. Make this disjointed argument cohesive and logical by adding transitions and joining sentences. You don't need to change the sequence of sentences:

Obstetricians perform too many cesareans. They can schedule deliveries for their own convenience. They can avoid sleepless nights and canceled parties. They resort to cesareans in any difficult delivery to protect themselves against malpractice suits. Cesareans involve larger fees and hospital bills than normal deliveries. Cesarean patients spend about twice as many days in the hospital as other mothers.

The National Institutes of Health confirmed that doctors were performing many unnecessary cesarean sections. They suggested ways to reduce their use. The recommendation was widely publicized. The obstetricians apparently failed to take note. In 1985, the operation was performed in 16.5 percent of United States' births. In 1992, 24.7 percent of the births were Cesareans.

TRANSITIONS COME IN PHRASES TOO:

Transitions can be in the form of words like *however, furthermore, meanwhile* but they can also come in the form of phrases like: *Not only x, but also y* and *If x, then y*. Sometimes you'll provide a full sentence to move your reader from one idea to the another: *As a result of Malcolm X forging his own education, he learns many things that are not taught in the typical classroom which inspires him to fight for change* (this moves the discussion from Malcolm X learning to read to what he learned to what he did).

Here are some examples of transitional phrases:

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| <p>To explain something further: Examples of this are, To say this in another way, In line with that, ...</p> | <p>To say it is true in only one direction: The converse is not true. This only goes in one direction. This is only true in this instance.</p> | <p>To say that something is true in "both directions" The converse is also true And vice versa</p> |
| <p>When you have given your conclusion first and want to then give your evidence, support, justification for it: The evidence for ... is The reason(s) for ... is (are) One can see this because This can be seen because This is supported by</p> | <p>To link together similar things (whether ideas or reasons): You can number them The following <i>n</i> things: [and then number them, or not number them, whichever seems more appropriate] In the same vein, Along with that, Not only x, but also y</p> | <p>To change topics: Moving on to a different point Considering something totally different now, Let me digress for a moment... Returning from the digression.... Returning to the above point about Related to...</p> |
| <p>When what you have presented leads up to, or supports, or makes a case for what you are about to say: We can see from the previous that, Because of the previous [sentence, paragraph, line of reasoning, three points,....] we can see that [or, it is rational to believe that, or it is reasonable to hold that]... In light of this we can see that</p> | <p>When you are going to "contradict" what has been said before [or contradict what you are about to say]: In spite of this [or, in spite of the fact that ...,] Despite the fact that ... Unfortunately that does not.... Contradicting that is While it may seem that.... The apparent implication is that ... , While it may be that..., The previous does not imply/demonstrate/show We cannot reasonably deduce/infer/assume from this... Although x, y While it is the case that..., it is not the case that (or it is not true that, or does not imply that....)</p> | <p>To show a cause and effect relationship: Since [x is true], [y is true] Since [x], y ... Because (of) x, y ... Given that x, y ... Factoring in that x, y... Taking into account x, we can see that y... As a consequence of x, y.... It follows from x, y We can see from x, y</p> |

PRACTICE WITH TRANSITIONAL WORDS AND PHRASES:

Using one of the body paragraphs from the essay on Malcolm X's "[Learning to Read](#)," underline all the transitional words AND the transitional phrases:

The diligence and persistent effort Malcolm X showed in learning to read has become disappointingly rare. Malcolm X in his autobiography tells us that when he went to prison, he could hardly read or write. He decided the way to improve would be to copy the entire dictionary word for word by hand. He said to copy just the first page alone took an entire day. The next day he reviewed all the words he did not remember, so he slowly built his vocabulary, and at the same time he started educating himself about the larger world as he describes the dictionary as a "miniature encyclopedia" (2). Malcolm X carried on until he copied the entire dictionary cover to cover. However, the time he dedicated to his writing was not confined to this amazing achievement alone: "Between what I wrote in my tablet, and writing letters, during the rest of my time in prison I would guess I wrote a million words" (2). The dedication to his own education and how he strengthened his own intelligence and abilities through sheer force of will is impressive but unfortunately is the exception rather than the norm. In *Generation Me*, the author Jean Twenge addresses the present generation of people who have been taught to put themselves first and expect instant results without working hard to achieve them. Twenge states: "They are less likely to work hard today to get a reward tomorrow—an especially important skill these days, when many good jobs require graduate degrees" (157). If people are less willing today to work hard, then we are going to have increasingly uneducated, lazy people who spend more time complaining than achieving. With a lack of education we won't be strong critical thinkers so will be easily taken in by people who want to exploit us for profit like advertisers and corporate America. Instead of defining who we are, people who want to sell us things will continue to shape our wants, desires and perceptions of ourselves.

ANSWERS FOR PRACTICE WITH TRANSITIONAL WORDS AND PHRASES:

The transitional words and phrases have been underlined:

The diligence and persistent effort Malcolm X showed in learning to read has become disappointingly rare. Malcolm X in his autobiography tells us that when he went to prison, he could hardly read or write. He decided the way to improve would be to copy the entire dictionary word for word by hand. He said to copy just the first page alone took an entire day. The next day he reviewed all the words he did not remember, so he slowly built his vocabulary, and at the same time he started educating himself about the larger world as he describes the dictionary as a “miniature encyclopedia” (2). Malcolm X carried on until he copied the entire dictionary cover to cover. However, the time he dedicated to his writing was not confined to this amazing achievement alone: “Between what I wrote in my tablet, and writing letters, during the rest of my time in prison I would guess I wrote a million words” (2). The dedication to his own education and how he strengthened his own intelligence and abilities through sheer force of will is impressive but unfortunately is the exception rather than the norm. In *Generation Me*, the author Jean Twenge addresses the present generation of people who have been taught to put themselves first and expect instant results without working hard to achieve them. Twenge states: “They are less likely to work hard today to get a reward tomorrow—an especially important skill these days, when many good jobs require graduate degrees” (157). If people are less willing today to work hard, then we are going to have increasingly uneducated, lazy people who spend more time complaining than achieving. With a lack of education we won’t be strong critical thinkers so will be easily taken in by people who want to exploit us for profit like advertisers and corporate America. Instead of defining who we are, people who want to sell us things will continue to shape our wants, desires and perceptions of ourselves.

Writing Guideline #17:

CONCLUSIONS

(17) CONCLUSIONS:

WHY ARE CONCLUSIONS IMPORTANT?

So much is at stake in writing a conclusion. This is, after all, your last chance to persuade your readers to your point of view and to impress yourself upon them as a writer and thinker. The impression you create in your conclusion will shape the impression that stays with your readers after they've finished the essay. Your conclusion should be the best part of your paper.

The end of an essay should therefore convey a sense of completeness and closure as well as a sense of the lingering possibilities of the topic, its larger meaning, and its implications. The final paragraph should close the discussion without closing it off.

WHAT SHOULD CONCLUSIONS DO?

- stress the importance of the thesis statement,
- give the essay a sense of completeness, and
- leave a final impression that convinces the reader.

WHAT SHOULD CONCLUSIONS AVOID?

- **Don't simply summarize your essay.** A brief summary of your argument may be useful, especially if your essay is long, more than ten pages or so. But shorter essays tend not to require a restatement of your main ideas.
- **Avoid phrases like "in conclusion," "to conclude," "in summary," and "to sum up."** These phrases can be useful, even welcome, in oral presentations. But readers can see, by the telltale compression of the pages, when an essay is about to end. You'll irritate your audience if you belabor the obvious.

WHAT ARE SOME SUGGESTIONS FOR CONCLUSIONS?

- **Answer the question "So what?"**
Show your readers why this paper was important. Show them that your paper was meaningful and useful.
- **Synthesize, don't summarize**
Don't simply repeat things that were in your paper. They have read it. Show them how the points you made and the support and examples you used were not random, but fit together.
- **Redirect your readers**
Give your reader something to think about, perhaps a way to use your paper in the "real" world. If your introduction went from general to specific, make your conclusion go from specific to general. Think globally.
- **Create a new meaning**
You don't have to give new information to create a new meaning. By demonstrating how your ideas work together, you can create a new picture. Often the sum of the paper is worth more than its parts.

WHAT ARE SOME STRATEGIES FOR CONCLUSIONS?

- **Establish a sense of closure in your essay by linking the last paragraph to the first, perhaps by reiterating a word, phrase, reference or idea you used at the beginning:**

For example: INTRODUCTION: Benjamin Franklin once said that the key to health and happiness was "moderation in everything." Indeed, we can see how true Franklin's philosophy is in the story of the tortoise and the hare. In the competition between the tortoise and the hare it is being "slow and steady," in other words moderate and consistent, that ultimately wins the race. By following a "slow and steady" course, the tortoise does gain health and happiness, while the hare's immoderate nature leads to his downfall.

CONCLUSION: Not only does the tortoise win the race, but his fame leads to a movie contract, while the hare's immoderate behavior gets him a prison sentence. Which would you rather do: end up in the movies, or in prison? If you prefer to be a movie star rather than a convict, then according to the story of the tortoise and the hare you should embrace Benjamin Franklin's philosophy of moderation. But be careful, because expecting moderation to make you into a movie star may be immoderate itself.

- **Conclude with a quotation from or reference to a primary or secondary source, one that amplifies your main point or puts it in a different perspective. A quotation from, say, the novel or poem you're writing about can add texture and specificity to your discussion; a critic or scholar can help confirm or complicate your final point:**

For instance, you might conclude an essay on the idea of home in James Joyce's short story collection, *Dubliners*, with information about Joyce's own complex feelings towards Dublin, his home. Or you might end with a biographer's statement about Joyce's attitude toward Dublin, which could illuminate his characters' responses to the city. Just be cautious, especially about using secondary material: make sure that you get the last word. You want to leave your reader with your ideas and words rather than letting someone else take your essay over in the end.

- **Conclude by setting your discussion into a different, perhaps larger, context:**

For example: *The Simpsons* has a great impact on its viewers, making the show a part of America's collective consciousness. While the Simpsons themselves have both positive and negative qualities, these negative qualities—these flaws—make them more human to us, more believable as a family. The positive qualities they exhibit, although not always as prevalent, give us both hope and make us believe in the goodness of modern humankind. We watch the Simpsons because they are a reflection of ourselves with all of our quirks and imperfections. The negativity in each show does not so much cause us to think of and feel evil or malice, but adds to the general enjoyment and provides material that leads to the discussion of a moral.

- **Conclude by redefining one of the key terms of your argument:**

For instance, an essay on Marx's treatment of the conflict between wage labor and capital might begin with Marx's claim that the "capitalist economy is . . . a gigantic enterprise of *dehumanization*"; the essay might end by suggesting that Marxist analysis is itself dehumanizing because it construes everything in economic rather than moral or ethical terms.

- **Conclude by considering the implications or outcomes of your argument (or analysis or discussion):**

What does your argument imply, or involve, or suggest? For instance, an essay on the novel *Ambiguous Adventure*, by the Senegalese writer Cheikh Hamidou Kane, might open with the idea that the protagonist's development suggests Kane's belief in the need to integrate Western materialism and Sufi spirituality in modern Senegal. The conclusion might make the new but related point that the novel on the whole suggests that such an integration is (or isn't) possible.

- **Conclude by offering opinions that your reader might or might not have accepted earlier:**

For example:

So what are we to do in such a dangerous world? While our access to the Internet seems like any other natural right, it in fact carries a great deal of responsibility. And as much as we would like to extend that responsibility to everyone, we must realize that not everyone has the experience to act reasonably in such a dangerous domain. Currently we restrict the right to vote to persons over the age of 18 and the right to drink alcohol to persons over the age of 21, since we assume they are not ready to sensibly partake in these activities. We live in a time when freedom is more precious than ever. It is natural to want to extend freedoms and rights to as many people as possible, but we have to think of their safety. Just as no one has the right to put others' lives in danger—in a car on the freeway or a plane in the sky—children should not have unmonitored access to the internet if they are endangering themselves. We must help minors help themselves.

- **Try to solve a problem you have raised:**

For example:

If young children do not realize that their parents speak from firsthand experience of their own youth, how can parents convince their children of their wisdom? The answer lies in the trust that must be established in the family. If children have learned to trust their folks, they will heed them, whether or not they understand the source of their knowledge.

- **Conclude by proposing a course of action:**

For example:

Challenges to homophobia and the rigidity of gender roles must go beyond the visible lesbian and gay movement. Lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals alone cannot defuse the power of stigmatization and the license it gives to frighten, wound, or kill. Literally millions of us are needed on this front, straight and gay alike. We invite any heterosexual unwilling to live with the damage that “real men” or “real women” messages wreak on them, on their children, and on lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals to join us. We ask that you not let queer jokes go unchallenged at work, at home, in the media, or anywhere. We ask that you foster in your children a genuine respect for themselves and their right to be who and what they wish to be, regardless of their gender... We ask that you invite your lesbian, gay, and bisexual friends and relatives into the routine of your lives without demanding silence or discretion from them... We ask that you stand with us in public demonstrations to demand our right to live as free people, without fear. We ask that you respect our dignity by acting to end the poison of homophobia” (Vasquez 165).

Writing Guideline #18:

TIMED WRITING

(18) TIMED WRITING:

Part 1: Important elements of expository writing
Part 2: Time management
Part 3: Key words
Part 4: Making a plan
Part 5: Practice prompts

The most common reasons for not-passing timed exams:

- Major flaws in organization
- Lacks a clear thesis statement
- Lack of development of main ideas
- Does not address the assigned topic
- Excessive flaws in grammar usage
- No clear beginning, middle, and end

Part 1: Important elements of expository writing:

FOCUS: One of the major skills that is being tested in a timed writing exam is your ability to write to the prompt. A prompt is simply the exam question or writing task. In order to successfully respond to a writing prompt you must do the following:

- (1) **Read** the prompt carefully (and often several times), circling key words
- (2) **Understand** what it is asking
- (3) **Identify** how many parts there are to the question
- (4) **Stay focused** on a consistent central idea while answering the prompt.

Thesis Statement: In a timed exam, your thesis will generally be your *answer* to the prompt. You will want to make this answer immediately clear to your reader, so it is best to put your thesis statement, which is your central idea stated in a sentence, in your introductory paragraph.

Opinion Words in the Thesis: The thesis usually contains a key word or controlling idea that limits its focus and reveals the writer's attitude toward the topic. When you answer the exam prompt, you will be revealing *your* attitude toward the topic. For example, if you were asked what your favorite spare time activity is and why, you could answer "backpacking," but this answer alone doesn't reveal your *attitude* toward it. In the sentence, "I enjoy backpacking in my spare time because it is both challenging and relaxing," the descriptive words "challenging" and "relaxing" reveal the writer's attitude toward the topic and establish what the essay will now focus on proving: *why* backpacking is challenging and relaxing. In order to write a focused and unified essay, you must stay directly focused on the topic and controlling idea presented in the thesis statement. Do not stray from your thesis statement.

ORGANIZATION:

Select an appropriate number of supporting points, depending both on your argument and your allotted writing time, and present them in a clear order, so the essay proceeds smoothly and logically from one point to the next. Be sure to put your main supporting points into separate paragraphs, so there is a clear beginning, middle and end as opposed to a long, uninterrupted block of text. Here are some common methods of organization:

- *Climax*: Present your ideas so they build to a climax, ending with your most dramatic examples.
- *Complexity*: Start with simpler ideas and build to more complex ones.
- *Familiarity*: Start with more familiar ideas and move towards newer ones.
- *Audience appeal*: Start with “safe” ideas and move to more challenging ones.
- *Chronological*: Present ideas in the time order in which they occurred.
- *Comparison/contrast*: When looking at similarities or differences, it may be ordered in one of two ways:

| | |
|---|---|
| Block style: look first at one item and then the next, using the same criteria each time. For example: I. Malcolm X A. Philosophies B. Religious influence C. Accomplishments II. Martin Luther King, Jr. A. Philosophies B. Religious influence C. Accomplishments | Point-by-point: Look at the two items simultaneously, comparing them on the same criteria. For example: I. Philosophies A. Malcolm X B. Martin Luther King, Jr. II. Religious influence A. Malcolm X B. Martin Luther King, Jr. III. Accomplishments A. Malcolm X B. Martin Luther King, Jr. |
|---|---|

DEVELOPMENT:

Generally, each of your body paragraphs should contain a topic sentence which directly supports your thesis statement and also contains a generalization in need of support. In order to provide that support, ask yourself, “How do I know that this is true?” Your answer will suggest how to develop the paragraph.

Evidence: In order to construct a well supported and convincing argument, you will need to flesh out the ideas presented in your topic sentences. Avoid a series of skimpy paragraphs which generally lack development. Provide concrete and specific detail for *each* supporting point in the form of examples, quotes and paraphrases from the text, illustrations, facts, personal knowledge, personal experiences, etc.

GRAMMAR—PUNCTUATION—SPELLING:

In a timed writing situation, you will not have a lot of time to spend worrying over the spelling of a word or the placement of a comma. However, you also don’t want to turn in a piece of writing that contains excessive grammatical, punctuation, and/or spelling errors. Therefore, set time aside at the end to proofread your essay.

- (1) Double space so when you proofread and want to cross out confusing sentences or misspellings or add left out words or examples, you will have room and won’t risk confusing your reader.
- (2) Read carefully to catch confusing sentences, errors in subject-verb agreement, verb tenses, run together sentences, etc., and look for opportunities to join sentences.
- (3) If you discover a place where more concrete detail is needed, add examples and evidence as needed.

Part 2: Time Management

Since taking a timed exam puts you in the situation of having a limited amount of time to create a focused, organized, well supported essay, you better have a clear plan of how you will use your allotted time *before* beginning the exam. Suggested breakdown of time:

- 10-15% of time: **Prewriting:**
- (1) Read the prompt carefully, circling key words
 - (2) Cluster or list to determine your main supporting points and strongest evidence; be sure you have a working thesis (see below on clustering/listing).
- 70-80% of time: **Write the essay:**
- (4) Write your essay following the outline.
 - (5) Skip lines in case you want to make some changes when you're proofreading after you complete the essay.
- 10-15% of time: **Proofreading:**
- (6) Proofread your essay carefully adding missed evidence, catching misspellings, putting in left out words, revising confusing sentences, joining sentences, etc..

Part 3: Key Words

When you read the prompt, pay close attention to *how* the essay question is phrased. It is very important to focus on the *exact* assigned task and to address *all parts* of the prompt. If you don't answer the question asked, you'll probably receive little or no credit for your work.

Describe: Write about the subject so the reader can easily visualize it; tell how it looks or happened. Use adjectives, adverbs and descriptive language to paint a mental image for you reader.

Compare: Analyze the similarities *and* the differences between two or more items.

Contrast: Look only at the differences between two or more items.

Explain: Give the meaning of something often answering the question "why"?

Discuss: A more open-ended approach asking the writer to provide a broader range of possibilities.

Argue: (or present a point of view or take a position) Usually requires the writer to take only one point of view (either pro or con) and substantiate that position. Don't be concerned about taking the "right" or "wrong" position; just support a position soundly and consistently.

Analyze: Break the subject (an object, event, or concept) down into parts, and explain the various parts.

Criticize/Critique: Point out both the positive and negative aspects of the topic.

Evaluate: Give your opinion of the value of the subject; discuss its strengths and weaknesses.

Illustrate: Make the point or idea by giving examples.

Trace: Tell about an event or process in chronological order.

Prove: Show that something is true by giving facts or logical reasons.

State: Give the main points in a brief, clear form.

Part 4: Making a Plan

Before you jump into writing a timed essay, know exactly where you are going, so you don't risk going off topic (which is very easy to do in a hurried timed situation). To ensure that you have strong and focused support of your thesis statement, set aside some time, after you carefully read the prompt and before you begin writing, to create a rough plan. Here are two helpful methods that are commonly used to select and organize possible supporting points.

Clustering: One technique to help you generate and organize ideas is called clustering. Clustering provides you a sort of informal map. To cluster your ideas, start out with a topic or question and draw a circle around it. Then connect related ideas to that circle and continue in that way. Clustering provides a mental picture of the ideas you generate. As a result, it can help you organize your material as you think of it. You can also eliminate supporting points that you can't find strong evidence to support.

Listing: Another method used to organize your ideas is called listing. This is the most informal kind of outline in which you jot down your main points and possible supporting examples and detail. This kind of outline is for you only, and you don't need to worry about making it more comprehensive if it does the job for you.

Part 5: Practice prompts

Prompt—

“History repeats itself.

Has to.

Nobody listens.”

--Steve Turner

A famous maxim says that those who fail to remember and learn from the events of history—economic failures, wars, injustices, strife—are doomed to repeat them. By learning from historical events, by listening to the message of history, a nation or people can avoid repeating the errors of the past. Identify one such significant past event, discuss its effects and explain why we should remember it.

Prompt—

The texts we have read this semester are all from foreign countries, which represent different cultures and ways of life. Using three of the texts we have read this semester, compare the issues concerning patriarchy in each. Using examples and evidence from the texts, explain what each author conveys about the realities and outcomes of patriarchy in that particular society. Finally, analyze what global assertions can be made by comparing the patriarchal aspects of these cultures to one another as well as to our own culture in the U.S..

Prompt—

Compare the different ways that four of the authors that we have read this semester used activism to change their current system and to bring about social change, and explain what we can learn about effective approaches through this comparison. Finally, argue which of the four you feel was the most successful as a revolutionary and as you make your case, be sure to define "revolutionary" and "success" according to you, and explain the implications and importance of your findings.

TIMED WRITING CHECKLIST:

- Underline and/or circle key words, command verbs, and number the different parts of the question. Address all parts in the response.**

- Make a plan based on how much time is allotted:
10-15% for prewriting, 70-80% for writing, 10-15% for proofreading.**

- Separate the paragraphs; make sure the introduction is separate from the body paragraphs.**

- Create an introduction that gives an overview of the question/prompt that is being addressed.**

- Create an introduction that contains the full names of the text(s) and author(s) being addressed.**

- Stay focused throughout the essay on the assigned question/prompt.
Anything in the essay that was not asked about in the question/prompt is off topic.**

- Use specific evidence for supporting points: examples, quotes and paraphrases from the text, illustrations, facts, personal knowledge, personal experiences, etc.**

- Practice writing timed essays to strengthen skills before taking timed exams for a grade.**

Writing Guideline #19:

STYLE:

(19) STYLE:

Covered in this section:

- (1) **Simplicity**
- (2) **Sentence Combining**
- (3) **Parallelism**

(1) **Simplicity:**

William Zinsser said: “The sentence is too simple—there must be something wrong with it. But the secret of good writing is to strip every sentence to its cleanest components. Every word that serves no function, every long word that could be a short word, every adverb that carries the same meaning that’s already in the verb, every passive construction that leaves the reader unsure of who is doing what—these are a thousand and one adulterants that weaken the strength of a sentence.” (“Simplicity” from *On Writing Well*)

AVOIDING WORDINESS:

From William Strunk’s *The Elements of Style*

Omit needless words:

Vigorous writing is concise. A sentence should contain no unnecessary words, a paragraph no unnecessary sentences, for the same reason that a drawing should have no unnecessary lines and a machine no unnecessary parts. This requires not that the writer make all his sentences short, or that he avoid all detail and treat his subjects only in outline, but that every word tell.

Many expressions in common use violate this principle:

| | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| the question as to whether | whether (the question whether) |
| there is no doubt but that | no doubt (doubtless) |
| used for fuel purposes | used for fuel |
| he is a man who | he |
| in a hasty manner | hastily |
| this is a subject which | this subject |
| His story is a strange one. | His story is strange. |

Omit needless words (continued):

The expression *the fact that* should be revised out of every sentence in which it occurs:

| | |
|--------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| owing to the fact that | since (because) |
| in spite of the fact that | though (although) |
| call your attention to the fact that | remind you (notify you) |
| I was unaware of the fact that | I was unaware that (did not know) |
| the fact that I had arrived | my arrival |

Who is, which was, and the like are often superfluous:

| | |
|---|--|
| His brother, who is a member of the same firm | His brother, a member of the same firm |
| Trafalgar, which was Nelson's last battle | Trafalgar, Nelson's last battle |

A common violation of conciseness is the presentation of a single complex idea, step by step, in a series of sentences which might better be combined into one:

| | |
|--|--|
| Macbeth was very ambitious. This led him to wish to become king of Scotland. The witches told him that this wish of his would come true. The king of Scotland at this time was Duncan. Encouraged by his wife, Macbeth murdered Duncan. He was thus enabled to succeed Duncan as king. (55 words) | Encouraged by his wife, Macbeth achieved his ambition and realized the prediction of the witches by murdering Duncan and becoming king of Scotland in his place. (26 words) |
|--|--|

The active voice is more concise and vigorous than the passive:

I will always remember my first visit to Boston.

This is much better than:

My first visit to Boston will always be remembered by me.

The active voice can also strengthen bland expressions and wordy phrasing:

| | |
|--|--|
| There were a great number of dead leaves lying on the ground. | Dead leaves covered the ground. |
| The reason that he left college was that his health became impaired. | Failing health compelled him to leave college. |
| It was not long before he was very sorry that he had said what he had. | He soon repented his words. |

PRACTICE ELIMINATING WORDINESS:

From Purdue's Online Writing Lab

Revise the following passages, avoiding wordiness and undesirable repetition.

A large number of people enjoy reading murder mysteries regularly. As a rule, these people are not themselves murderers, nor would these people really ever enjoy seeing someone commit an actual murder, nor would most of them actually enjoy trying to solve an actual murder. They probably enjoy reading murder mysteries because of this reason: they have found a way to escape from the monotonous, boring routine of dull everyday existence.

To such people the murder mystery is realistic fantasy. It is realistic because the people in the murder mystery are as a general rule believable as people. They are not just made up pasteboard figures. It is also realistic because the character who is the hero, the character who solves the murder mystery, solves it not usually by trial and error and haphazard methods but by exercising a high degree of logic and reason. It is absolutely and totally essential that people who enjoy murder mysteries have an admiration for the human faculty of logic.

But murder mysteries are also fantasies. The people who read such books of fiction play a game. It is a game in which they suspend certain human emotions. One of these human emotions that they suspend is pity. If the reader stops to feel pity and sympathy for each and every victim that is killed or if the reader stops to feel terrible horror that such a thing could happen in our world of today, that person will never enjoy reading murder mysteries. The devoted reader of murder mysteries keeps uppermost in mind at all times the goal of arriving through logic and observation at the final solution to the mystery offered in the book. It is a game with life and death. Whodunits hopefully help the reader to hide from the hideous horrors of actual life and death in the real world.

(2) Sentence Combining:

Trying to achieve simplicity in your writing does not mean to write only in short sentences. If your essays are filled with short sentences, they will read as choppy and the relationships between the sentences will not be as clear. You want to have variety and fluidity in your sentences.

Short sentences are choppy:

I went to the store. The store is by my house. It has everything. It is my favorite. Greg runs the store. He always makes me laugh. He is really friendly too. He makes my day. At the store, there is an impressive wine selection. I like white wine. I've recently started drinking red. Greg has great wine recommendations.

Combine sentences for more fluidity:

I went to my favorite store by my house that has everything. Greg, who runs the store, is really friendly and always makes me laugh. He makes my day. I enjoy that there is an impressive wine selection because I like white wine. I recently started drinking red wine though because Greg has great recommendations.

As you can see, not all of your sentences need to be long. You want rhythm in your writing and sentence variety is the key. Longer sentences are good for fluidity and seeing relationships between ideas, and then shorter sentences allow a writer to put emphasis on particular points.

How to properly combine sentences:

- (1) **Coordinate** sentences when you want to equally emphasize both sentences.

Join sentences using a comma and conjunction (**For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So**) OR combine related sentences using a semi-colon → ;

For example: I like reading poetry. I don't always understand it.

Coordinated with comma and conjunction: I like reading poetry, **but** I don't always understand it.

Coordinated with semi-colon: I like reading poetry; I don't always understand it.

- (2) **Subordinate** sentences when you want to emphasize one sentence over another.

Join sentences with a subordinator (such as: although, since, because, if, even though, when, while)

For example: Jenson got fired from his job. He spent a year traveling the world.

Subordinated: **Because** Jenson got fired from his job, he spent a year traveling the world. OR

Jenson spent a year traveling the world **because** he got fired from his job.

(Subordinators can begin a sentence or join the sentences. The sentence that begins with the subordinator is **de-emphasized**. In this case, that Jenson was fired is de-emphasized and that he traveled is emphasized).

- (3) **Embed** words, phrases and/or sentences

Often you can take words, phrases and whole sentences and place them *within* another sentence.

For example: The boy came to the party. He is Jose's cousin. He graduated from Stanford. He was top in his class. The girl he liked rejected him. He left. He has a lot of confidence. Rejection is always hard.

Embedded (embedded sentences in bold): The boy **who came to the party** is Jose's cousin. He graduated **top of his class** from Stanford. He left **after the girl he liked rejected him**. Rejection is always hard even **with a lot of confidence**.

PRACTICE SENTENCE COMBINING:

Combine as many sentences as you can in the following paragraphs using the guidelines:

Paragraph 1:

From *Your Dictionary.com*

The Boston Red Sox were three games down. The Red Sox had to win the next four games to advance. Fans were worried. Boston had not won a World Series since 1918. No team had ever come back in the playoffs from a three-game deficit. All of the fans knew this. Red Sox fans watched anxiously as the fourth game of the ALCS began. Yankees fans watched confidently. They also knew that anything could happen. People wanted to watch a good series. They did not expect it to be such a nail-biter! David Roberts stole second base. This move would be remembered as the turning point of the series. Nobody believed the Red Sox would win that year. The Red Sox won that year. The Yankees would not win the World Series for another five years. In 2009, the Yankees won the World Series.

Now let's try **de-combining** sentences so we can appreciate the conciseness of well combined sentences and how it is easier to see the relationship among ideas when they are joined. Break this sentence down into its root sentences:

Paragraph 2:

The thesis from the essay on Malcolm X's "[Learning to Read](#)":

The characteristics that he shows of not giving up even in the face of overwhelming odds and applying good old-fashioned, and often tedious and repetitive, hard work and persistence have become frighteningly rare in the U.S. today where people have bloated senses of entitlement.

(3) Parallelism:

Another method to improve fluidity, combine sentences, and remove repetition is through using parallelism. In parallel structure, it is important to group similar ideas and items together in list form. The main rule to remember is that the things in the list must be the same grammatical form.

Using parallelism will help with...

(1) economy (2) clarity (3) equality (4) fluidity

From Towson University:

Here are some examples of parallel elements:

| | | | |
|----------|---------------|-----------------------|---------------------|
| thinking | to see | at the time | because I care |
| running | to understand | in the house | after they met |
| ↑ | ↑ | ↑ | ↑ |
| words | infinitives | prepositional phrases | subordinate clauses |

These elements, on the other hand, are not parallel:

| | | | |
|----------|--------------------|-------------|----------------|
| thinking | to see | at the time | because I care |
| to run | since I understand | being here | to meet |

Used in a sentence, they create a jarring effect and produce writing with unclear emphasis and meaning. We call such an error "faulty parallelism."

Writers generally use parallelism as a technique in the following five ways.

1. With elements joined by coordinating conjunctions, especially **and**, **but**, and **or**.
Example: She likes to look, **but** not to listen. He wondered who he was **and** what he was doing.
2. Use parallel structure with elements in lists or in a **series**.
Example: He found cleaning supplies **in the closet**, **under the sink** but not **in the garage**.
3. Use parallel structure with elements being compared (**X is more than / better than Y**)
Example: **Driving** to New York can actually take less time than **flying** there.
4. Use parallel structure with elements joined by a **linking verb** or a **verb of being**.
Example: **Being** Jim's friend means **being** understanding. To know her **is** to love her.
5. Use parallel structure with elements joined by a correlative conjunction such as:
either / or neither / nor both / and not only / but also
Example: As young recruits, we were told **not only** what to do **but also** what to think.

PRACTICE IN FIXING FAULTY PARALLELISM:

Correct the faulty parallelism in the following sentences using the FIVE TECHNIQUES described:

- (1) We put the pictures and what our itinerary was into the album.
- (2) The instructor advised me to use the rearview mirror often, and I should observe the speed limit.
- (3) At the store my duties are to keep the shelves stocked, I work the registers, and assisting customers.
- (4) We want a candidate who has a sense of commitment, history of a good record in public office, and who has experience in foreign affairs.
- (5) We enjoyed water skiing much more than when we swam in the lake.
- (6) Hearing her sing in person was ten times better than if you heard her on the radio.
- (7) What she said was her meaning.
- (8) Doing well on the GRE means to assure yourself acceptance into a good graduate school.
- (9) She is both happy about the raise and she is feeling nervous about the extra responsibility.
- (10) They not only ate all the food in the house but they also didn't clean up their mess.

Writing Guideline #20:

**GRAMMAR-
PUNCTUATION-SPELLING:**

Adjectives & Adverbs

Explanation

Adjectives and adverbs are words you can use to modify—to describe or add meaning to—other words.

Connections
See also “Commas”
and “Dangling
Modifiers.”

Adjectives modify nouns or pronouns. Examples of some common adjectives are: young, small, loud, short, fat, pretty. You can also identify many adjectives by the following common endings.

-able: honorable, useable
-al: parental, economical
-ful: forgetful, soulful

-ic: frantic, scientific
-ive: festive, disruptive
-ish: selfish, boyish

-less: ruthless, careless
-ous: joyous, rebellious

Adverbs, on the other hand, modify verbs, adjectives, other adverbs, and even whole clauses. Adverbs can tell us *how* something is done, *when* it is done, and *where* it is done. Examples of some common adverbs are: really, quickly, especially, early, well, immediately, yesterday.

While many adverbs do end with “-ly”, don’t take this for granted: some adverbs, like “almost” and “very” do not end this way, and some words that do end in “-ly”, like “lively,” are actually adjectives.

Comparatives and Superlatives

Many adverbs and most adjectives generally have three forms: the normal form; the comparative form, which you can use to compare two things; and the superlative form, which you can use to compare three or more things. The following chart gives you some guidelines for forming the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs.

| Rules | Examples | | |
|---|------------------------|-------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| | Normal | Comparative | Superlative |
| Short adjectives & adverbs: <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Add –er for comparative• Add –est for superlative | Green Big Hungry | Greener Bigger Hungrier | Greenest Biggest Hungriest |
| | Soon Late | Sooner Later | Soonest Latest |

| Rules | Examples | | |
|--|---|---|---|
| | Normal | Comparative | Superlative |
| Longer adjectives & most longer adverbs ending in -ly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add “more” + adjective/adverb for comparative • Add “most” + adjective/adverb for superlative | Delicious Incredible More delicious | More incredible More | Most delicious Most incredible |
| | Slowly Easily Brightly | More slowly More easily More brightly | Most slowly Most easily Most brightly |
| Irregular adjectives and adverbs have special forms | Good Bad Little (amount) Many | Better Worse Less More | Best Worst Least Most |
| | Well Badly | Better Worse | Best Worst |

When using comparative and superlative forms, keep the following in mind:

- Many adverbs indicating time, place, and degree (i.e. tomorrow, here, totally) do not have comparative or superlative forms.
- Adjectives and adverbs that indicate an absolute or unchangeable quality should not be used with comparative and superlative constructions. Such absolute modifiers include words like final, main, impossible, perfect, unavoidable, unique.

Placement of Adjectives & Adverbs

Misplaced adjective or adverbs can cause confusion, as in the following example:

- Shaken not stirred, James Bond drank his martinis.

The writer probably is probably referring to the martinis, but the way this sentence is written, it implies that James Bond himself is shaken and not stirred.

For more information about misplaced adjectives and adverbs, see the “Dangling Modifiers” handout.

Adjectives

In order to avoid confusion, try to place adjectives as close as possible to the nouns or pronouns they modify. Most one-word adjectives come right before the nouns they modify. In the examples below, the adjectives are double-underlined and the nouns they modify are in italics.

- He made a delicious *dinner*.
- The hungry *girls* devoured it quickly.
- Their full *stomachs* pushed against their jeans.
- But they couldn't resist the incredible *dessert*.

One major exception to this rule is when an adjective follows a linking verb (i.e. is/are, was/were, feel, smell, taste, look, believe). For example:

- *Dinner* was delicious.
- The *girls* were hungry.
- Their *stomachs* felt full.
- *Dessert* looked incredible.

Be careful. Sometimes writers will use adverbs with a linking verb when what they really want is an adjective, or vice-versa. Choosing the adjective versus the adverb form of the same word has big implications for the meaning of a sentence. For example:

| Adjective | Adverb |
|---|-----------------------------------|
| I feel bad. (I feel ill, depressed, apologetic) | I feel badly (I'm bad at feeling) |

Multiple-word adjective phrases generally follow the noun or pronoun they modify, but occasionally can come before.

- The *girl* snoring in the next room woke up her roommate.
- The *customer* annoyed with the slow service complained to the manager.
- Proud her youngest son, his *mother* showed his picture to strangers on the bus.

Adjective clauses—easy to identify because they start with the words “who,” “whom,” “whose,” “which,” “that,” “when,” and “where”—follow the noun they modify. For example:

- She had a *goat* that she loved very much.
- His favorite *girlfriend*, who he thought was coming over later that evening, had just received an anonymous phone call.

Adverbs

As with adjectives, adverbs need to be placed where the reader can clearly understand the meaning you intend. Adverbs are a bit more flexible, however: both single-word and multiple-word adverb phrases can generally be placed either before or after the words they modify. In the examples below, the adverbs and adverb phrases are underlined and the words they modify are in italics. For example:

- The lion *jumped* skillfully through the flaming hoop.
- The lion skillfully *jumped* through the flaming hoop.
- Before next Wednesday, *she* needed to cash her paycheck.
- *She* needed to cash her paycheck before next Wednesday.

Punctuating Adjectives and Adverbs

Adjectives

To help you decide whether or not you should use a comma when separating two or more adjectives, ask yourself the following two questions:

- Can the order of the two adjectives be reversed?
- Can the word "and" be put between the adjectives?

If either answer is yes, then the adjectives are coordinate, and you should use a comma. For example:

- Jessica is an ambitious, intelligent woman.
- Jessica is an intelligent, ambitious woman. [order reversed]
- Jessica is an intelligent and ambitious woman. [added "and"]

If you cannot reverse the order of the adjectives or add "and" to the adjectives, then they are cumulative, and do not require a comma. For example:

- Roger has fourteen silver horns.
- Roger has silver fourteen horns. [The reversed order does not work.]
- Roger has fourteen and silver horns. [The added "and" does not work.]

Adverbs

Place a comma at the end of an adverb phrase when it comes at the beginning of the sentence. For example:

- After some thought, she decided to buy her cousin's used car.

For more detailed information on when to use commas with adjectives and adverbs, please see the "Commas" handout.

Exercises

A) Identify the adjectives and adverbs in the following sentences by underlining the adjectives twice and the adverbs once. .

For example: The one-eyed green aliens stepped cautiously out of their spaceship.

1. Their timid leader tentatively put one fat, calloused foot on the grass.
2. She then gingerly placed the other foot down.
3. She paused, thoughtfully scratched her forehead, and then started to waddle quite gracelessly toward a dim light.
4. Soon the braver aliens followed her but the more cowardly aliens hung back inside the door of the silver spaceship.
5. Suddenly, they heard a short, high-pitched yelp.
6. The youngest alien had stepped accidentally on the tail of a small furry creature, and both of them cried out instinctively.
7. The little alien regained his composure right away and, curious about the strange creature, he carefully reached down to pick up the frightened mouse.
8. The mouse, still terrified, dashed away.
9. It ran over the sensitive toes of several aliens who squealed loudly
10. The resulting commotion distracted the group, and they didn't notice the two young children slowly riding up on their creaky three-speed bicycles.

B) Create more detailed sentences by adding your own adjectives and adverbs to modify the words in italics. For example:

- The *star* *punched* the *photographer*.

The reclusive movie star violently punched the pushy photographer.

1. The *island* was populated by *birds* that *soared* over the trees.
2. It was also populated by *tourists* who stayed at the *resort* and *sat* by the *pool*.
3. The *man* in a *suit* was *reading* a *magazine* on his morning commute to work.
4. The *woman* next to him *sighed* as the train *stopped* in a tunnel.
5. The neighbors *gossiped* about the *people* who lived in the *house* on the corner.
6. UPS delivered *packages* to the back door and *strangers* in *cars* visited.
7. The students in the computer lab *talked* to each other and *worked* on their essays.
8. The *tutor* *helped* the *boy* with his *homework*.
9. The *children* *ate* the *ice cream*.
10. A *bully* *grabbed* one of the cones and *stuffed* it in his *mouth*.

Appositives

Explanation

In your essays, you often want to use long, complex sentences to draw your reader in, to avoid the choppiness that comes from a series of short sentences, and to provide clear and vivid detail. While adjectives can modify nouns (the *blue* car), sometimes nouns themselves—appositives—also modify nouns for the purpose of offering details or being specific. Sometimes these appositives will be called noun phrase appositives (or NPAs).

...connections...

For more help combining sentences, see [Adjectives and Adverbs](#)

What does an appositive look like?

- It will begin with a noun or an article (a, an, the).
- As a phrase, it will not have its own subject *and* verb.
- They are usually set off with a comma, but occasionally are separated with a colon (:) or dash (—).

Examples:

- The car, an antique Stingray, cost ten thousand dollars.



- Martha, Beth's older sister, came to the open-mic night with her guitar.
- To the baseball game Roger brought all his goodies: balls, a glove, a hat and a sign.
- She took her medication—pain killers and cold medicine—and hid them in her suitcase.

Create Your Own Appositives

Because you may be writing a whole new sentence to give just a little piece of information to your reader, try to make your writing less choppy and repetitive by using an appositive to combine the ideas.

You might have:

- I wanted to give Droopy to the SPCA before she attacked.
- Droopy is my sister's ferocious pitbull.

which could easily be combined:

- I wanted to give Droopy, my sister's ferocious pit bull, to the SPCA before she attacked.

What happened to create the appositive? The writer noticed that the second sentence, "Droopy is my sister's ferocious pit bull" only gave more information about Droopy, who had already been introduced in the previous sentence. That additional information is dropped into the first sentence after the noun it modifies. Remember to use commas to set off the NPA.

A Note on Colons and Dashes

You may be wondering when a colon or dash is appropriate to set off an NPA. Most of the time a comma will do just fine. Sometimes, though, you will wish to call more attention to the information in apposition—draw the reader’s eyes to it—and in those instances, a dash (which is made with *two* hyphens “—”) may do the trick. A colon is usually used when the NPA is a series or list of items (“I brought her favorite fruit: apples, oranges and peaches.”)

Exercise 1 – Noun Phrase Appositives – Sentence Combining

Combine the following sentences using NPAs.

Example: I want to take the painting to the museum for donation. The painting is a Van Gogh.

CORRECT: I want to take the painting, a Van Gogh, to the museum for donation.

1. The lunch was cheap, served cold, and brought an hour late. The lunch was a bowl of soup.
2. Maxwell’s car topped fifty miles per hour—but barely. His car was a sleek Corvair.
3. The student body voted “no” on the resolution even though it would have benefited them explicitly. The student body is a confused group of adults whose only interest in common was the college’s location.
4. The pilot was stranded for twelve hours inside of his jet. The pilot was a former Air Force mechanic. His jet was a Cessna Skylane.
5. I want to speak on the important subjects. The important subjects are philosophy, linguistics and chemistry.
6. After six long years Alec finally achieved his lifelong goal. The goal was a scholarship to a good college.
7. Even though you’re willing to forfeit the prize, I think you should wait a week or two—until you know you won’t need the money. The prize would be my salary for a whole year.
8. The bear came to our tent, peeked in, and went on his merry way. The bear was a sleepy grizzly.
9. Camped around the fire, each of us stared at the night sky. The fire was a glowing source of warmth. The night sky was a bowl full of sparkling stars.
10. Mrs. Peterson warned us that we would have only one more day to hand in the assignment. Mrs. Peterson is my least favorite teacher.

Exercise 2 – NPAs – Sentence Combining

For each of the following sentences, add one or more NPA to give the reader additional information. Make up whatever you like! (Hint: find the noun(s) in the sentence to look to see what can take an NPA.)

Example:

- The textbook fell from my desk.

CORRECT: *The textbook, a giant collection of poetry, fell from my desk.*

1. My best friend lost the race.
2. Bill Clinton took first prize for his book.
3. Joanne told Larry to go for a ride on his boat.
4. Napoleon discovered the “trapple.”
5. My binder contains one hundred papers and two pamphlets.
6. The dog bit Bill in the leg before he could run into a house.
7. Her shirt nearly blinded me.
8. Abe Lincoln probably didn’t use Log Cabin syrup.
9. I like the school’s newest building.
10. Cindy took the money to the bank.

Articles

Explanation

The English language has definite (“*the*”) and indefinite articles (“*a*” and “*an*”). The use depends on whether you are referring to any member of a group, or to a specific member of a group.

| <u>Indefinite Articles: “a” and “an”</u> | <u>Definite Article: “the”</u> |
|---|--|
| <p>You will use an indefinite article when referring to any member of a group or one your readers are not yet familiar with.</p> | <p>You will use the definite article when referring to a specific member of a group.</p> |
| <p>The indefinite article “<i>a</i>” is used when the word following it (which may be a noun or an adjective) begins with a consonant or with a consonant sound.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ a dog○ a computer○ a onetime sale <p>The indefinite article “<i>an</i>” is used when the word following it begins with a vowel (<i>a</i>, <i>e</i>, <i>i</i>, <i>o</i>, or <i>u</i>).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ an apple○ an ellipsis○ an umbrella | <p>The consonant and vowel rules that apply to “<i>a</i>” and “<i>an</i>” do not apply to the use of “<i>the</i>.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ the neighbor’s dog○ the nice nephew○ the mooing cows○ the building○ the red hairdryer○ the airplane |
| <p>If you were to say, “Juan set his keys on <i>a</i> table,” it would tell the reader that Juan chose any table, an unspecific table, one of many.</p> <p>If you were to say, “Marcus goes swimming in <i>a</i> lake on Fridays,” the reader understands that <i>which</i> lake Marcus chose really isn’t important, and might even change from week to week.</p> | <p>If you were to say, “Juan set his keys on <i>the</i> table,” it would tell the reader that Juan chose a specific table, one you may have already mentioned.</p> <p>If you were to say, “Marcus goes swimming in <i>the</i> lake on Fridays,” the reader understands that it is a specific lake, and that he goes to the same place each week.</p> |

Plural Indefinite Article - *some*

You will use the word “some” before a plural noun (or its modifying adjective):

- some hairs
- some boxes

The singular: I put all of my clothes in a box I found in the basement.

The plural: I put all of my clothes in *some* boxes I found in the basement.

Plural Nouns

Plural nouns do not require an indefinite article: “I love apples,” instead of “I love an apples.” (You must use the definite article if you have already introduced the idea or are referring to a specific member of a group: “I love *the* apples grown across the street.”)

Non-count Nouns

Non-count nouns, which include concepts and ideas that cannot be counted in number, may or may not require an article: no one hard and fast rule applies. You can write “Kindness spreads like wildfire,” instead of “A kindness spreads like wildfire,” or “The kindness spreads like wildfire” (unless you are referring to a specific kindness mentioned elsewhere in your writing, as in “the kindness you showed me”).

Proper Nouns

Proper nouns, which name a particular person, place or thing, sometimes take the article “*the*” and sometimes do not.

- Soda is damaging to your teeth, but everyone still drinks it.
- *The* soda in my cup is flat, so I think I will throw it out.
- We are going to meet at *the* White House.

Do not use “*the*” before:

- names of countries (except *the* Netherlands, the United Arab Emirates, and *the* United States)
- names of cities, towns or states
- names of streets
- names of lakes and bays (except a group of lakes—*the* Great lakes)
- names of mountains (except mountain ranges—*the* Rockies)
- names of continents
- names of islands (except island chains—*the* Canary islands)

Do use “*the*” before:

- names of rivers, oceans and seas
- points on the globe
- geographical areas
- deserts, forests, gulfs and peninsulas

Adapted from:

<http://www.owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/esl/eslart.html> 3/14/06 – 10:00AM & *The Brief Holt Handbook, Fourth Edition*, Kirsznner & Mandell, 2004

Exercise 1 – Definite and Indefinite Articles

Fill in the blank for each sentence using either *a*, *an*, or *the*, or leave the space blank if none is needed.

Example:

I was going to the beach where my cousin Willie lost his board in the waves.

11. Last week _____ seagull dropped his fish onto my car.
12. Maria took out _____ garbage before reading.
13. _____ surfboard cut through the waves as she sped toward the beach.
14. Sculpture is _____ interesting art form, whether in metal, clay or uranium.
15. I love picnics—especially when I remember _____ food.
16. My house is falling apart, _____ shutters are in disrepair, and _____ windows are broken.
17. The brothers meet to discuss _____ possible solution.
18. I went to the lab to work on _____ computer, but they were all taken.
19. Well, professor, _____ alien came and stole my gray matter before I could finish my homework.
20. This semester _____ same student violated his restraining order.
21. She passed him to avoid _____ confrontation involving _____ police.
22. I want to go to _____ part of Ukraine where they speak _____ Russian dialect.
23. The assistants found _____ theme that meant the most to them, and they wove it carefully into _____ handbook they could be proud of.
24. _____ airplane's tires skidded down _____ Los Angeles Airport's main runway before knocking out _____ baggage cart and _____ fuel truck.
25. I am studying _____ American history in school, but only after I pass my Biology class and ace _____ final exam.

Commas

Explanation

Commas have many uses in the English language. They are responsible for everything from setting apart items in a series to making your writing clearer and preventing misreading. Correct comma use is a difficult skill to master since it requires a combination of grammar knowledge and independent stylistic judgment.

...connections...

For more help understanding sentence combining, turn to Coordinators and Subordinators.

Sentence Combining

When you are joining ideas, phrases or clauses within a sentence, you often will use a comma for punctuation.

An **independent clause**, also known as a simple sentence, is a group of words that contains a subject and a verb AND can stand alone as a sentence. For example

- The child went to the dentist.
- His girlfriend is angry.
- She will buy a new pair of shoes.

You can join an independent clause with another independent clause using a coordinator (FANBOYS) and a comma:

- Angelo rides his bike, and Mary takes the bus.
- Marguerite grabbed the diamonds, but Oliver sold them on the black market.

You can easily remember the seven coordinators by keeping in mind the word "FANBOYS":

For And Nor
But Or Yet So

A dependent clause is a group of words that contains a subject and a verb BUT it cannot stand alone because it starts with a subordinator, words like although, while, since, because, if, until, after. For example:

- When the child went to the dentist
- Because his girlfriend is angry
- Although she will buy new shoes

You will use a comma to join a dependent clause require a comma before it can be attached to the independent clause that finishes the thought:

- Even though Michael was allowed to go to the concert, his mother made sure he had completed all his homework.

If you reverse the order and put the independent clause first and the dependent clause second, however, you do not need a comma:

- His mother made sure he had completed all his homework even though Michael was allowed to go to the game.

Series

You will use commas to separate items in a series containing three or more coordinate elements.

- Ron, Maria, and Jessica play soccer every day after school.
- My favorite vegetables are Brussels sprouts, spinach, and cauliflower.
- I want either fettuccini alfredo, eggplant parmesan, or the linguine with clams in a white sauce.

You will use commas to separate items in a series of two or more coordinate adjectives—adjectives modifying the same idea independent of each other.

- It should be a *slow, lazy* day.
- Seven years passed in a *destructive, whirling* blur.
- He brought his *sleek, shiny* bicycle.

Commas are not required when the adjectives are cumulative, or when they describe different aspects of the same noun.

- Donnie sold me *ten gold* bowling balls.
- My favorites are the *lazy white* clouds.
- He ordered a *delicious chocolate* cake for the party.

Comma-Adjective Rule

To help you decide whether or not you should use a comma when separating two or more adjectives, ask yourself the following two questions:

- Can the order of the two adjectives be reversed?
- Can the word “*and*” be put between the adjectives?

If either answer is yes, then the adjectives are coordinate, and you should **use** a comma.

- Jessica is an ambitious, intelligent woman.
 - Jessica is an intelligent, ambitious woman. [order reversed] 😊
 - Jessica is an intelligent *and* ambitious woman. [added “*and*”] 😊

If you cannot reverse the order of or add “*and*” to the adjectives, then they are cumulative, and **do not** require a comma.

- Roger has fourteen silver horns.
 - Roger has silver fourteen horns. [The reversed order does not work.] ❌
 - Roger has fourteen *and* silver horns. [The added “*and*” does not work.] ❌

Setting off Nonessential Elements

Some modifying elements of a sentence are essential, restricting the meaning of a modified term, while others are nonessential and do not restrict the modified term's meaning. These nonessential elements, which can be words, phrases, or clauses, are set off with commas.

| | <u>Nonessential</u> (Nonrestrictive) | <u>Essential</u> (Restrictive) |
|-----------------------------|---|---|
| Adjective Clause | Students, <i>who use the majority of the Health Center's services</i> , claim to be especially sick this year. <i>All students claim to be sick this year.</i> | Students <i>who play any school sport</i> will receive free tickets to final game. <i>Only students who play a school sport receive the tickets, not all students.</i> |
| Prepositional Phrase | The professor, <i>with a wink</i> , dismissed her class early. <i>Removing the phrase "with a wink" doesn't change the meaning of the sentence.</i> | The professor <i>with no students</i> is good for very little. <i>The prepositional phrase "with no students" tells what kind of professor is good for very little; it is essential.</i> |
| Verbal Phrase | Popular politicians, <i>campaigning in every small town in America</i> , wave the American flag and kiss babies. | The politician <i>campaigning for president</i> has no time for a meaningful personal life. |
| Appositives | <i>The Big Lebowski</i> , a 1997 Coen Brothers film, is a modern mystery and a Western rolled into one. | The great American movie <i>The Big Lebowski</i> popularized the nickname "Dude." |

When deciding whether information is nonessential or essential, ask yourself this question:

- Is the modifier essential to the meaning of the noun or subject it modifies?

NO: Nonrestrictive (use commas)

YES: Restrictive (no commas)

Transitional Words and Phrases

Transitional words and phrases qualify, clarify, and make connections between ideas. They are usually set off with commas when they introduce, interrupt, or come at the end of a clause.

| Transitions | |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| however | for example |
| therefore | on the other hand |
| thus | typically speaking |
| nevertheless | as a result |
| furthermore | |
| alternatively | |

- Nevertheless, she took the bus knowing it would be late.
- On the other hand, money is money and I have to pay my rent.
- Rare horses, however, are something I would consider buying.

Note: When you use a transitional word to combine two independent clauses, you must use a semicolon or punctuate them as two separate sentences.

- Diamonds are rare; however, the coal that makes them is abundant.
- The best dogs raced first; therefore, the spectators all went home before it rained.
- Laughter is the best medicine; of course, penicillin also comes in handy sometimes.
- I wanted to finish quickly. Unfortunately, I still had three exams afterward.

Quotations

In most cases, use commas to set off a direct quotation from the identifying tag (*he said, she screamed, I wrote* and so on).

- Thoreau said, "To be awake is to be alive."
- "To be awake is to be alive," Thoreau said.
- "To be awake," Thoreau said, "is to be alive."
- "To be awake is to be alive," Thoreau said. "I have never yet met a man who was quite awake."

If the quoted text contains an exclamation point or a question mark, do not use a comma in addition:

- "Should we bring the casserole tonight?" he asked.
- "I love those children!" the father screamed.

Adapted from:
http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/g_commaess.html 3/23/06 – 1:00PM &
The Brief Holt Handbook, Fourth Edition, Kirsznner & Mandell, 2004

Exercise 1 – Commas – Dependent & Independent Clauses

Add commas where necessary in the sentences below. Some sentences will not require one.

Examples:

Although my mother told me not to get her a gift, I decided to make her a scrapbook.

I want to give more money to her charity, but I think the IRS already took too much of my salary.

-
26. Lately Katherine has wanted more companionship even though she rather likes to be alone.
 27. Jerry vies for her attention but she has so much on her own mind as she suffers through this ordeal.
 28. But whereas Alec acts like a friend he also wants Katherine's admiration.
 29. So that she will be found innocent Miss Smatter will write another's confession.
 30. Jerry eats his sandwich as coolly as the others do yet he can't shake the feeling of deception and mistrust.
 31. Sabrina thinks that the apartment's rent is trivial while Kelly thinks it crucial.
 32. Although Rachel has little say in the matter her friends could use the advice.
 33. Because her dog was hit by a car he walks with a substantial limp.
 34. The doctor set it with pins and even though he didn't scratch at it he was still forced to wear a giant collar.
 35. Either the bill came two weeks later or the doctor sent a collection agency for the money.

Exercise 2 – Commas – Series and Adjectives

Add commas where necessary in the sentences below. Some sentences will not require one.

Example:



I want to pick fragrant, colorful daffodils, roses, and lilies for my sister's birthday party.

1. Lately Martin has been picking giant swollen mushrooms from his yard.
2. Sue won the "Vegetable Prize of the Day" that included carrots turnips and leeks.
3. Most people don't know that their favorite chips contain preservatives artificial flavors and MSG.
4. The three tall brothers took the brilliant shining vitamins before playing sports.
5. Watching movies reading books sleeping and exercising are my favorite weekend activities.

Exercise 3 – Commas – Essential and Nonessential Items

Add commas where necessary in the sentences below. Some sentences will not require one.

Example:



- The racing fans, who rarely wave pennants, showed up in full force on Sunday.
-

1. Shelly my mother's step-sister gave me thirty dollars last week.
2. The campus police who rarely arrest any faculty members are responsible for patrolling all night long.
3. The man walking his dog down the street looks like my great-uncle Ted.
4. My grandmother with a terrible scream alerted me to the fire in her closet.
5. Doug gave me three helpings of dessert which was a crème brûlée.
6. Speaking as if he was consumed with fury Louis yelled to the audience.
7. The actor with no siblings starred in the blockbuster movie *Grammar Cop*.
8. The helicopter a Grasker A-7 flew over the otherwise empty desert where two thousand troops slept silently awaiting orders.
9. Without a warrant the police cannot enter your house provided you don't taunt them from within.
10. "Sonny's Blues" the famous story by Baldwin contains rich allegory that weaves along with fascinating symbolism a rich fabric of text accessible to most readers.

Exercise 4 – Commas – Transitions

Add commas and/or semicolons where necessary in the sentences below.

Example:



- Nevertheless, I wanted to go to the farm to see the llamas.

-
1. I didn't want to see the whole country however I did want to visit the biggest states and prettiest parks.
 2. On the other hand Martin said that Oklahoma is worth skipping.
 3. Alternatively I dream about the open road even if it is scary sometimes.
 4. My car takes five quarts of oil typically speaking.
 5. I made the motel reservations already therefore I should leave next week.
 6. Pharmaceuticals as a result are becoming more and more expensive.
 7. Thus I will need to buy a new car before I set off on Sunday.

Contractions

Explanation

Apostrophes can show possession (*the girl's hamster is strange*), and also can show the omission of one or more letters when words are combined into contractions. You would use a contraction to shorten and combine words. This is a list of the most common contractions.

...connections...

For more help with contractions, please see [Possessives](#).

| <u>Long Form</u> | <u>Contraction</u> |
|------------------|--------------------|
| I am | I'm |
| I had | I'd |
| I have | I've |
| it is | it's |
| we will | we'll |
| they will | they'll |
| we are | we're |
| they are | they're |
| do not | don't |
| does not | doesn't |
| did not | didn't |
| let us | let's |
| is not | isn't |
| are not | aren't |
| should not | shouldn't |
| will not | won't |
| cannot | can't |
| would not | wouldn't |
| could not | couldn't |
| you would | you'd |
| who is | who's |

In formal writing, contractions are not used as frequently (if at all). Some instructors allow contractions in assignments, and some do not. You should check with them about their policy if it is not clear from the syllabus. If you do use contractions, however, be sure to include the apostrophe in place of the letters you omit.

Exercise 1 – Contractions

In each of the sentences below, correct any contraction errors you find.

Example: When John returns, he wont want to eat dinner.

Correct: When John returns, he won't want to eat dinner.

1. The team is busy typing at the desk, but theyre not going to stay long.
2. It isnt that their parents are mean, but they dont spend any time with them.
3. Youd have to be crazy to eat that fast food.
4. Paragraphs arent my favorite thing to study, but they beat spelling.
5. In two more days well be sailing around the world.
6. The second student from the left wouldnt turn in his test on time.
7. Lets see what Im doing next week so I dont double-book.
8. Whos coming to the party tomorrow?
9. This really isnt what I envisioned when I agreed to get paid.

Exercise 2 – Contractions

Combine words in the long form into contractions in the sentences below.

Example: I will not stack all five piles together.

Correct: I won't stack all five piles together.

1. The co-op does not have any cereal unless you are buying it in bulk.
2. In fact, it is cheaper, healthier, and should not be any less fresh.
3. I have had a good experience at that store.
4. The food I brought home would not ever go to waste.
5. They will bag it for you and will not drop anything.

Adapted from Fog City Fundamentals, Fourth Edition, Altman & Deicke, 1998

Coordinators

Explanation

Coordinators are words you can use to join simple sentences (aka **independent clauses**) and show the logical connections between ideas.

Use **coordinators** when you want to stress equally both ideas you are connecting; if instead you want to de-emphasize one of the ideas, use a **subordinator**.

Connections

See also the “Subordinators” and “Commas” handouts.

You can easily remember the seven coordinators if you keep in mind the word FANBOYS:

| Coordinators | | Logical Relationship | Sample sentences |
|--------------|------------|-----------------------|---|
| F | FOR | Cause/Effect | I expect to see lots of green on Friday, <i>for</i> it is St.Patrick’s Day. |
| A | AND | Addition | The Irish bars will be packed, <i>and</i> the beer will be flowing. |
| N | NOR | Addition of negatives | I won’t drink green beer, <i>nor</i> will I drink a Shamrock Shake. |
| B | BUT | Contrast | I like the color green, <i>but</i> I don’t think it’s an appetizing color for a beverage. |
| O | OR | Alternative | Guinness is always a good choice, <i>or</i> if you’re driving, water is a better choice. |
| Y | YET | Condition | I have to wake up early the next morning, <i>yet</i> I don’t want to be anti-social. |
| S | SO | Cause/Effect | One of my friends is having a party, <i>so</i> I will probably drop by for a while. |

Punctuation

Unless the clauses are quite short, put a comma before the conjunction when it joins two independent clauses.

- She brought home a big bag of Halloween candy that should have lasted weeks, but by the next day her little brother had eaten it all.
- He fasts for Ramadan and she fasts for Yom Kippur.

Exercises

Join the following sentences with the coordinator that most clearly expresses the logical relationship between the two ideas being connected. Hint: you should use each coordinator only once.

, but he

For Example: Calvin had his heart set on being a physics major. ~~He~~ was horrible at math.

1. He could not understand geometry. He could not understand physics.
2. He took extra classes. The tutor couldn't seem to help.
3. He worked incredibly hard. Everyone in the math department was willing to help him.
4. He realized he would have to improve. He was going to have to give up his ambition to become a great physicist.
5. The other students could build catapults out of popsicle sticks and rubber bands. Calvin's catapult couldn't even launch a pebble.
6. Calvin's experiments were always unique. They proved that some basic law of nature no longer existed.
7. Calvin finally realized that he did not have it in him to be the next Stephen Hawking. He changed his major to English.

Dangling Modifiers

Explanation

All **modifiers**, words that add clarity, describe, or add detail to other words in a sentence, must be clearly and logically connected to their **implied subjects**, the grammatical subject of the clause nearest to the modifier. For example, in the following sentences we can easily connect the underlined modifiers with their implied subjects, which are underlined twice.

...connections...

See also the “Identifying Verbs & Subjects” and “Adjectives & Adverbs” handouts.

- Happy with her new hula hoop, the young girl skipped down the street.
- Invigorated by the sunny weather, we decided to go on a picnic in Golden Gate Park.
- Before buying a hybrid car, my brother used to ride a motorcycle.

But sometimes, when writers use modifiers carelessly, their implied subjects are illogical. For example:

- In examining his argument closely, the point at which he went wrong can be seen.
- To network more effectively, Scientology is practiced by many actors.
- Polite and respectful, the visiting teacher was impressed with the children’s manners.

The way the first two sentences are written, they imply that the point somehow examined his argument and that Scientology is trying to network more effectively—neither of these ideas make any sense. The third sentence, while not as obviously illogical, suggests that the visiting teacher was polite and respectful, not the children—almost certainly not what the writer intends.

Misleading or illogical constructions like these are called dangling modifiers. Dangling modifiers most often come at the beginning of a sentence, as in the examples above, but they can also come at the end of a sentence.

- Attendance was stressed by my English teacher, taking off points for late arrivals and early departures.

The way this sentence is written, it implies that attendance takes points off for late arrivals and early departures—an illogical statement.

Fixing Dangling Modifiers

In order to fix a dangling modifier, you need to revise your sentence so that the implied subject makes sense. You can do this by asking yourself “*who is logically doing the action of the modifier*”? For example:

| Original Sentence | Revised Sentence |
|--|---|
| <p><u>In examining his argument closely</u>, the <u>point</u> at which he went wrong can be seen.</p> | <p><i>Who is examining his argument?</i> <u>we</u> <u>In examining his argument closely</u>, <u>we</u> can see the point at which he went wrong.</p> |
| <p><u>To network more effectively</u>, <u>Scientology</u> is practiced by many actors.</p> | <p><i>Who is trying to network more effectively?</i> <u>actors</u> <u>To network more effectively</u>, many <u>actors</u> practice Scientology.</p> |
| <p><u>Polite and respectful</u>, the visiting teacher was impressed with the children’s manners.</p> | <p><i>Who is polite and respectful?</i> <u>the children</u> <u>Polite and respectful</u>, <u>the children</u> impressed the visiting teacher with their manners.</p> |
| <p>In my English class, <u>attendance</u> was stressed, <u>taking off points for late arrivals and early departures</u>.</p> | <p><i>Who stresses attendance?</i> the <u>teacher</u> In my English class, the <u>teacher</u> stressed attendance, <u>taking off points for late arrivals and early departures</u>.</p> |

Exercises

Read each sentence, underlining the introductory modifier and double-underlining the implied subject. Does the modifier logically connect with the implied subject? If the implied subject does not make sense, revise the sentence.

For example: Thought to have originated the Indian Subcontinent, Eastern Europe is now home to many Roma, better known as gypsies.

(*Is Eastern Europe thought to have originated in India?* No, the Roma are, so we need to revise this sentence.)

Revised: Thought to have originated the Indian Subcontinent, many Roma, better known as gypsies, now live in Eastern Europe.

1. Reacting with suspicion and hostility to the Roma's distinct culture and nomadic lifestyles, they have historically been discriminated against by some native Europeans.
2. Taken to the extreme, persecution included enslavement and executions.
3. Known as the *Porajmos*, or the "devouring," in World War Two the Nazis carried out an attempted genocide that killed between 200,000 and 800,000 Roma.
4. Derogatory stereotypes are still perpetuated, characterizing the Roma as tramps and thieves.
5. Both embodying and transcending the sadness of this history, an important expression of traditional Rom culture is music.
6. Developed in Spanish Roma communities, the outside world is probably most familiar with flamenco music.
7. Brought to the Americas, Roma music has contributed to Cuban salsa, mambo, rumba and guajira music: Mexican mariachi music; and even American country music.
8. A celebration of the range and vitality of gypsy music, the Roma director Tony Gatlif made the excellent documentary *Latcho Drom*.

Fragments

Explanation

In English, a sentence must contain a subject-verb unit; a fragment is a group of words that *pretends* to be a sentence but doesn't actually have a valid subject-verb unit.

Common Sources of Fragments

Connections

For a more detailed discussion of these terms, see the "Subjects & Verbs" and "Subordinators" handouts.

1. The fragment is a **dependent clause**, a group of words that contains a subject-verb unit but cannot stand alone because it begins with a **subordinator**. For example:

- *Since* they broke up
- *Although* I am her cousin
- *Unless* you stop doing that
- *Because* he was tired

Other common subordinators include: though, even though, while, whereas before, after, if, when, as soon as.

2. The fragment is a **phrase**, a group of words that does not contain a subject-verb unit. Many times, phrases are easy to identify. For example:

- A long, strange trip
- Lost in the supermarket
- Jenny from the block
- The richest man in Babylon

Two types of phrases can be a bit trickier to spot, however, because they contain words that *look* like verbs but aren't acting as part of a valid subject-verb unit:

A. **-ing phrases**: Without a form of the verb "to be," **-ing** words cannot be part of the subject-verb unit. For example:

- The man eating a fig
- The coyote howling at the moon

B. **"Who, whom etc." phrases**: Verbs that are separated from the subject by the words "who," "whom," "whose," "when," "where," "that," and "which" cannot be part of the subject-verb unit. For example:

- The woman *who* disobeyed
- The apple *that* she ate
- The garden *which* she had to leave

Strategies for Fixing Fragments

In order to turn a fragment into a complete sentence, you have a couple of options.

1. Often you simply need to combine a fragment with a neighboring sentence to produce a grammatically complete sentence. For example:

| Fragment (in italics) | Complete sentence |
|--|---|
| Rocio made that mistake too. <i>But only when she wasn't paying attention.</i> | Rocio made that mistake too, but only when she wasn't paying attention. |
| <i>Daydreaming about the weekend.</i> I missed my exit. | Daydreaming about the weekend, I missed my exit. |
| <i>My chatty next door neighbor.</i> She loves to gossip. | My chatty next door neighbor loves to gossip. |
| I've never been back to El Salvador. Since I left ten years ago. | I've never been back to El Salvador since I left ten years ago. |

2. Other times, you'll need to complete the sentence by supplying the missing subject or verb, or by attaching an independent clause

| Fragment (in italics) | Complete sentence |
|--|--|
| <i>A laboratory for the study of animal life in the South Pacific.</i> | A laboratory for the study of animal life is situated in the South Pacific. |
| <i>The girl who wanted an 'A' in her English class.</i> | The girl who wanted an 'A' in her English class re-wrote each essay three times. |
| <i>The man thoughtfully scratching his beard.</i> | The man was thoughtfully scratching his beard. |
| <i>Since I only had a cookie for breakfast.</i> | Since I only had a cookie for breakfast, I was starving by lunchtime. |

Exercises

A) Read the following groups of words and determine if they are grammatically complete sentences or if they are fragments.

For example: Going to community college *fragment*

1. A noticeable mistake which was on the flyer
2. Whenever I get tired of doing my math homework
3. The building across from the library is condemned
4. My roommate who intends to finish college in four years
5. My other roommate has been in college seven years
6. Before the semester began
7. The teacher who liked to listen to the sound of his own voice
8. Because mid-terms are just about to start
9. If I could be left alone to do my homework
10. Although I don't usually enjoy hard work, I love studying Japanese
11. Listening to tapes in the language lab is really time consuming
12. The boy typed on the Mac in the computer lab
13. The essay that I have to write
14. While I was eating my lunch at the campus center

B) Read the following sentences and fix any fragments you find.

For example: Sometimes, life is like a movie. A cheesy romantic comedy to be exact.
Sometimes, life is like a movie, a cheesy romance comedy to be exact.

1. Anxious about his love life. He decided to visit a fortune-teller.
2. The fortune-teller asked for fifty dollars. And the names of his favorite movie stars.
3. Consulted her astrology charts and closely examined his palms.
4. She predicted someone important would soon come into his life. A tall, dark stranger.
5. While he was skeptical that such a clichéd prediction could come true.
6. The day that he would meet the stranger was cold and foggy. He was sipping hot chocolate at his favorite café.
7. The stranger who would change his life. She walked in the door and ordered a hot chai.
8. She asked if she could share his table. Because the other tables were full of students studying for their midterms.
9. Looking up from his crossword. He smiled and said yes.
10. As she sat down in the table across from him.

C) Now, read the following paragraph and a) underline any sentence fragments that you find b) fix these fragments by combining them with adjacent sentences or supplying missing words.

In “The Lottery,” author Shirley Jackson implies that human beings are mindless, static creatures. Who cannot or will not free themselves from the domination of tradition. Even when a ritual has lost all purpose or value. This theme is dramatized in her own tale of a town’s annual selection of one of its residents. For sacrifice at the hands of his or her neighbors. On June 27th of every year, the head of each household draws a lot from an old black box. To see whether someone in the household is the fated one.

On the day of the story’s action, the proceedings are supervised by Joe Summers. An old-timer who oversees square dances, the teenager’s club, and the Halloween program. The townsfolk are in a festive mood. Approaching the oncoming massacre of a neighbor with no more concern than they give to the milking of a cow. They are not troubled that they no longer know the reason for the ritual. The purpose that prompted their forebears to initiate the proceedings. They simply consider the drawing a necessity. One of the town’s vital activities. Old Man Warner exemplifies the majority of the villagers. Sheep-like, he follows the dictates of tradition unquestioningly. “There’s always been a lottery,” he says. And, by implication, always will be.

Identifying Verbs and Subjects

Explanation

This handout will help you identify two of the most important parts of speech, verbs and subjects. Being able to identify verbs and subjects will allow you to create complete and clear sentences; it will also help you understand other grammatical concepts like fragments and run-together sentences.

Connections

See also the “Verb Tenses” handout.

Identifying Verbs

Verbs are easy to identify because they are words that indicate action or a state of being, words like: write, run, tell, have, be, look, feel. Verbs are the only part of speech that gets **conjugated**, that is, that changes tense in order to indicate a particular time frame. This chart contains examples of some of the more common verb tenses:

| Present | Past | Future | Present Progressive | Present Perfect | Past Perfect |
|----------------|------------------|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------|----------------------|
| I <u>learn</u> | I <u>learned</u> | I <u>will learn</u> | I <u>am learning</u> | I <u>have learned</u> | I <u>had learned</u> |

For more a comprehensive description of verb tenses and guidelines for using them correctly, see the “Verb Tenses” handout.

Sentences can contain several types of verbs and verb-like words; what we’re interested in is finding the **main verbs**, the words that drive the action of a sentence. While all verbs *can* be conjugated, main verbs are the ones that actually *do* change when the entire sentence changes tense. To find which words are acting as the main verbs in a sentence, then, try changing the tense. For example:

| Original sentence: | New tense: |
|--|--|
| Running a marathon <u>is</u> not fun. | Running a marathon <u>will</u> not <u>be</u> fun. |
| Hoping to build up her portfolio, the supermodel <u>is going</u> to Paris. | Hoping to build up her portfolio, the supermodel <u>went</u> to Paris. |
| To escape their stress, Liz and Ryan <u>have been watching</u> bad reality TV. | To escape their stress, Liz and Ryan <u>will be watching</u> bad reality TV. |
| The bicycle <u>had been</u> left in the rain. | The bicycle <u>was</u> left in the rain. |

Identifying Subjects

The **subject** of a sentence performs the action(s) indicated by the main verb; that is, the subject is the *doer* of the action: the diva was singing (the diva is doing the action of “singing”), the glass broke (the glass is doing the action of “breaking”), the audience started to applaud (the audience is doing the action of “applauding”).

To identify the subject of the sentence, you can ask yourself “who or what is (verb)?”

In the following examples, the subjects have been underlined once and the verbs underlined twice.

| Sentence | Question → Subject |
|--|---|
| <u>Running</u> a marathon <u>is</u> not fun. | What is not fun? <u>running</u> |
| The <u>supermodel</u> <u>is going</u> to Paris. | Who is going to Paris? the <u>supermodel</u> |
| <u>Liz</u> and <u>Ryan</u> <u>have been watching</u> bad reality TV. | Who is watching TV? <u>Liz</u> and <u>Ryan</u> |
| The <u>bicycle</u> <u>had been</u> left in the rain. | What had been left in the rain? the <u>bicycle</u> |

As you might have noticed, words that end in **-ing** can sometimes act like subjects:

- Running a marathon is not fun.

and sometimes they act as verbs:

- Liz and Ryan are watching bad reality TV.

As a general guideline, when an **-ing** word is preceded by a form of “be” (i.e. is, are, was, were), it is acting as a verb.

Exercises

Find the subjects and main verbs in the following sentences. Underline the subject(s) once and the main verb(s) twice.

For example: To cheer himself up, he watched old detective movies and ate ice cream.

1. After a long, rainy winter, the woman and her husband had become tired of their small apartment, so they decided to drive to a seedy part of town in search of excitement.
2. The couple had been cruising slowly down a side street, looking for some local nightlife, when they heard music coming from a small bar on the corner.
3. They had just left their car when some stray cats started fighting in a side alley.
4. When couple walked in and sat down at the bar, nobody bothered to look up.
5. At one end of the bar, a tired-looking woman was languidly smoking her cigarette and expertly blowing out smoke rings.
6. The bartender was wiping down the counter and softly whistling to himself.
7. Hunched over a table in the back corner, four men were enjoying a friendly game of cards.
8. A sad Billie Holiday tune had been playing softly from an old jukebox, but once the song was over, the room went silent.
9. Suddenly, a man in the back stood and threw his cards down on the table, cursing loudly.
10. When he began to reach into his pocket, the couple looked at each other anxiously and then hurriedly backed out the door.

Possessives

Explanation

To show ownership of things, people or concepts, we use possessives. The possessive form looks like this:

- The dog belonging to the boy shed hair on the floor.
- The talent of the singer is apparent after seeing her show.

...connections...

For additional apostrophe-related material, see [Contractions](#)

But a simpler, more common and concise way, is to change the noun that does the possessing:

- The *boy's* dog shed hair on the floor.
- The *singer's* talent is apparent after seeing her show.

With a few exceptions, the following two rules cover nearly all you need to know about forming possessives:

1. To form the possessive of a noun, add apostrophe + s.
 - the books of the *student* → the *student's* books
 - the toys of the *girl* → the *girl's* toys
2. If the noun already ends in s, just add an apostrophe at the end of the word.
 - the books of the *students* → the *students'* books
 - the toys of the *girls* → the *girls'* toys

If a proper noun (a name) ends in -s, you may choose to add either apostrophe + s, or just the apostrophe alone, depending on whether you would pronounce the extra -s.

Moses' followers OR *Moses's* followers

Remember: Do not use -'s when you are simply showing the plural form:

CORRECT: Charbroiled eggplants are served here.

INCORRECT: Charbroiled eggplant's are served here.

Adapted from *Fog City Fundamentals, Fourth Edition*, Altman & Deicke, 1998

Exercise 1 – Possessives

Rewrite each underlined group of words, using apostrophes to show possession.

Examples: Nancy liked the shape of the laptop.

the laptop's shape

Jo often borrowed the comb belonging to Nancy.

Nancy's comb

-
1. Nancy was driving along with Jo in the car owned by Beth.
 2. The tires of the car screeched to a halt after a confession.
 3. Not even the defroster could fight the fog of the windows.
 4. The two avoided the snow by walking underneath the leaves of the trees.
 5. The hands of Jo were cold; warming them wasn't entirely out of the question.
 6. "The attitudes of people just aren't ready for this," Nancy said.
 7. The two looked to the snowflakes of the sky and saw white dusty stars floating by.
 8. "We should go home and sit before the heat of the fireplace," Jo said.
 9. "The mugs that belong to Beth should hold enough hot chocolate to warm us up."

Other Forms of Possessives

Joint Possession: The following pairs of nouns show joint ownership; two or more people own the same thing.

the string belonging to Rich and Eddie ⇨ Rich and Eddie's duck

the children of Bob and Edward ⇨ Bob and Edward's children

Rule: Nouns showing joint ownership have apostrophe + s added to the noun nearest the thing possessed.

Individual Possession: The following pairs of nouns show individual ownership. (Rich and Eddie probably do not own the same socks, nor do Bob and Edward use the same toothbrush.)

the socks belonging to Rich and Eddie ⇨ Rich's and Eddie's socks

the toothbrushes of Bob and Edward ⇨ Bob's and Edward's toothbrush

Rule: Nouns showing individual ownership have apostrophe + s added to each noun.

When NOT to use apostrophe + s:

Do not use 's to form possessive pronouns:

| <u>Pronouns</u> | <u>Possessive Pronouns</u> | |
|-----------------|----------------------------|--------|
| he | his | his |
| she | her | hers |
| it | its | n/a |
| we | our | ours |
| you | your | yours |
| they | their | theirs |
| I | my | mine |

Which possessive pronouns belong in the following examples?

This is Kimberly's handbook.

This is her handbook. The handbook is hers.

Those are Jessie's records.

Those are _____ records. The records are _____.

That is Frank and Todd's car.

That is _____ car. The car is _____.

The tall one is Erika's vase.

The tall one is your vase. The vase is _____.

Exercise 2 – Possessives

Rewrite each underlined group of words, using apostrophes to show possession.

Examples:

- The flavor of the coffee was unusual. ⇨ the coffee's flavor
 - I live in the home of my parents. ⇨ my parents' home
 - We went to the wedding of Joe and Kay. ⇨ Joe and Kay's wedding
 - He ironed the clothes of Pete and May. ⇨ Pete's and May's clothing.
-

1. The combined losses of the North and South were the greatest in any American war.
2. The president took away some of the responsibilities of the chief-of-staff.
3. We loved the shoes of George and Sara.
4. She was insulted by the rude remarks of her sister-in-law.
5. I couldn't stand the behavior of Alan and Jennifer.
6. The information of the ambassador was mostly incorrect.
7. The voyages of Magellan and Columbus were controversial.
8. The novels of Fitzgerald and Nabokov are among the most admired in modern literature.
9. One of the most famous events in American history is the journey west of Lewis and Clark.
10. Don't forget the birthday of your mother-in-law.

Adapted from Fog City Fundamentals, Fourth Edition, Altman & Deicke, 1998.

Run-Together Sentences (RTS)

Explanation

Contrary to popular belief, run-together sentences are not simply sentences that are too long. Instead, run-together sentences are the result of combining two or more **complete sentences** together without an **acceptable joiner**.

A **complete sentence**, also known as an **independent clause**, contains a subject-verb unit; in the example sentences below, subjects are underlined once and verbs underlined twice so you can see the different independent clauses.

Acceptable joiners for connecting independent clauses include:

- Coordinators
- Subordinators
- Semi-colons

We'll look at these acceptable joiners more closely in a moment, but first let's take a look at what CANNOT connect complete sentences.

Connections

See also the "Subjects and Verbs" "Coordination," and "Subordination" handouts.

| Problem | RTS example: |
|--|---|
| Commas cannot connect two complete sentences—this type of RTS also referred to as a <i>comma splice</i> | His older <u>sister</u> <u>hit</u> him, the <u>boy</u> <u>started</u> to cry. |
| Transition words , with or without a comma, cannot connect two complete sentences—this can be another type of <i>comma splice</i> | <u>He</u> <u>took</u> four ibuprofen, <u>then</u> his <u>headache</u> <u>faded</u> away. |
| <i>Not using anything to connect complete sentences is also incorrect—this is also known as a run-on sentence</i> | My <u>teacher</u> <u>writes</u> RTS in the margins of my essay <u>I</u> <u>do</u> not <u>know</u> what she means. |

Since it is easy to confuse transition words with coordinators and subordinators, we've included a chart on the next page to help you out.

| Logical Relationship | Coordinators (CAN join sentences) | Subordinators (CAN join sentences) | Transition Words (CANNOT join sentences) |
|-----------------------------|---|--|---|
| Addition | and | | also, further, additionally, furthermore, moreover, similarly |
| Contrast | but, yet | although, while, even though, even if, whereas, though | however, still, nevertheless, otherwise, on the other hand, instead, nonetheless, alternatively |
| Cause | for | because, since | |
| Effect/ Result | so | so that, in that, in order that | therefore, thus, consequently, hence, as a result |
| Choice/ Alternative | or, nor | | on the other hand, conversely |
| Condition | | if, unless, provided that | otherwise |
| Time | | after, before, as soon as, since, when, while, until, as | then, next, previously, subsequently, afterwards |

How to Fix Run-Together Sentences

Use a coordinator

One way to fix a run-together sentence is to insert a comma and a coordinator to join the two independent clauses. For example:

| Original RTS | Grammatically Correct Sentence |
|--|--|
| Her older <u>sister</u> <u>hit</u> him, the <u>boy</u> <u>started to cry</u> . | His older <u>sister</u> <u>hit</u> him, so the <u>boy</u> <u>started to cry</u> . |

When you use a coordinator to fix a run-together sentence, make sure that you choose one that indicates the correct logical relationship between the two ideas you are connecting; the chart on the previous page can help you figure this out.

Use a subordinator

Another way to fix a run-together sentence is to use a subordinator to join the two independent clauses. For example:

| Original RTS | Grammatically Correct Sentence |
|--|---|
| <u>He</u> <u>took</u> four ibuprofen, his <u>headache</u> <u>faded</u> away. | His <u>headache</u> <u>faded</u> away as soon as <u>he</u> <u>took</u> four ibuprofen. As soon as <u>he</u> <u>took</u> four ibuprofen, his <u>headache</u> <u>faded</u> away. |

As you can see from the examples above, subordinators don't always need to be placed in the middle of sentence; they can also come at the beginning. When you do place the subordinator at the beginning of a sentence, you need to put a comma after the end of the first clause.

As with coordinators, when you use a subordinator to fix a run-together sentence, you need to make sure that you choose one that indicates the correct logical relationship between the two ideas you are connecting.

Use a semi-colon

A third way fix run-together sentences is by joining the two independent clauses with a semi-colon.

| Original RTS | Grammatically Correct Sentence |
|---|---|
| My <u>teacher</u> <u>writes</u> RTS in the margins of my essay <u>I</u> <u>do</u> not <u>know</u> what she means. | My teacher writes RTS in the margins of my essay; (however) I don't know what she means. |

You can pair a semi-colon with a transition word, but remember that transition words alone *cannot* join sentences. If you do use a transition word, be sure that it is one that indicates the correct logical relationship between the ideas you are connecting.

Split the RTS into two sentences

One final way to fix a run-together sentence is to spit it up into two independent clauses. For example:

| Original RTS | Grammatically Correct Sentence |
|---|--|
| My <u>teacher</u> <u>writes</u> RTS in the margins of my essay <u>I</u> <u>do</u> not <u>know</u> what she means. | My teacher writes RTS in the margins of my essay. I don't know what she means. |

When you fix run-together sentences in this way, just be careful that you don't end up with a series of short, choppy sentences.

Exercises

A) Fix the following run-together sentences using one of the seven coordinators (FANBOYS: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so).

yet

For example: I don't usually watch reality TV [^] I do love a show called *Project Runway*.

1. At the beginning of the season there are fourteen aspiring fashion designers, in the end only three people get to show at Olympus Fashion Week in New York.
2. The supermodel Heidi Klum hosts, famous designers serve as guest judges.
3. The contestants must take the design challenges seriously every week the loser goes home.
4. Some of the contestants have huge egos, they are unnecessarily competitive.
5. I don't have TiVo I am going to my friend's house to watch the season finale.

B) Fix the following run-together sentences using a **subordinator**.

since

For example: [^] Many students have to cover their own living expenses, they work full-time.

1. She needed a part-time job, books and tuition were expensive this year.
2. She would have preferred not to have to work retail, the only job she could find was at a shoe store in the mall.
3. The customers were frequently demanding and rude, she liked her co-workers.
4. She had been working for a month, her employee discount kicked in.
5. She paid off her credit card bill, she was planning to buy a new pair of shoes.

C) Fix the following run-together sentences using a semi-colon; you can also include an appropriate transition word.

For example: As people get older they tend to get wiser; sometimes they also get fatter.

1. Orville was almost thirty-five his tummy had started to stick out.
2. His wife worried that his eating habits were unhealthy, she tried to encourage him to eat more fruits and vegetables.
3. Orville was not as concerned he would eat six cookies a meal without feeling guilty.
4. On the radio, Orville had heard that drinking green tea could help you lose weight he decided to stop drinking coffee that very day and put his coffee machine away.
5. Only he didn't really stop drinking coffee, he just stopped making it at home and went to the neighborhood café instead.

D) The following sentences are taken from actual student essays. Fix the RTS errors using an appropriate strategy; remember to think about the logical relationship between ideas when choosing a strategy.

1. The legalization of prostitution would actually help reduce crime, the prostitute wouldn't be a victim of extortion or beatings.
2. Police could stake out a street crime area instead of a brothel the effect would be safer streets and more efficient use of the police.
3. Not everybody is going to be so ambitious and work many will probably do nothing.
4. At one time people had responsibilities to their families and communities, now you only have to answer to yourself and no one else.
5. To some, divorce provides an easy out to their problems of getting along together, therefore they dissolve the marriage rather than work it out.

E) Now that you've had a chance to correct isolated sentences, try to find and fix the run-together sentences in the following paragraph.

Sleep is a subject we should all know a lot about, we spend one third of our lives sleeping. Even though everyone sleeps, scientists have only recently begun to understand what goes on when we sleep. They used to believe that the body repairs itself while asleep, there is some truth to this but the body also does this while awake. The brain does not simply shut itself off at night, it goes through a complicated series of chemical changes. Scientists have begun to chart these changes, working with complex instruments that measure brain-wave patterns. They have found that we do not move smoothly from being awake to being asleep, we pass through a cycle of four sleep stages. At each stage blood pressure and pulse rate drop, the body temperature also goes down. In the second stage the number and length of brain waves go up, while the sleeper's eyes begin to move rapidly back and forth behind their lids. Scientists call this activity rapid eye movements, or REMs, the activity that accompanies most of our dreaming. If a person is deprived of REM sleep, that person will soon become bad-tempered and irritable. A full night's sleep is not a single, unbroken state but consists of four or five of these multi-stage sleep cycles.¹

¹ Altman, Pam and Doreen Deicke, Eds. Fog City Fundamentals, 4th ed. Pearson Custom Publishing: Boston. 1998 p. 19. Sill need to correctly format citation.

F) One more time! Some of the sentences in the following paragraph are run-together; find these sentences and fix them using the most appropriate strategy.

In 1867, a chef at a hotel in Saratoga Springs accidentally dropped some thinly sliced potatoes into hot cooking oil, instantly the world found a new delicacy: the potato chip. At the time, Saratoga Springs was America's most fashionable resort, fads that started there usually found immediate success. Almost overnight, the potato chip became Saratoga's hottest item. The wide, tree-lined avenues were filled with people eating potato chips, the huge veranda of the United States Hotel was no different; it was filled with chip-eaters too. Some of the richest, most powerful people in the world consumed them regularly, for instance, the Vanderbilts could often be seen daintily plucking chips from paper cups on their stroll back to their mansion. The elegant "Saratoga chips" remained the delicacy of the wealthy until 1925, when the first chip factory was constructed in Albany, New York. The potato chip was no longer the snack of only the rich and famous, it became a common household item. Of course potato chips have changed a great deal in the last hundred years, now they come in various textures and flavors, some even stacked in paper tubes. Still, the next time you grab a handful of greasy, flavor-dusted chips, you might pause to remember the noble origins of that humble food.

Subject-Verb Agreement

Explanation

In the present tense verbs must agree with their subjects: both must be singular, or both must be plural.

I breathe the air. He **breathes** the air.
You breathe the air. She **breathes** the air.
They breathe the air. It **breathes** the air.

...connections...

For more help identifying subjects and verbs, turn to page 693, Subjects, Verbs & Clauses.

You must add an **-s** or **-es** at the end of the verb when the subject (or the entity performing the action) is a singular third person: **he**, **she**, **it**, or words for which these pronouns could substitute. This is not a problem in the past or future tenses (*skipped* and *will skip*, for instance), but becomes trickier in the present tense.

Examples

| <u>He, She, It</u> | <u>All others</u> |
|---|--|
| <u>Roberto</u> <u>eats</u> all of the oranges. | <u>They</u> <u>eat</u> everything but the rind. |
| <u>She</u> <u>wonders</u> which constellations are hidden. | <u>I</u> <u>wonder</u> if Leo has already passed. |
| <u>It</u> <u>lasts</u> for another three hours or until they score. | <u>Veronica and Kevin</u> <u>last</u> as long as they can. |

To Create the plural/singular

To make a noun plural, we usually add an **-s** or **-es**, as in the case of *jar* to *jars* or *box* to *boxes*. Some nouns, such as *deer* and **non-count nouns** like *courage* and *fear*, act differently and you must assess them in context. See *Subjects, Verbs & Clauses*.

A verb is singular, by contrast, when it is matched with a singular subject. A singular verb, then, usually has an **-s** or **-es** ending, as in the case of *talks* and *fixes*.

Finding the subject and verb

To successfully determine whether or not your subjects and verbs agree, you need to be able to locate them in your writing. The subject in a sentence is the agent that is doing whatever is done in the sentence. The verb is the action--what is actually done. Look at this example:

- The zebra runs down the street.

“The zebra” is the subject of this sentence, and “runs” is the verb.

Use Pronouns to Help

When the **pronouns** *he*, *she* or *it* are used as a subject in a sentence, the verb is always singular, and therefore will contain an **–s** or **–es** ending.

- He takes the money.
- She stacks the papers.
- It chimes hourly.

All other pronouns (I, you, we, they) require a plural verb (one without an **–s** or **–es** ending).

- They skate until March if the ice holds.
- We borrow money to pay our loans.

You can use these pronoun rules to determine whether your verb should be plural or singular. Let's look at a variety of subjects, and see which pronouns can replace them.

| Subject | Pronoun substitute | Verb |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|--------|
| John, Marion and Isaac | They... | grow. |
| The community forest | It... | grows. |
| The leading investigator | She... | |
| The Leaning Tower of Pisa | It... | |

So, if you can substitute *he*, *she* or *it* for the subject, your verb ought to be singular (with an **–s** or **–es**).

Practice Exercises

Circle the correct verb for each sentence.

Tip: write the pronoun above the subject to help you identify whether the verb should be singular or plural.

(*He*)

1. Jordan (hang / **hangs**) the picture upside down above his futon.

()

2. *Starry Night* (contain / contains) eleven stars and one swirling moon.

()

3. The hammers (pound / pounds) the nails until each corner is flush against the wall.

()

4. Van Gogh's sister (take / takes) most of the credit for his genius.

()

5. The yellows in the painting (swirl / swirls) around the blue sky rather than the other way around.

Complicated subjects

Some subjects include phrases that might confuse you into choosing the wrong verb. The verb agrees with the subject, not the noun or pronoun in the phrase.

-
- The person who loathes cats plays only with their tails.
 - One of the brothers is missing.
 - The computer building, including all of the labs, closes its doors promptly at seven.

Subjects connected by “*and*” require a plural verb. Subjects connected by “*or*” or “*nor*” require a singular.

- John and Jeff drive downtown.
- A sandwich or muffin is fine.
- Neither rain nor shine help the soccer field.

If a compound subject has both plural and singular nouns, follow the pronoun rule for the noun *closest* to the verb.

-
- One walnut or two acorns fill a squirrel for a day.

Agreement Exercise

Fill in the verb for each sentence.

| Subject | Verb | |
|------------------------------|-------------|--|
| Martin and his mother | <i>play</i> | [to play] backgammon every day after work. |
| The junior or senior | | [to march] in the Homecoming parade. |
| A plum, and not the carrots, | | [to provide] valuable nutrients to the body. |
| Martha or Dan’s children | | [to scribble] on the wall to create their art. |
| The banana’s peel | | [to stretch] across the floor to make them trip. |
| Saving of electricity | | [to take] strong initiative, but benefits all of us. |
| The group of friends | | [to call] each card aloud to win the game. |

Agreement Practice Paragraph: The Supreme Court

Underline each subject once, each verb twice, and fix any incorrect verbs. The first sentence is done for you.

The Supreme Court Justices rejoices after a particularly difficult decision. Though they usually lean on the chief justice to announce the ruling (unless he is in the minority) each celebrate in his or her own way. A reporter, speaking on the condition of anonymity, tells that in each session, the justices bickers back and forth even when they seem to agree. One or two bicker more than the others, but no one keep silent for long. All this bickering produces so much tension that when they finish a case, they all must go their separate ways until at least the following week when they repeat the whole process.

Subordinators

Explanation

Like coordinators (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so), **subordinators** (see chart below) can join **independent clauses**, aka simple sentences, and can help you:

Connections

See also the “Coordinators” and “Fragments” handouts.

- Make your writing more fluid by connecting short sentences
- Make your writing more precise by showing your reader the logical relationships between ideas.

Let’s take a look at some of the most common subordinators. As you can see from the sample sentences below, subordinators can appear either at the beginning or in the middle of a sentence.

| Logical Relationship | Subordinators | Sample Sentence |
|-----------------------------|--|--|
| Contrast/ Concession | although, while, even though, even if, whereas, though | Although the young blond heiress was often in the news, she had no talent. |
| Cause | because, since | He started to worry about finding a job because he was almost finished with his last semester of college. |
| Effect/ Result | so that, in that, in order that | She enrolled in cooking school so that she could become a pastry chef. |
| Condition | if, unless, provided that | If it is sunny this weekend, they are planning to have a barbeque. |
| Time | after, before, as soon as, since, when, while, until, as | Until my brother pays me back for last time, I am not lending him any more money. |

Subordinators & Dependent Clauses (aka Subordinate Clauses)

Joining two independent clauses with a subordinator transforms one of them—the one which begins with the subordinator—into a dependent clause. Even though this clause will still contain a subject-verb unit, it cannot stand alone as a sentence.

| Independent Clause (a complete sentence) | Dependent clause (no longer a complete sentence) |
|--|--|
| The young blond <u>heiress</u> <u>was</u> often in the news. | <i>Although</i> the young blond <u>heiress</u> <u>was</u> often in the news |
| <u>He</u> <u>was</u> almost <u>finished</u> with his last semester of college. | <i>Because</i> <u>he</u> <u>was</u> almost <u>finished</u> with his last semester of college |

Dependent clauses pretending to be sentences are actually **fragments**, a grammar error you can read more about on the “Fragments” handout.

Subordinators & Emphasis

Unlike coordinators, subordinators do not give equal emphasis to the ideas they connect; instead, the clause that begins with a subordinator—the dependent clause—receives less emphasis. Compare the following two sentences:

- Although he wanted to see the movie, Guillermo did not want to spend ten dollars.
- Although he did not want to spend ten dollars, Guillermo wanted to see the movie.

In the first sentence, the subordinator “although” de-emphasizes Guillermo’s desire to see the movie; his reluctance to spend the money seems more important. In the second sentence, however, the subordinator “although” de-emphasizes Guillermo’s reluctance to spend the money, and his desire to see the movie seems more important.

Be careful, then, when deciding where to place the subordinator—this placement can change the meaning of your sentence.

Punctuation

When a subordinator introduces a sentence, put a comma after the first clause.

- *After* she went to bed, she started to hear noises downstairs.

But if the subordinator comes in the middle of a clause, you don’t need to set it off with a comma.

- She started to hear noises downstairs *after* she went to bed.

Exercises

A) Join the following sentences using an appropriate subordinator. For the first four sets of sentences, you'll see a hint about the logical relationship you should show.

For example: Some rodents and birds prey on cockroaches.

Man is their biggest foe. [CONTRAST]

While some rodents and birds prey on cockroaches, man is their biggest foe.

1. Cockroaches are a health menace to humans.
They carry viruses and bacteria that result in diseases from hepatitis to salmonella. [CAUSE]
2. Humans try to defeat cockroaches.
Cockroaches are very successful at surviving our attacks. [CAUSE]
3. Cockroaches are smaller than the humans who chase them.
They have extremely fast responses and sensitive receptors. [CONTRAST/CONCESSION]
4. There is no food.
Cockroaches subsist on glue, paper, and soap. [TIME]
5. They can't find glue, paper or soap.
They can draw on their body stores for three months.
6. Cockroaches are really desperate.
They will turn into cannibals.
7. Female Suriname cockroaches produce generation after generation of identical females.
They are able to clone themselves.

B) Join the following sentences with subordinators, making sure the word you choose indicates the appropriate logical connection between ideas.

1. They sat down with Red Cloud to discuss the purchase of the Black Hills. Whatever calmness the government commissioners still possessed must have been shaken.
2. Red Cloud calmly proposed that \$600 million seemed like a fair price. The region was so valuable to the Native Americans and appeared even more valuable to the commissioners.
3. The Native Americans had reconsidered their price tag. They suggested that \$6 million would be a reasonable offer.
4. The commissioners were too intimidated to negotiate. They returned to Washington and angrily recommended teaching the Native Americans a lesson.
5. The government immediately ordered all Native Americans to come onto the reservation at once. The demand was both illegal and impossible to comply with.
6. Most of the Native Americans could never know about the order. They were spread out all over the Black Hills.
7. The deadline came. Only one small band of Native Americans had come in.
8. The other Native Americans were now assumed at war with the government. The Indian Bureau turned the matter over to General Philip Sheridan.
9. It was a totally unprovoked war. No Sioux or Cheyenne had ever violated a treaty or actually attacked a U.S. citizen.

Verb Tenses

Explanation

Tense refers to the form a verb takes in a sentence, whether to express the present, past or future.

...connections...

For more help identifying subjects and verbs, turn to Subjects, Verbs & Clauses.

Examples

Simple Tenses

Present: I *learn*.
Past: I *learned*.
Future: I *will learn*.

Perfect Tenses

Present perfect: I *have learned*.
Past perfect: I *had learned*.
Future perfect: I *will have learned*.

Progressive Tenses

Present progressive: I *am learning*.
Past progressive: I *was learning*.
Future progressive: I *will be learning*.
Present perfect progressive: I *have been learning*.
Past perfect progressive: I *had been learning*.
Future perfect progressive: I *will have been learning*.

Simple Tenses

Present

The present tense indicates that an action is taking place at the time you express it, or an action that occurs regularly.

- We *wear* organic cotton shirts [an action taking place when it is expressed].
- I *watch* the documentary on PBS each Sunday night [an action that occurs regularly].

Past

The past tense indicates that an action is completed and has already taken place.

- Martin Luther King, Jr. *gave* his most famous speech in 1963 [an action completed in the past].
- As a girl, she *wondered* how her college degree would help her career [an action that occurred once or many times in the past but did not extend to the present].

Future

The future tense indicates that an action will or is likely to take place.

- Later today I *will rinse* the dishes [a future action that will definitely occur].
 - The defendant probably *will plead* innocent [a future action that is likely to occur].

Perfect Tenses

Perfect tenses designate actions that were or will be completed before other actions. You can form the perfect tenses with the appropriate tense form of the helping, or auxiliary, verb *have* plus the past participle.

Present perfect

The present tense indicates that an action is taking place at the time you express it, or an action that occurs regularly.

- We *have worn* organic cotton shirts [an action that began in the past and is finished at the present].
- She *has donated* extensively to UNICEF [an action that began in the past and extends into the present].

Past perfect

The past perfect tense indicates an action occurring before a certain time in the past.

- By 1995, Doctor Harvey *had built* the first artificial brain.

Future perfect

The future perfect tense indicates that an action will be finished by a certain time.

- By Thursday, the President *will have apologized* for his mistake.

Progressive Tenses

The progressive tenses express continuing action. You can form them with the appropriate tense of the verb *be* plus the present participle.

Present progressive

The present progressive tense indicates that something is happening at the time you express it.

- The worker *is hammering*, and her foreman *is watching* lazily.

Past progressive

The past progressive tense indicates two kinds of past action.

- Poe's writing *was becoming* increasingly bizarre and dark [a continuing action in the past].
- The mob tackled Jean-Luc Goddard while he *was introducing* the film [an action occurring at the same time in the past as another action].

Future progressive

The future progressive tense indicates a continuing in the future.

- The government *will be monitoring* the phones in the lab.

Present perfect progressive

The present perfect progressive tense indicates action continuing from the past into the present and possibly into the future.

- The teacher *has been grading* since yesterday afternoon.

Past perfect progressive

The past perfect progressive tense indicates that a past action went on until another occurred.

- Before her promotion, Nico *had been working* on restoring open space on campus.

Future perfect progressive

The future perfect progressive tense indicates that an action will continue until a certain future time.

- On Tuesday I *will have been working* on this paper for six weeks.

Adapted from *The Brief Holt Handbook, Fourth Edition*, Kirsner & Mandell, 2004.

Exercise 1 – Simple Past Tense

Fill in each blank with the correct past tense form of the verb provided.

Example:

PLAY We played dodgeball all afternoon.

FRY 1. We _____ the fish we caught in the lake.

STUDY 2. All of us _____ hard for the physics exam.

CRY 3. Mary _____ on his shoulder all through the movie.

MARRY 4. She _____ him on Tuesday and played slots that night.

TRY 5. Fred _____ to get in the concert by posing as a security guard.

SHOP 6. I _____ for all of my birthday presents at the art fair.

ADMIT 7. No one _____ that he was tired.

PLAN 8. Marty and Isabel _____ their marriage simply and loosely.

TERRIFY 9. The fireworks _____ the younger children.

Exercise 2 – Simple Past Tense

In each of the following sentences, underline any verbs that should have –ed or –d endings and supply the missing letters. Watch for time expressions (last week, yesterday, years ago) that indicate past time.

incorrect: The committee vote to adjourn yesterday.

correct: The committee voted to adjourn yesterday.

1. The driver ask for the exact fare last week.
2. Oliver use to live in Berkeley when he was a college student.
3. Katerina studied all the time and so she graduate from college last year.
4. College students are suppose to attend every class meeting.
5. Last Sunday, Laura listen to the drummers in the park.
6. Until I started school, I work twenty hours per week and study the rest of the time.
7. Finally Gayle's cat return home.
8. Several years ago I witness a crime and identify the criminal.

Exercise 3 – Perfect Tenses

Use the perfect tense to fill in the blank using the same time period (past, present, future) as the sample.

Example: Joan licks the popsicle. (present tense)

Joan has licked the popsicle. (present perfect tense)

(Remember: Perfect tenses for the verb *to run* are:

Present: she *has run*

Past: she *had run*

Future: she *will have run*)

1. Eric took piano lessons.

Eric _____ piano lessons since he was ten years old.

2. Tara raises as many children as she can.

Tara _____ as many children as she can.

3. Bill, on the other hand, will join the Coast Guard.

Bill, on the other hand, _____ the Coast Guard.

4. Alyssa gives a drawing to each of her friends.

Alyssa _____ a drawing to each of her friends.

5. Chickens pecked at bugs and fruit in the garden.

Chickens _____ at bugs and fruit in the garden.

6. Each egg will travel a thousand miles before it lands on her lap.

Each egg _____ a thousand miles before it lands on her lap.

7. The wings had plenty of room to spread.

The wings _____ plenty of room to spread.

8. Madison collects the hay in the morning after breakfast.

Madison _____ the hay in the morning after breakfast.

Exercise 4 – Progressive Tenses

In the following sentences, change the simple tense verbs to progressive tense verbs using the same time period (present, past, future). Avoid the perfect tense for this exercise.

Example: Martians land on the planet Earth. (present)

Martians are landing on the planet Earth. (present progressive)

(Remember: Progresssive tenses for the verb *to run* are:

Present: she *is running*

Past: she *was running*

Future: she *will be running*)

1. Ferdinand scoffed when his friends all left for college.

Ferdinand _____ when his friends all left for college.

2. He enjoys his flowers, vegetables and herbs.

He _____ his flowers, vegetables and herbs.

3. The pumpkins ripened too long last year.

The pumpkins _____ too long last year.

4. His friends will call at the next holiday or break.

His friends _____ at the next holiday or break.

5. Ferdinand answers the phone saying “What?”

Ferdinand _____ the phone saying “What?”

6. He screened his calls last week to avoid bill collectors.

He _____ his calls last week to avoid bill collectors.

7. His money goes under his mattress until he needs it.

His money _____ under his mattress until he needs it.

8. He will go fishing next week if he gets his license.

He _____ next week if he gets his license.