Because You Have Something to Say:
A Writing Guide

for

English 101 Rhetoric and Writing I

Lewis-Clark State College

Because You Have Something to Say:
A Writing Guide
LCSC English 101 Rhetoric & Writing I

1st Edition

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Lewis-Clark State College

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Acknowledgments

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Credits

This textbook is a collection of materials from the following sources that are under the Creative Commons license and curated by the editors for LCSC's First-Year Writing Program.

Commonsense Composition

Council of Writing Program Administrators

EmpoWord: A Student-Centered Anthology & Handbook for College Writers

"The Professional Writer's Many Personae: Creative nonfiction, Popular Writing,
	Speechwriting, and Personal Narrative"

Storytelling and the Information Strategy in Information Strategies for Communicators

Teaching Autoethnography: Personal Writing in the Classroom

Writing Commons

Writing for Strategic Communication Industries

Writing for Success

Writing Spaces: Readings on Writing, Volumes 1 & 2

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Introduction to English 101 Rhetoric & Writing I

Overview

English 101 is designed to introduce students to college-level writing. It is a writing-intensive course. Students are required to use critical thinking skills to study writing as a process, including pre-writing or inventing, drafting, collaborating, revising, and editing.

LCSC Course Catalog & Outcomes

English 101 Rhetoric & Writing I (3 credits)
The fundamental skills of reading and writing the essay. Specific attention to personal, descriptive, expository, and persuasive writing. By the end of the semester, you will be expected to:

- Understand writing as a process, including prewriting, revision, and editing.
- Read and respond thoughtfully and analytically.
- Control a main idea in your writing, both in formal papers and timed essays.
- Develop and organize support for a main idea.
- Develop a logical argument.
- Identify and write to a variety of audiences.
- Write clearly, concisely and vigorously.
- Use correct spelling, punctuation, and grammar.
- Use basic word-processing skills to produce and revise an essay.

Pre-requisite: Satisfactory completion of ENGL-090 or ENGL-093, or appropriate placement.

Idaho General Education Learning Outcomes (GELOs)

- Use flexible writing process strategies to generate, develop, revise, edit, and proofread texts.
- Adopt strategies and genre appropriate to the rhetorical situation.
  Use inquiry-based strategies to conduct research that explores multiple and diverse ideas and perspectives, appropriate to the rhetorical context.
- Use rhetorically appropriate strategies to evaluate, represent, and respond to the ideas and research of others.
- Address readers' biases and assumptions with well-developed evidence-based reasoning.
- Use appropriate conventions for integrating, citing, and documenting source materials as well as for surface-level language and style.

Writing Program Administrators Outcomes Statement for First-Year Composition

(v3.0) http://wpacouncil.org/positions/outcomes.html
(adopted 17 July 2014)

Introduction

This Statement identifies outcomes for first-year composition programs in U.S. postsecondary education. It describes the writing knowledge, practices, and attitudes that undergraduate students develop in first-year composition, which at most schools is a required general education course or sequence of courses. This Statement therefore attempts to both represent and regularize writing programs' priorities for first-year composition, which often takes the form of one or more required general education courses. To this end it is not merely a compilation or summary of what currently takes place. Rather, this Statement articulates what composition teachers nationwide have learned from practice, research, and theory.[1] It intentionally defines only "outcomes," or types of results, and not "standards," or precise levels of achievement. The setting of standards to measure students' achievement of these Outcomes has deliberately been left to local writing programs and their institutions.

In this Statement "composing" refers broadly to complex writing processes that are increasingly reliant on the use of digital technologies. Writers also attend to elements of design, incorporating images and graphical elements into texts intended for screens as well as printed pages. Writers' composing activities have always been shaped by the technologies available to them, and digital technologies are changing writers' relationships to their texts and audiences in evolving ways.

These outcomes are supported by a large body of research demonstrating that the process of learning to write in any medium is complex: it is both individual and social and demands continued practice and informed guidance. Programmatic decisions about helping students demonstrate these outcomes should be informed by an understanding of this research.

As students move beyond first-year composition, their writing abilities do not merely improve. Rather, abilities will diversify along disciplinary, professional, and civic lines as these writers move into new settings where expected outcomes expand, multiply, and diverge. Therefore, this document advises faculty in all disciplines about how to help students build on what they learn in introductory writing courses.

Rhetorical Knowledge

Rhetorical knowledge is the ability to analyze contexts and audiences and then to act on that analysis in comprehending and creating texts. Rhetorical knowledge is the basis of composing. Writers develop rhetorical knowledge by negotiating purpose, audience, context, and conventions as they compose a variety of texts for different situations.

By the end of first-year composition, students should
- Learn and use key rhetorical concepts through analyzing and composing a variety of texts
- Gain experience reading and composing in several genres to understand how genre conventions shape and are shaped by readers' and writers' practices and purposes
- Develop facility in responding to a variety of situations and contexts calling for purposeful shifts in voice, tone, level of formality, design, medium, and/or structure
- Understand and use a variety of technologies to address a range of audiences
- Match the capacities of different environments (e.g., print and electronic) to varying rhetorical situations

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn
- The expectations of readers in their fields
- The main features of genres in their fields
- The main purposes of composing in their fields

Critical Thinking, Reading, and Composing

Critical thinking is the ability to analyze, synthesize, interpret, and evaluate ideas, information, situations, and texts. When writers think critically about the materials they use--whether print texts, photographs, data sets, videos, or other materials--they separate assertion from evidence, evaluate sources and evidence, recognize and evaluate underlying assumptions, read across texts for connections and patterns, identify and evaluate chains of reasoning, and compose appropriately qualified and developed claims and generalizations. These practices are foundational for advanced academic writing.

By the end of first-year composition, students should
- Use composing and reading for inquiry, learning, critical thinking, and communicating in various rhetorical contexts
- Read a diverse range of texts, attending especially to relationships between assertion and evidence, to patterns of organization, to the interplay between verbal and nonverbal elements, and to how these features function for different audiences and situations
- Locate and evaluate (for credibility, sufficiency, accuracy, timeliness, bias and so on) primary and secondary research materials, including journal articles and essays, books, scholarly and professionally established and maintained databases or archives, and informal electronic networks and internet sources
- Use strategies--such as interpretation, synthesis, response, critique, and design/redesign--to compose texts that integrate the writer's ideas with those from appropriate sources

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn
- The kinds of critical thinking important in their disciplines
- The kinds of questions, problems, and evidence that define their disciplines
- Strategies for reading a range of texts in their fields

Processes

Writers use multiple strategies, *composing processes*, to conceptualize, develop, and finalize projects. Composing processes are seldom linear: a writer may research a topic before drafting, then conduct additional research while revising or after consulting a colleague. Composing processes are also flexible: successful writers can adapt their composing processes to different contexts and occasions.

By the end of first-year composition, students should
- Develop a writing project through multiple drafts
- Develop flexible strategies for reading, drafting, reviewing, collaborating, revising, rewriting, rereading, and editing
- Use composing processes and tools as a means to discover and reconsider ideas
- Experience the collaborative and social aspects of writing processes
- Learn to give and to act on productive feedback to works in progress
- Adapt composing processes for a variety of technologies and modalities
- Reflect on the development of composing practices and how those practices influence their work

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn
- To employ the methods and technologies commonly used for research and communication within their fields
- To develop projects using the characteristic processes of their fields
- To review work-in-progress for the purpose of developing ideas before surface-level editing
- To participate effectively in collaborative processes typical of their field

Knowledge of Conventions

Conventions are the formal rules and informal guidelines that define genres, and in so doing, shape readers' and writers' perceptions of correctness or appropriateness. Most obviously, conventions govern such things as mechanics, usage, spelling, and citation practices. But they also influence content, style, organization, graphics, and document design.

Conventions arise from a history of use and facilitate reading by invoking common expectations between writers and readers. These expectations are not universal; they vary by genre (conventions for lab notebooks and discussion-board exchanges differ), by discipline

(conventional moves in literature reviews in Psychology differ from those in English), and by occasion (meeting minutes and executive summaries use different registers). A writer's grasp of conventions in one context does not mean a firm grasp in another. Successful writers understand, analyze, and negotiate conventions for purpose, audience, and genre, understanding that genres evolve in response to changes in material conditions and composing technologies and attending carefully to emergent conventions.

By the end of first-year composition, students should
- Develop knowledge of linguistic structures, including grammar, punctuation, and spelling, through practice in composing and revising
- Understand why genre conventions for structure, paragraphing, tone, and mechanics vary
- Gain experience negotiating variations in genre conventions
- Learn common formats and/or design features for different kinds of texts
- Explore the concepts of intellectual property (such as fair use and copyright) that motivate documentation conventions
- Practice applying citation conventions systematically in their own work

Faculty in all programs and departments can build on this preparation by helping students learn
- The reasons behind conventions of usage, specialized vocabulary, format, and citation systems in their fields or disciplines
- Strategies for controlling conventions in their fields or disciplines
- Factors that influence the ways work is designed, documented, and disseminated in their fields
- Ways to make informed decisions about intellectual property issues connected to common genres and modalities in their fields.

[1] This Statement is aligned with the *Framework for Success in Postsecondary Writing*, an articulation of the skills and habits of mind essential for success in college and is intended to help establish a continuum of valued practice from high school through to the college major.

LCSC First-Year Writing Policies

Syllabus

You will receive a syllabus during the first week of class. The syllabus is typically handed out in class and posted on Blackboard. The syllabus outlines the policies for attendance, grading, and general expectations of the course. You will also find information about your instructor including their name, location of their office, office hours and how to contact them.

A note about office hours: These are dedicated times your instructor is available to meet with students. Take advantage of these times to talk with your instructor about any questions you may have about completing an assignment or your grade in the course.

Attendance

While attendance policies are set by each individual instructor, it is expected that you will attend class regularly, participate in class activities and discussions, be on time, and engage with the material and topics of discussion. You will receive feedback on your writing on a regular basis and have opportunities to ask specific questions about your assignments. Anecdotal evidence shows that students who attend class show greater improvement in their writing and in general do better in the course.

If you will miss class due to LCSC activities, such as athletics, class field trip, or club related events, you must fill out the *College-Related Student Travel Form*, have it signed by your instructor / coach / advisor and submit it to your instructor at least a week before the schedule absence.

Military and Firefighter Policy: If you serve in the military or are a firefighter, there are special policies regarding absences, as well as withdrawing from classes due to service. Details can be found in the LCSC Policy & Procedures Policy 5.302

How to withdraw / drop a course:
If you feel that you are unable to successfully complete the course, you may consider withdrawing from the class. Before dropping, you will want to consult with your academic advisor, as well as financial aid to discuss any repercussions. The final date to withdraw / drop from a class is posted on the LCSC Academic Calendar. Details and drop forms about the process can be found on the LCSC Registrar's website.

Textbooks/Readings

For your English 101 class, this guide, *Because You Have Something to Say*, will comprise your textbook. A digital copy is available on Blackboard. If you wish to use a printed copy, copies are on reserve at the LCSC Library and LCSC Writing Center. Also, students may download a PDF of this textbook to print. Students may print portions of it on their own or take it to the LCSC Graphic Communications office to be printed and bound into a text.

Other readings may be added to supplement this textbook. They will be handed out in class and/or posted on Blackboard as a PDF.

Assignments

English 101 courses will complete writing assignments in the following genres: personal narrative, expository, analysis, and argument. The specific assignments may vary from instructor to instructor but will cover the same goals. You can expect to do a variety writing assignments to help you develop your skills for each genre. Writing is based on a process, so it is expected that you will complete the various assignments with the goal of improving your writing within each genre.

Plagiarism & Academic Dishonesty

From the LCSC Student Handbook 2018-2019

Cheating or plagiarism in any form is unacceptable. The College functions to promote the cognitive and psychosocial development of all students. Therefore, all work submitted by a student must represent one's own ideas, concepts and current understanding. Academic Dishonesty includes:

- Cheating—intentionally using or attempting to use unauthorized materials, information, or study aids in any academic exercise. The term "academic exercise" includes all forms of work submitted for credit hours.
- Fabrication—intentional and/or unauthorized falsification or invention of any information or the source of any information in an academic exercise.
- Collusion Facilitating Academic Dishonesty—intentionally or knowingly helping or attempting to help another to commit an act of Academic Dishonesty.
- Plagiarism—the deliberate adoption or reproduction of ideas or words or statement of another person as one's own without acknowledgment.

The sanctions imposed for a violation of this section of the Code are independent of, and in addition to, any adverse academic evaluation which results from the student's conduct. The course instructor is responsible for academic evaluation of a student's work and shall make that evaluation without regard to any disciplinary action which may or may not be taken against a student under the Student Code of Conduct.

When it comes to writing, purchasing and/or downloading a paper off the internet or from another student, letting your parents, roommates, siblings, friends, or strangers write the paper for you or write significant portions of your assignment(s) all count as part of cheating and fabrication. It is expected that all of the writing you turn in to your professors is written by you. It is one thing to receive feedback on your draft during peer-review or the writing center, with suggestions on how to improve a sentence or ideas on how to improve your paper, but quite another when you have someone write large sections of a draft for you.

Avoiding Plagiarism in Writing

Plagiarism in writing—Any information that does not come from common knowledge or personal experience and that is accessed via an external medium (personal interview, internet source, books, newspapers, etc.) must be cited. When in doubt, cite the source. A practice that should become routine in your writing is to cite the source in two ways: with an in-text citation and on a Works Cited/Reference page.

Two important reminders:

1) plagiarism can occur in formal writing assignments as well as informal writing and
2) writing submitted through Blackboard may be run through a plagiarism checker.

Other resources on avoiding plagiarism

- Understanding and Avoiding Plagiarism | WAC Clearinghouse
- Is It Plagiarism Yet? | Purdue OWL
- Safe Practices | Purdue OWL
- Defining and Avoiding Plagiarism: The WPA Statement on Best Practices

Copyright and Fair Use

From [Library of Congress: Copyright and Primary Sources](#)

Copyright

What is copyright?
Copyright refers to the author's (creators of all sorts such as writers, photographers, artists, film producers, composers, and programmers) exclusive right to reproduce, prepare derivative works, distribute copies, and publicly perform and display their works. These rights may be transferred or assigned in whole or in part in writing by the author. Unless otherwise agreed in writing, work created by an employee is usually owned by the employer. The U.S. Copyright Act gets its authority from Article 1, Section 8, cl. 8 of the U.S. Constitution.

If there is no copyright notice, does that mean there is no copyright?

The absence of a copyright notice does not mean that there is no copyright. Copyright protection exists automatically from the moment of creation in a tangible fixed form, which is generally considered to include electronic form. A notice is not required to protect copyright.

Fair Use

What is "fair use"?
Fair use is an exception to the exclusive protection of copyright under American law. It permits certain limited uses without permission from the author or owner. Depending on the circumstances, copying may be considered "fair" for purposes such as criticism, comment, news reporting, teaching (including multiple copies for classroom use), scholarship or research.

To determine whether a specific use under one of these categories is "fair," courts are required to consider the following factors:
- the purpose and character of the use, including whether such use is of a commercial nature or is for nonprofit educational purposes;
- the nature of the copyrighted work;
- the amount and substantiality of the portion used in relation to the copyrighted work as a whole (is it long or short in length, that is, are you copying the entire work, as you might with an image, or just part as you might with a long novel); and
- the effect of the use upon the potential market for or value of the copyrighted work.

Public Domain (from the Copyright Office FAQ)

A work of authorship is in the "public domain" if it is no longer under copyright protection or if it failed to meet the requirements for copyright protection. Works in the public domain may be used freely without the permission of the former copyright owner. Even if something is in the public domain, it must be cited within other texts.

Resources for Successful Students

Student Success

There are many resources online and on campus to help you be a successful student. Balancing home, work, and school takes motivation and dedication.

You will want to take the *Performance Prognosis Inventory for English 101*. This will give you a good idea of the expectations your professors will have and is a good indicator if your current behaviors will help you succeed in class.

It is recommended that you have a schedule. You do not need anything fancy. A simple notebook can work as a calendar and schedule keeper if you check it regularly. Here are resources that can be very helpful:

Semester on a Page - Use the LCSC Academic Calendar to fill out the important holidays and deadlines. Use your syllabi from all of your classes to note when important assignments are due. Make sure to fill in important dates from your personal calendar. This will help you see your semester as a whole, see conflicting deadlines and important assignments and events so you know when to plan ahead.

Weekly Planner – Use the weekly planner to organize your week. Schedule everything from when you are eating and doing laundry to entering your work schedule, study schedule and of course, when to have fun. So if you can't miss your favorite weekly tv show or gaming night, make sure to schedule that in, too!

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
6:00	Gym	Gym	Gym	Gym	Gym	Gym	Gym
7:00	English @ 7:30	Breakfast	English @ 7:30	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
8:00				Work	Work		
9:00	Snack	Homework	Snack	Homework			
10:00	Math @ 10:30		Math @ 10:30				Visit family
11:00							
12:00	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch		
1:00	Homework	Work	Homework	Work	Bio lab		
2:00							
3:00							
4:00		Break		Break			
5:00	Dinner	History	Dinner	Biology	Going out	Dinner	Homework
6:00						Laundry	
7:00							
8:00	TV time		Gaming night				
9:00							
10:00	Sleep	Sleep		Sleep		Sleep	Sleep
11:00			Sleep				

Semester on a Page

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY

Weekly Schedule

	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday	Sunday
5:00							
6:00							
7:00							
8:00							
9:00							
10:00							
11:00							
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4:00							
5:00							
6:00							
7:00							
8:00							
9:00							
10:00							
11:00							

Performance Prognosis Inventory for English 101

Based on the original by Dr. Saundra Y. McGuire,

The inventory below lists behaviors that you should exhibit in order to excel in English 101. Write true or false beside each of the following statements describing the way you will work in this class. The scoring scale is on the next page.

1. I will always read the assigned material before I go to class.
2. I will go over my class notes as soon as possible after class and note questions I might have.
3. I will learn the relevant concepts about writing so that I have the background necessary to understand the writing assignments.
4. I will read and write daily to stay on track to finish needed assignments.
5. I will go to my instructor's office hours and the LCSC Writing Center regularly to discuss my struggles with writing and to clarify any questions I have on assignments.
6. I will reflect, reread, and revise my previous written work to improve it.
7. I am willing to read my work aloud to find errors.
8. I will actively participate in peer-review where we will provide feedback to each other on our writing, as well as learn how to improve my own writing.
9. I will review grammar and punctuation rules when they are a problem in my writing.
10. I will write multiple drafts of an essay to improve it.
11. I will actively participate in small group and class discussions.
12. I will be on-time, stay for the whole class, and attend more than 90% of the time.
13. I know that I can earn an A in this class through hard work , and will put forth the effort to do so.

The predicted grade for your performance this semester is provided on the next page.

Performance Prognosis Inventory
Number of True Responses = Predicted Grade
10–13 = A
6–9 = B
4–5 = C
2–3 = D
less than 2 = F

Know that you can change your predicted grade at any point by changing your behavior so that more of the statements are true.

Below are additional resources to help you become a successful student.

Articles and Books for Student Success

These resources are to help you be more successful. More than simply a list of behaviors, such as the *Inventory* above, they explain and provide a deeper understanding of what it takes to not only be successful in English 101, but to be a successful student in all of your classes.

Writing Success
"What Does the Professor Want? Understanding the Assignment" by Amy Guptill, from *Writing in College: From Competence to Excellence*

The book, *The Word on College Reading and Writing* by Carol Burnell, Jaime Wood, Monique Babin, Susan Pesznecker, and Nicole Rosevear has excellent resources on "Dealing with Obstacles and Developing Good Habits" in order to be a better writing student:

- "Overcoming Writing Anxiety and Writer's Block"
- "Good Writing Habits"
- "Procrastination"

General Student Success
Foundations of Academic Success: Words of Wisdom by Thomas C. Priester, SUNY Genesee Community College, Batavia, 2015

A Different Road To College: A Guide For Transitioning Non-Traditional Students by Alise Lamoreaux, Lane Community College, 2016

LCSC Writing Center

Like the U. S. Post Office's Christmas campaign— "Mail early. Mail often."—the LCSC Writing Center invites students to "Visit early. Visit often." You are invited to work with the writing consultants, students trained to help their peers understand assignments, generate ideas, express those ideas clearly, and learn the finer points of organization, punctuation, and documentation.

Visit early to get help understanding assignments, brainstorming ideas, or sharing a first draft with a consultant who can offer suggestions for organization and revision.

Visit often to develop
- an acquaintance with the writing process, which requires an understanding of purpose and audience, the generation of multiple drafts, and a willingness to re-see your work and find clearer ways to express your ideas.
- an understanding of the styles of writing and documentation required by various disciplines.
- general writing skills and greater confidence in using writing to explore and express ideas.

The LCSC Writing Center is not an editing service nor can they suggest a grade for an assignment. While the writing tutors can provide feedback on your project, you are responsible for making sure that the assignment fulfills all of the requirements required for a grade.

Additional information:
- The LCSC Writing Center is located in the LCSC Library, Room 172.
- It is open the second week of the semester through the fifteenth week. It is not open during holiday breaks including Thanksgiving, spring, or summer break.
- The weekly schedule is Monday - Thursday 9 am-5 pm and Friday 9 am - noon. Additional hours are available prior to midterms and finals week.
- For more information please visit their website.

LCSC Library

The LCSC Library offers resources to help you with your writing and research. You can check out laptops, projectors, books, ebooks, movies, music, and study guides.

They have group study tables, as well as six study rooms that are available for study groups. Two of these rooms have a monitor to hook up to your laptops to help review presentations or work on collaborative writing.

On the first floor is a computer lab in the library with desktop computers, printing stations, and scanners. You can also find the LCSC Writing Center here. The second floor is designated a Quiet Zone for individual, quiet study. Comfortable reading chairs are situated throughout the library. Also, the majority of the book resources are on the second floor.

If you are conducting research, you can schedule a one-on-one research appointment with one of the librarians. They can help you find books and search over 100 academic databases with academic and news articles, as well as streaming videos. The Interlibrary Loan Service (ILL) can request materials not available at the LCSC Library. There is a 24/7 Ask a Librarian service where a librarian from LCSC or from another institution can help you find resources.

For fun, you can play one of the board or card games available, select a book from the Pleasure Reading area, use the yoga ball instead of a desk chair, charge your digital device, get a coffee from the Starbucks coffee machine, or check out a popular movie from the New Media collection. Check out events such as board game night. Rumor has it that ASLCSC provides *free* snacks.

The library posts hours of operation on their website.

Technology Use @ LCSC

Two departments on campus provide technology services and support to students, Information Technology and e-Learning Services.

Information Technology (IT) department provides services including LCMail, WarriorWeb and assistance connecting to the secured WarriorStudent WiFi network. They have detailed

information on their website on how to use these services and well as troubleshoot any problems.

e-Learning Services (eLS) department at LCSC facilitates a variety of technology-enhanced instruction, through Blackboard. Their website has Information including: the e-Learning Student Handbook, links to Blackboard Support, computer system and web browser recommendations, tutorials on how to use Blackboard, and information on test proctoring for online students. Additionally, there are links for Student Success Tools, including information on how to use Google Drive and others.

It is recommended that you use Google Chrome or Mozilla Firefox to access Blackboard.

Additional computer services available on campus:

Computer Labs

The LCSC campus has two open computer labs available for student use; they are located in the Library and the Student Union Building Room 202. Details are available on this [website](#).

Computer Printing

There are both in-lab and mobile printing service on campus. Each student has five dollars on the WarriorOne card to use for printing at designated computer labs. The credits are added to your card automatically each fall and spring semester, but not in the summer. Unused print credits do not roll over to the next semester. Details about how to use mobile printing can be found on the Student Printing [website](#).

Loaner Laptops

Laptops are available for check out in the SUB and in the LCSC Library. Visit the check-out desk for details.

How to Log on to Blackboard

The direct link to login to Blackboard is: https://lcsc.blackboard.com. LCSC Blackboard is accessible from the [LCSC homepage](#). Go to "Quicklinks" on the upper left to find the link.

Blackboard Login Information
- Username: Your Warrior Web ID, which is the first part of you LCMail (usually first initial, middle initial, full last name; Example: bbwarrior)
- Password: Your eight-digit birth date in MMDDYYYY format (Example: January 31, 1985 = 01311985).

After accessing Blackboard for the first time, you should change your password to something more unique and secure.

If you are struggling to use Blackboard, contact the [24/7 Blackboard Support](#) website. You can submit a request for help online, by phone, or use their live chat feature.

Google Docs & Drive

Google office products are a free and easy way to complete assignments. Using your LCmail log-in information, you can access all of their products including Google Drive, Docs, Slides and Hangout.

Google Drive is an important service to use throughout your academic career. This is a free cloud storage service where you can back up all of the documents you need for class. For your English class, this drive can be helpful for keeping track of rough drafts, storing your final drafts as well as your research and readings for the class. Check out Getting Started with Google Drive for details. The drive and your files are accessible from any computer, tablet or phone with the appropriate apps.

Google Docs is a word processor, which is a free and easy way to write and automatically back-up your work. There are detailed instructions from Google Help Center on How to Use Google Docs, as well as how to access and start a Google Doc from a computer, Android, and an iPhone/iPad devices. From that page you can find information on how to format documents for your writing class.

If you use Google Docs and need to upload your document to Blackboard, you must export it to an Microsoft Word or PDF document in order for it to be read in Blackboard and for your instructor to be able to read your submission.

In Google Docs you
- select the *File* menu,
- select *Download as* and
- select either the *Microsoft Word (.docx)* or *PDF document (.pdf)*.

Take a look at the image below to see the menu.

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mauris vitae ultricies. Enim sit amet venenatis urna cursus eget nunc sc

Fringilla urna porttitor rhoncus dolor purus non enim praesent element

Posuere urna nec tincidunt praesent semper feugiat nibh. Scelerisque in

non consectetur a erat. Est ultricies integer quis auctor elit sed. Ullamco

Sending Emails

From Email Guidelines for Students by Lee Ann Hodges in Writing Commons. 29 Sept 2017

You are often required to use email to communicate with instructors, staff, advisors, and peers. As your studies advance, you may also use email to contact professionals in your field for service-learning or job opportunities. College is the beginning of your professional life, and email messages can reflect positively or negatively on your professional image.

Email Accounts

LCSC provides you with an email account—use it! Here's why:

- Using your LCSC-provided email address identifies you to the sender so that your email is less likely to be deleted out of hand or quarantined by a spam filter.
- You can keep college and personal email separate, which will help you stay organized.
- You don't have to be as concerned with the impression that a cutesy or risqué personal email address may create. (Think "hotmess@gmail.com" or "drinkingbuddy@yahoo.com")
- All of your official LCSC emails will go to your account. It is the only way you can conduct official business via email is through your account.

Components of an email

The Subject Line

Think of a subject line as the title for the email; it lets the reader know what to expect from the message. The subject line is crucial, yet many students skip it. Invest an extra minute in a specific subject line, and it may make the difference between being ignored and answered quickly.

Most professionals receive numerous email messages each day, yet they may have little time to respond. Many people prioritize answering emails on the basis of the subject line. A blank subject line is not useful to the reader; furthermore, if the email address is unfamiliar, the message may get mistaken for a virus or SPAM message and deleted.

Make subject lines as specific as possible. General subject lines such as "Question" or "Hello" aren't helpful in conveying the content of your message to the reader. Here are a few examples of ineffective and effective subject lines:

Ineffective Subject Lines	Effective Subject Lines
Question	Question About POL 120 Research Paper
Request	Recommendation Letter Request
Project	BIO 275 Group Project Submission
Meet	Study Group Meeting Times
Job	Assistant Network Administrator Inquiry
Plan	Marketing Plan Recommendations

Notice that the effective subject lines above use title case, in which the principal words are capitalized. However, sentence case can be effective for subject lines expressed as complete sentences. Examples: "Are you available Wednesday?" or "Thank you for your time."

Salutation

The salutation is the greeting, such as "Dear Dr. Marks" or "Good afternoon, Ms. Cho." Salutations can range from informal (Hi, Dr. Stein!) to formal (Dear Professor Williams:); when choosing a salutation, students should consider their audience, how well they know their readers, and the writing situation.

- Double-check the spelling of the recipient's name and his or her honorific (Dr. / Professor etc.).
- Do not guess if you are uncertain of a person's honorific or gender; incorrect assumptions of gender or educational level can be awkward for (or even offensive to) the recipient. Using a position title is an excellent solution. Examples:
  - Dear Director Kelly:
  - Dear Professor Glover:
- Do not use first name only with an individual in a position of authority unless invited to do so or if the recipient has signed a previous email to you with only his or her first name.
- If you are unsure:
  - When you aren't sure who will read the email; sometimes email addresses are set up for an entire department or for general information requests. If so, you can start with "Hello"
  - When the email is sent to a group. (However, it's also fine to add an inclusive salutation, such as, "Dear colleagues" or "Hello, all.")

You can avoid a salutation when the email is very brief and straightforward, such as in the case of a reply to a previous message.

The Message

All but the briefest and most straightforward of messages should use the three-part structure of introduction, body, and conclusion. Emails are usually short, so keep each of these three parts brief; it is common, for example, to have one-sentence introductions and conclusions.

> Introduction: State the purpose of the message.
> Body: Supply the necessary details.
> Conclusion: Close with a courteous statement or action information, such as deadlines and contact information.

Sample E-mail Message

SUBJECT: Internship Recommendation Request

Specific subject line gives reader a good idea of what the message is about.

Dear Dr. Boyer,

A more formal salutation is appropriate for a request like this.

I was in your ENG 309 Technical Editing class last fall and learned many techniques that could be used in an internship for which I've applied. Would you be willing to recommend me for the position?

Introduction reminds the reader of who the writer is and states the purpose of the email.

The internship is at Spectrum Publishing, which produces print and web-based textbooks for high school science courses. As you may recall, although my major is in English, I chose a minor in biology in hopes of obtaining a job in a science-related publishing field.

The recommendation is a simple web-based form that can be completed at http://spectrumpublishing.com/internrecommentation. The deadline is April 15.

These paragraphs provide all necessary information for completing the recommendation, making it easy for the professor to agree.

I hope you'll be willing to recommend me. The internship is a perfect fit for my interests and goals, and a vote of confidence from a professor with in-depth experience in this field would carry much weight. I look forward to hearing from you!

Courteous closing emphasizes how important the recommendation is without sounding pushy.

Thank you,

Cynthia Voight

Replying to Messages

When replying to an email message, you have a few options:

- Replying to all recipients or just to the sender
- Replying with or without the original message

"Reply to all" should only be used when everyone who received the message needs to see your reply; this feature will send your response to everyone listed in the "TO" and "CC" lines. Carefully consider whether the entire group needs your response before using "reply to all"; unnecessary use of this feature is annoying to your readers.

The "reply with message" feature is useful for supplying automatic context for a response. One caution, however: make certain that you type the response at the top of the message, not at the end, where your reader must scroll down to locate it.

Do not use the reply feature to start a new conversation on a different topic; create a new email message with a fresh subject line.

Email Content, Organization, and Formatting Tips

Provide all details the reader may need.

Supply proper identification if the recipient does not know you or may not remember you. For example, list your course and section when corresponding with a professor. Unless an instructor has an unusually small number of students or an exceptionally good memory, he or she is not likely to remember which class you're in, especially early in the semester. If inquiring about a service-learning opportunity, mention your college and how you learned of the position.

Avoid stream-of-consciousness messages. In other words, don't just write words as they come to you; read it from the recipient's perspective and edit accordingly before you click "send."

Watch your tone and be respectful, especially if you're frustrated when you send the email.
- o Poor Tone: "I tried to access the link to the Opposing Viewpoints database you recommended, but it won't go through! How am I supposed to complete this assignment?!"
- o Diplomatic Tone: "I tried to access the link to the Opposing Viewpoints database, but I got a message that the server was unavailable. Is there a different database with similar information that I could use?"

- o Unprofessional Tone: "Sorry for submitting the components of internship application separately. The requirements were really hard to find on your website, and I just now realized that I hadn't submitted one of them."
- o Professional Tone: "Attached is the personal statement required for the internship application. I sent the personal information form and recommendations on May 4, so this submission should complete my file."

Use proper paragraphing. Many writers make the mistake of lumping all the content of an email message into one long paragraph. Short paragraphs lend themselves well to skimming, a practice that most email readers use.

Add a space between paragraphs to provide a visual clue as to where a new paragraph starts.

Use standard English. Text language is unacceptable.

Run a spell-check. In fact, consider writing important or lengthy messages in a word processing program, which generally has better spelling and grammar checkers than email programs.

When you're satisfied with the draft, you can copy and paste it to the email program.

Make sure that any attachments you intend to send are truly attached. Also, refer to the attachment in the message itself to alert the reader to its presence.

Email is an excellent academic and professional tool that students can use to your benefit. Extra time spent crafting effective email messages is an investment in a practical and valuable communication skill.

Writing Project One:
Process of Writing a Personal Narrative

Overview

A personal narrative is a true story about some aspect of a writer's life. Just as each of your individual life experiences are diverse, the parameters of personal narratives are also varied; they can concentrate on an event, an incident, a person, an idea, and so on. No matter what type of personal narrative you are asked to write for your class, each is bound to one central rule, as nonfiction writer Lee Gutkind explains, "This is the pledge the writer makes to the reader – the maxim we live by, the anchor of creative nonfiction: 'You can't make this stuff up!'"

The following is excerpted from Shane Abrams's book, *EmpoWord: A Student-Centered Anthology and Handbook for College Writers*, which addresses three primary components of a personal narrative: vivid detail, well-told story, and reflection. The reading offers valuable exercises on each narrative element as well as samples of student work. Following the excerpt, you will find additional suggested readings and videos to help you in writing your own personal narratives.

Introduction: Description, Narration, and Reflection

Storytelling is one of few rituals that permeates all cultures. Indeed, there's nothing quite as satisfying as a well-told story. But what exactly makes for a well-told story?

Of course, the answer to that question depends on your **rhetorical situation**: your audience, your sociohistorical position, and your purpose will determine *how* you tell your story. Perhaps your story is best told in traditional writing; maybe it is a story best told orally, among friends or family; it could even be a story that uses images or technology. By creating your own story in this unit, you will be negotiating a distinct rhetorical situation. As you learn techniques and concepts for effective storytelling, so too will you practice asking the critical questions of any rhetorical situation.

The following unit explores three useful rhetorical tools—**description**, **narration**, and **reflection**—that often contribute to effective storytelling. Each section will provide techniques and activities to help you decide which stories you can tell and the ways in which you can tell them. The assignment at the end of this section, a descriptive personal narrative essay, encourages you to synthesize all three rhetorical tools to share one of your stories in writing.

Introduction Vocabulary

description - a rhetorical mode that emphasizes eye-catching, specific, and vivid portrayal of a subject. Often integrates imagery and thick description to this end.

narration - a rhetorical mode involving the construction and relation of stories. Typically integrates description as a technique.

reflection - a rhetorical gesture by which an author looks back, through the diegetic gap, to demonstrate knowledge or understanding gained from the subject on which they are reflecting. May also include consideration of the impact of that past subject on the author's future— "Looking back in order to look forward."

rhetorical situation - the circumstances in which rhetoric is produced, understood using the constituent elements of subject, occasion, audience, and purpose. Each element of the rhetorical situation carries assumptions and imperatives about the kind of rhetoric that will be well received. Rhetorical situation will also influence mode and medium.

Part I: Describing a Scene or Experience

This morning, as I was brewing my coffee before rushing to work, I found myself hurrying up the stairs back to the bedroom, a sense of urgency in my step. I opened the door and froze— what was I doing? Did I need something from up here? I stood in confusion, trying to retrace the mental processes that had led me here, but it was all muddy.

It's quite likely that you've experienced a similarly befuddling situation. This phenomenon can loosely be referred to as automatization: because we are so constantly surrounded by stimuli, our brains often go on autopilot. (We often miss even the most explicit stimuli if we are distracted, as demonstrated by the Invisible Gorilla study)

Automatization is an incredibly useful skill—we don't have the time or capacity to take in everything at once, let alone think our own thoughts simultaneously—but it's also troublesome. In the same way that we might run through a morning ritual absent-mindedly, like I did above, we have also been programmed to overlook tiny but striking details: the slight gradation in color of cement on the bus stop curb; the hum of the air conditioner or fluorescent lights; the weight and texture of a pen in the crook of the hand. These details, though, make experiences, people, and places unique. By focusing on the particular, we can interrupt automatization. We can become radical noticers by practicing good description. (There is a school of writing based on this practice, termed *остранение* by Viktor Shklovsky, commonly translated into English as "Art as Technique." 1925. *Literary Theory: An Anthology*, 2nd ed.)

In a great variety of rhetorical situations, **description** is an essential rhetorical mode. Our minds latch onto detail and specificity, so effective description can help us experience a story, understand an analysis, and nuance a critical argument. Each of these situations requires a different kind of description; this section focuses on the vivid, image-driven descriptive language that you would use for storytelling.

Part I Vocabulary

constraint-based writing - a writing technique by which an author tries to follow a rule or set of rules in order to create more experimental or surprising content, popularized by the Oulipo school of writers.

description - a rhetorical mode that emphasizes eye-catching, specific, and vivid portrayal of a subject. Often integrates imagery and thick description to this end.

defamiliarization - a method of reading, writing, and thinking that emphasizes the interruption of automatization. Established as "остранение" ("estrangement") by Viktor Shklovsky, defamiliarization attempts to turn the everyday into the strange, eye-catching, or dramatic.

ethnography - a study of a particular culture, subculture, or group of people. Uses thick description to explore a place and its associated culture.

figurative language - language which implies a meaning that is not to be taken literally. Common examples include metaphor, simile, personification, onomatopoeia, and hyperbole.

imagery - sensory language; literal or figurative language that appeals to an audience's imagined sense of sight, sound, smell, touch, or taste.

thick description - economical and deliberate language which attempts to capture complex subjects (like cultures, people, or environments) in written or spoken language. Coined by anthropologists Clifford Geertz and Gilbert Ryle.

Techniques
Imagery and Experiential Language

Strong description helps a reader experience what you've experienced, whether it was an event, an interaction, or simply a place. Even though you could never capture it perfectly, you should try to approximate sensations, feelings, and details as closely as you can. Your most vivid description will be that which gives your reader a way to imagine being themselves as of your story.

Imagery is a device that you have likely encountered in your studies before: it refers to language used to 'paint a scene' for the reader, directing their attention to striking details.

Here are three examples:

> Bamboo walls, dwarf banana trees, silk lanterns, and a hand-size jade Buddha on a wooden table decorate the restaurant. For a moment, I imagined I was on vacation. The bright orange lantern over my table was the blazing hot sun and the cool air currents coming from the ceiling fan caused the leaves of the banana trees to brush against one

another in soothing crackling sounds. (Anonymous student author, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.):

The sunny midday sky calls to us all like a guilty pleasure while the warning winds of winter tug our scarves warmer around our necks; the City of Roses is painted the color of red dusk, and the setting sun casts her longing rays over the Eastern shoulders of Mt. Hood, drawing the curtains on another crimson-grey day. (Anonymous student author, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.)

Flipping the switch, the lights flicker—not menacingly, but rather in a homey, imperfect manner. Hundreds of seats are sprawled out in front of a black, worn down stage. Each seat has its own unique creak, creating a symphony of groans whenever an audience takes their seats. The walls are adorned with a brown mustard yellow, and the black paint on the stage is fading and chipped. (Ross Reaume, Portland State University, 2014. Reproduced with permission from the student author).

You might notice, too, that the above examples appeal to many different senses. Beyond just *visual* detail, good imagery can be considered sensory language: words that help me see, but also words that help me taste, touch, smell, and hear the story. Go back and identify a word, phrase, or sentence that suggests one of these non-visual sensations; what about this line is so striking?

Imagery might also apply **figurative language** to describe more creatively. Devices like metaphor, simile, and personification, or hyperbole can enhance description by pushing beyond literal meanings.

Using imagery, you can better communicate specific sensations to put the reader in your shoes. To the best of your ability, avoid clichés (stock phrases that are easy to ignore) and focus on the particular (what makes a place, person, event, or object unique). To practice creating imagery, try the Imagery Inventory exercise and the Image Builder graphic organizer in the Activities section of this section.

Thick Description

If you're focusing on specific, detailed imagery and experiential language, you might begin to feel wordy: simply piling up descriptive phrases and sentences isn't always the best option. Instead, your goal as a descriptive writer is to make the language work hard. **Thick description** refers to economy of language in vivid description. While good description has a variety of

characteristics, one of its defining features is that every word is *on purpose*, and this credo is exemplified by thick description.

The term "thick description" was coined by Gilbert Ryle and adopted into the field of anthropology by Clifford Geertz. Ryle, Gilbert. *Collected Essays (1929-1968),* vol. 2, Routledge, 2009, 479+. Geertz, Clifford. *The Interpretation of Cultures*, Basic Books, 1973.

Thick description as a concept finds its roots in anthropology, where ethnographers seek to portray deeper context of a studied culture than simply surface appearance (Ryle, 1973). In the world of writing, thick description means careful and detailed portrayal of context, emotions, and actions. It relies on specificity to engage the reader.

Consider the difference between these two descriptions:

The market is busy. There is a lot of different produce. It is colorful.	vs.	Customers blur between stalls of bright green bok choy, gnarled carrots, and fiery Thai peppers. Stopping only to inspect the occasional citrus, everyone is busy, focused, industrious.

Notice that, even though the description on the right is longer, its major difference is the specificity of its word choice. The author names particular produce, which brings to mind a sharper image of the selection and uses specific adjectives. Further, though, the words themselves do heavy lifting—the nouns and verbs are descriptive too! "Customers blur" both implies a market (where we would expect to find "customers") and also illustrates how busy the market is ("blur" implies speed), rather than just naming it as such.

Effective thick description is rarely written the first time around; it is *re*-written. As you revise, consider that every word should be on purpose.

Consider the following examples of thick description:

> I had some strength left to wrench my shoulders and neck upward, but the rest of my body would not follow. My back was twisted like a contortionist's. (Anonymous student author, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.)

Shaking off the idiotic urge to knock, I turned the brass knob in my trembling hands and heaved open the thick door. The hallway was so dark that I had to squint while clumsily reaching out to feel my surroundings so I wouldn't crash into anything. (Noel Taylor, Portland State University, 2014. Reproduced with permission from the student author.)

Snow-covered mountains, enormous glaciers, frozen caves and massive caps of ice clash with heat, smoke, lava and ash. Fields dense with lush greenery and vibrant purple lupine plants butt up against black, barren lands scorched by eruptions. The spectacular drama of cascading waterfalls, rolling hills, deep canyons and towering jagged peaks competes with open expanses of flat, desert-like terrain. (Chris Gaylord, Portland State University, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.)

Where do you see the student authors using deliberate, specific, and imagistic words and phrases? Where do you see the language working hard?

Unanticipated and Eye-catching Language

In addition to our language being deliberate, we should also strive for language that is unanticipated. You should control your language, but also allow for surprises—for you and your reader! Doing so will help you maintain attention and interest from your reader because your writing will be unique and eye-catching, but it also has benefits for you: it will also make your writing experience more enjoyable and educational.

How can you be surprised by your own writing, though? If you're the author, how could you not know what you're about to say? To that very valid question, I have two responses:

On a conceptual level: Depending on your background, you may currently consider drafting to be thinking-*then*-writing. Instead, you should try thinking-*through*-writing: rather than two separate and sequential acts, embrace the possibility that the act of writing can be a new way to process through ideas. You must give yourself license to write before an idea is fully formed—but remember, you will revise, so it's okay to not be perfect. (I highly recommend Anne Lamott's "Shitty First Drafts.")

On a technical level: Try out different activities—or even invent your own—that challenge your instincts. Rules and games can help you push beyond your auto-pilot descriptions to much more eye-catching language!

Constraint-based writing is one technique like this. It refers to a process which requires you to deliberately work within a specific set of writing rules, and it can often spark unexpected combinations of words and ideas. The most valuable benefit to constraint-based writing, though, is that it gives you many options for your descriptions: because first idea ≠ best idea, constraint-based writing can help you push beyond instinctive descriptors.

When you spend more time thinking creatively, the ordinary can become extraordinary. The act of writing invites discovery! When you challenge yourself to see something in new ways, you actually see more of it. Try the Dwayne Johnson activity to think more about surprising language.
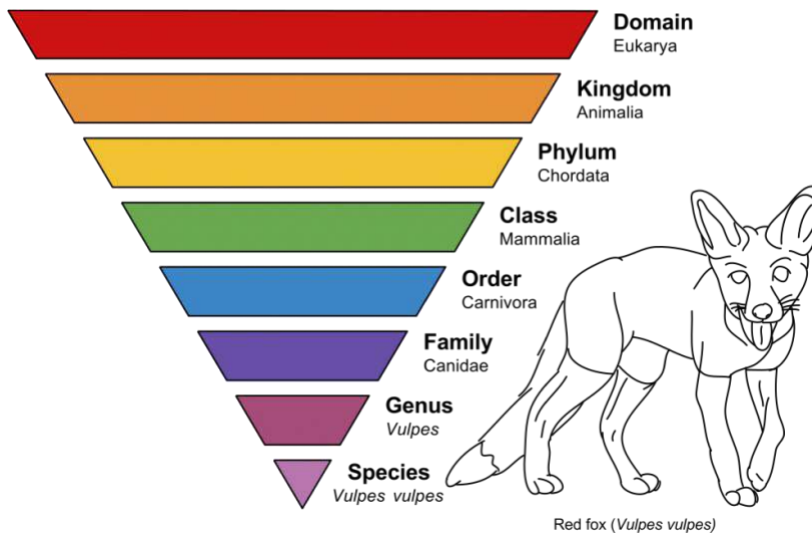
Activities

Specificity Taxonomy
Activity courtesy of Mackenzie Myers

Good description lives and dies in particularities. It takes deliberate effort to refine our general ideas and memories into more focused, specific
language that the reader can identify with.

Red fox (*Vulpes vulpes*)

A *taxonomy* is a system of classification that arranges a variety of items into an order that makes sense to someone. You might remember from your biology class the ranking taxonomy based on Carl Linnaeus' classifications, pictured here.

To practice shifting from general to specific, fill in the blanks in the taxonomy below. After you have filled in the blanks, use the bottom three rows to make your own. As you work, notice how attention to detail, even on the scale of an individual word, builds a more tangible image.

	More General	General	Specific	More Specific
(example):	animal	mammal	dog	Great Dane
1	organism		conifer	Douglas fir
		airplane		Boeing 757
2		novel		*Harry Potter and the Goblet of Fire*
	clothing		blue jeans	
3	medical condition		respiratory infection	the common cold
	school	college		
4	artist		pop singer	
	structure	building		The White House
5		coffee	Starbucks coffee	
		scientist		Sir Isaac Newton
6				

Compare your answers with a classmate. What similarities do you share with other students? What differences? Why do you think this is the case? How can you apply this thinking to your own writing?

Micro-Ethnography

An **ethnography** is a form of writing that uses thick description to explore a place and its associated culture. By attempting this method on a small scale, you can practice specific, focused description.

Find a place in which you can observe the people and setting without actively involving yourself. (Interesting spaces and cultures students have used before, include a poetry slam, a local bar, a dog park, and a nursing home.) You can choose a place you've been before or a place you've never been. The point here is to look at a space and a group of people more critically for the sake of detail, whether or not you already know that context.

As an ethnographer, your goal is to take in details without influencing those details. In order to stay focused, go to this place alone and refrain from using your phone or doing anything besides note-taking. Keep your attention on the people and the place.

Spend a few minutes taking notes on your general impressions of the place at this time.
- Use imagery and thick description to describe the place itself.
- What sorts of interactions do you observe? What sort of tone, affect, and language is used?
- How would you describe the overall atmosphere?

Spend a few minutes "zooming in" to identify artifacts—specific physical objects being used by the people you see.
- Use imagery and thick description to describe the specific artifacts.
- How do these parts contribute to/differentiate from/relate to the whole of the scene?

After observing, write one to two paragraphs synthesizing your observations to describe the space and culture. What do the details represent or reveal about the place and people?

Imagery Inventory

Visit a location you visit often—your classroom, your favorite café, the commuter train, etc. Isolate each of your senses and describe the sensations as thoroughly as possible. Take detailed notes in the organizer below or use a voice-recording app on your phone to talk through each of your sensations.

Sense	Sensation
Sight	
Sound	
Smell	
Touch	
Taste	

Now, write a paragraph that synthesizes three or more of your sensory details. Which details were easiest to identify? Which make for the most striking descriptive language? Which will bring the most vivid sensations to your reader's mind?

The Dwayne Johnson Activity

Activity inspired by Susan Kirtley, William Thomas Van Camp, and Bruce Ballenger.

This exercise will encourage you to flex your creative descriptor muscles by generating unanticipated language.

Begin by finding a mundane object. (A plain, unspectacular rock is my go-to choice.) Divide a blank piece of paper into four quadrants. Set a timer for two minutes; in this time, write as many describing words as possible in the first quadrant. You may use a bulleted list. Full sentences are not required.

Now, cross out your first quadrant.

In the second quadrant, take five minutes to write as many new describing words as possible without repeating anything from your first quadrant. If you're struggling, try to use imagery and/or figurative language.

For the third quadrant, set the timer for two minutes. Write as many uses as possible for your object.

Before starting the fourth quadrant, cross out the uses you came up with for the previous step. Over the next five minutes, come up with as many new uses as you can.

After this generative process, identify your three favorite items from the sections you didn't cross out.

Spend ten minutes writing in any genre or form you like—a story, a poem, a song, a letter, anything—on any topic you like. Your writing doesn't have to be about the object you chose, but try to incorporate your chosen descriptors or uses in some way. Share your writing with a friend or peer, and debrief about the exercise. What surprises did this process yield? What does it teach us about innovative language use?

Keep in mind as you complete the activity:

   1) Writing invites discovery: the more you look, the more you see.
   2) Suspend judgment: first idea ≠ best idea.
   3) Objects are not inherently boring: the ordinary can be dramatic if described creatively.

Surprising Yourself: Constraint-Based Scene Description

This activity is a modified version of one by Daniel Hershel.

This exercise asks you to write a scene, following specific instructions, about a place of your choice. There is no such thing as a step-by-step guide to descriptive writing; instead, the detailed instructions that follow are challenges that will force you to think differently while you're writing. The constraints of the directions may help you to discover new aspects of this topic since you are following the sentence-level prompts even as you develop your content.

1. Bring your place to mind. Focus on "seeing" or "feeling" your place.

2. For a title, choose an emotion or a color that represents this place to you.

3. For a first line starter, choose one of the following and complete the sentence:

    •   You stand there...
    •   When I'm here, I know that...
    •   Every time...
    •   I [see/smell/hear/feel/taste] ...
    •   We had been...
    •   I think sometimes...

4. After your first sentence, create your scene, writing the sentences according to the following directions:

    •   Sentence 2: Write a sentence with a color in it.
    •   Sentence 3: Write a sentence with a part of the body in it.
    •   Sentence 4: Write a sentence with a simile (a comparison using like or as)
    •   Sentence 5: Write a sentence of over twenty-five words.
    •   Sentence 6: Write a sentence of under eight words.
    •   Sentence 7: Write a sentence with a piece of clothing in it.
    •   Sentence 8: Write a sentence with a wish in it.
    •   Sentence 9: Write a sentence with an animal in it.
    •   Sentence 10: Write a sentence in which three or more words alliterate; that is, they begin with the same initial consonant: "She has been left, lately, with less and less time to think...."
    •   Sentence 11: Write a sentence with two commas.
    •   Sentence 12: Write a sentence with a smell and a color in it.
    •   Sentence 13: Write a sentence without using the letter "e."
    •   Sentence 14: Write a sentence with a simile.

- Sentence 15: Write a sentence that could carry an exclamation point (but don't use the exclamation point).
- Sentence 16: Write a sentence to end this portrait that uses the word or words you chose for a title.

5. Read over your scene and mark words/phrases that surprised you, especially those rich with possibilities (themes, ironies, etc.) that you could develop.

6. On the right side of the page, for each word/passage you marked, interpret the symbols, name the themes that your description and detail suggest, note any significant meaning you see in your description.

7. On a separate sheet of paper, rewrite the scene you have created as a more thorough and cohesive piece in whatever genre you desire. You may add sentences and transitional words/phrases to help the piece flow.

Image Builder

This exercise encourages you to experiment with thick description by focusing on one element of your writing in expansive detail. Read the directions below, then write your responses as an outline on a separate piece of paper.

1. Identify one image, object, action, or scene that you want to expand in your story. Name this element in the big, yellow bubble.
2. Develop at least three describing words for your element, considering each sense independently, as well as emotional associations. Focus on particularities. (Adjectives will come most easily, but remember that you can use any part of speech.)
3. Then, on the next page, create at least two descriptions using figurative language (metaphor, simile, personification, onomatopoeia, hyperbole, etc.) for your element, considering each sense independently, as well as emotional associations. Focus on particularities.
4. Finally, reflect on the different ideas you came up with.
   - Which descriptions surprised you? Which descriptions are accurate but unanticipated?
   - Where might you weave these descriptions in to your current project?
   - How will you balance description with other rhetorical modes, like narration, argumentation, or analysis?
5. Repeat this exercise as desired or as instructed, choosing a different focus element to begin with.
6. Choose your favorite descriptors and incorporate them into your writing.

If you're struggling to get started, check out the example on the pages following the blank organizer.

Image, Object, Action, or Scene

Emotions
Descriptors:

Sound
Descriptors:

Taste
Descriptors:

Touch
Descriptors:
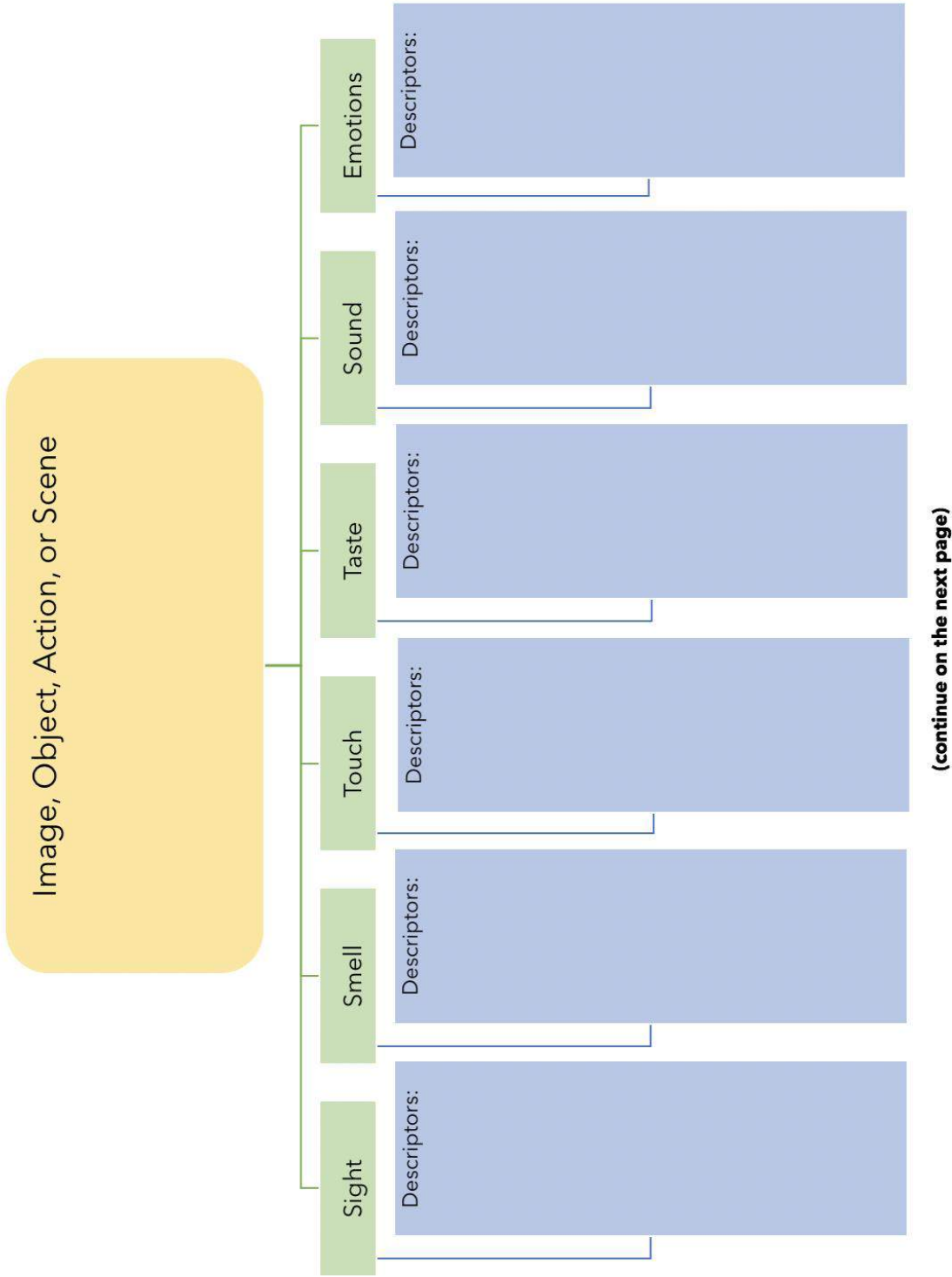
Smell
Descriptors:

Sight
Descriptors:

Image, Object, Action, or Scene (continued)

Emotions
Figurative Language:

Sound
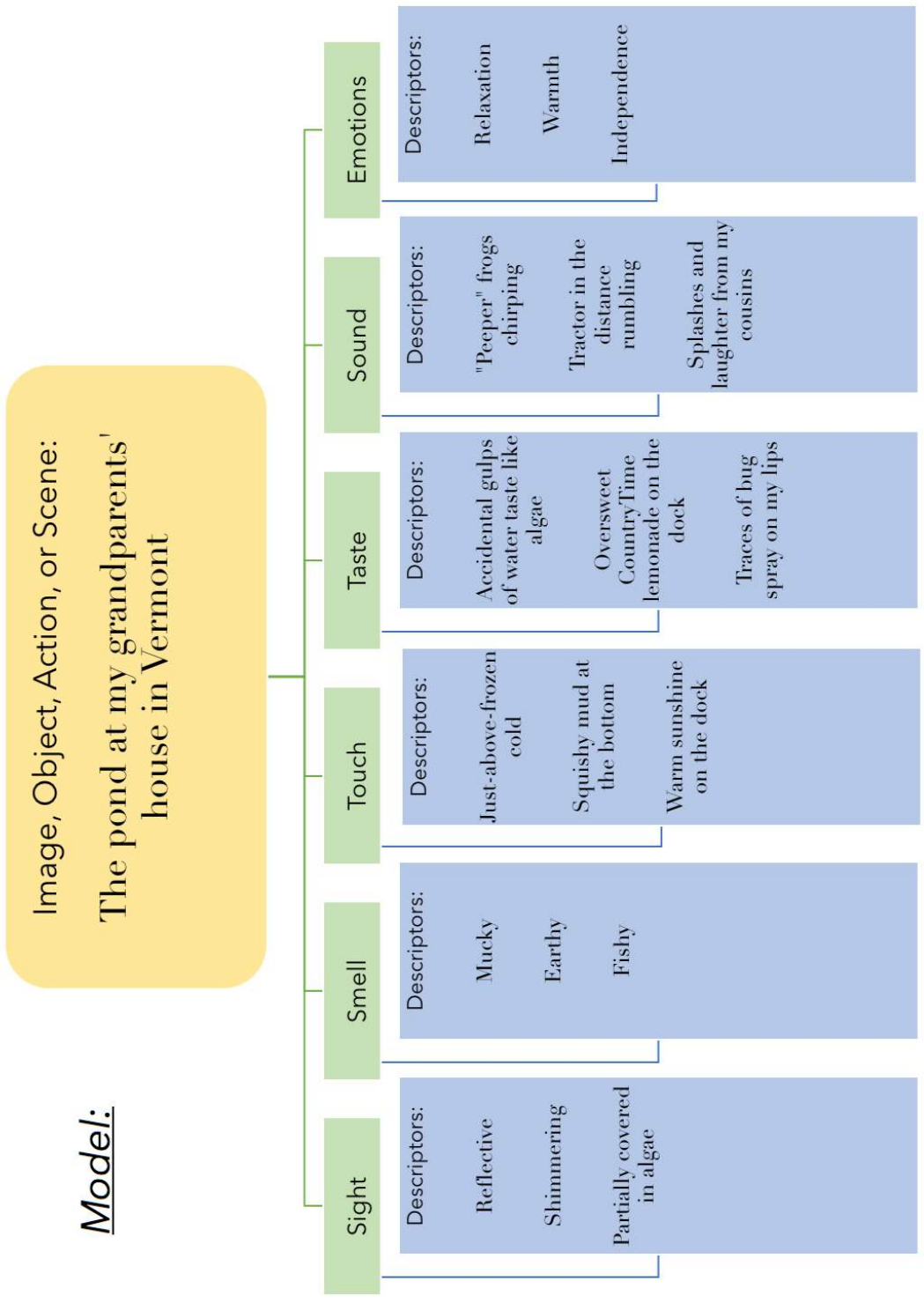Figurative Language:

Taste
Figurative Language:

Touch
Figurative Language:

Smell
Figurative Language:

Sight
Figurative Language:

Model:

Image, Object, Action, or Scene:

The pond at my grandparents' house in Vermont

Sight

Descriptors:

Reflective

Shimmering

Partially covered in algae

Smell

Descriptors:

Mucky

Earthy

Fishy

Touch

Descriptors:

Just-above-frozen cold

Squishy mud at the bottom

Warm sunshine on the dock

Taste

Descriptors:

Accidental gulps of water taste like algae

Oversweet CountryTime lemonade on the dock

Traces of bug spray on my lips

Sound

Descriptors:

"Peeper" frogs chirping

Tractor in the distance rumbling

Splashes and laughter from my cousins

Emotions

Descriptors:

Relaxation

Warmth

Independence

Model:

Image, Object, Action, or Scene:

The pond at my grandparents' house in Vermont

Sight

Figurative Language:

The surface shimmers in the wind like a curtain.

The algae meanders across the pond.

Smell

Figurative Language:

The odor of fish and mud crawls up my nostrils.

The layer of muck left between my toes smells like autumn's decaying leaves.

Touch

Figurative Language:

Nearly-frozen jets of cold water are a wake-up call.

Sunlight tickles my skin as I lay on the dock.

Taste

Figurative Language:

My tongue tingles from the cheap mix lemonade my grandma brought.

Chemicals linger on my lips from religous bug spray application.

Sound

Figurative Language:

Frogs chirp and splunk as they travel around the pond.

Squealing with joy, my teenage cousins are children again.

Emotions

Figurative Language:

The weight of the world vanishes from my shoulders.

I am self-reliant here, like solemn, giant oak tree.

Model Texts by Student Authors

Innocence Again

Imagine the sensation of the one split second that you are floating through the air as you were thrown up in the air as a child, that feeling of freedom and carefree spirit as happiness abounds. Looking at the world through innocent eyes, all thoughts and feelings of amazement. Being free, happy, innocent, amazed, wowed. Imagine the first time seeing the colors when your eyes and brain start to recognize them but never being able to name the shade or hue. Looking at the sky as it changes from the blackness with twinkling stars to the lightest shade of blue that is almost white, then the deep red of the sunset and bright orange of the sun. All shades of the spectrum of the rainbow, colors as beautiful as the mind can see or imagine.

I have always loved the sea since I was young; the smell of saltiness in the air invigorates me and reminds me of the times spent with my family enjoying Sundays at the beach. In Singapore, the sea was always murky and green but I continued to enjoy all activities in it. When I went to Malaysia to work, I discovered that the sea was clear and blue and without hesitation, I signed up for a basic diving course and I was hooked. In my first year of diving, I explored all the dive destinations along the east coast of Malaysia and also took an advanced diving course which allowed me to dive up to a depth of thirty meters. Traveling to a dive site took no more than four hours by car and weekends were spent just enjoying the sea again.

Gearing up is no fun. Depending on the temperature of the water, I might put on a shortie, wetsuit or drysuit. Then on come the booties, fins and mask which can be considered the easiest part unless the suit is tight—then it is a hop and pull struggle, which reminds me of how life can be at times. Carrying the steel tank, regulator, buoyancy control device (BCD) and weights is a torture. The heaviest weights that I ever had to use were 110 pounds, equivalent to my body weight; but as I jump in and start sinking into the sea, the contrast to weightlessness hits me. The moment that I start floating in the water, a sense of immense freedom and joy overtakes me.

Growing up, we have to learn the basics: time spent in classes to learn, constantly practicing to improve our skills while safety is ingrained by our parents. In dive classes, I was taught to never panic or do stupid stuff: the same with the lessons that I have learned in life. Panic and over-inflated egos can lead to death, and I have heard it happens all the time. I had the opportunity to go to Antarctica for a diving expedition, but what led to me getting that slot was

the death of a very experienced diver who used a drysuit in a tropic climate against all advice. He just overheated and died. Lessons learned in the sea can be very profound, but they contrast the life I live: risk-taker versus risk-avoider. However, when I have perfected it and it is time to be unleashed, it is time to enjoy. I jump in as I would jump into any opportunity, but this time it is into the deep blue sea of wonders.

A sea of wonders waits to be explored. Every journey is different: it can be fast or slow, like how life takes me. The sea decides how it wants to carry me; drifting fast with the currents so that at times, I hang on to the reef and corals like my life depends on it, even though I am taught never to touch anything underwater. The fear I feel when I am speeding along with the current is that I will be swept away into the big ocean, never to be found. Sometimes, I feel like I am not moving at all, kicking away madly until I hyperventilate because the sea is against me with its strong current holding me against my will.

The sea decides what it wants me to see: turtles popping out of the seabed, manta rays gracefully floating alongside, being in the middle of the eye of a barracuda hurricane, a coral shelf as big as a car, a desert of bleached corals, the emptiness of the seabed with not a fish in sight, the memorials of death caused by the December 26 tsunami—a barren sea floor with not a soul or life in sight.

The sea decides what treasures I can discover: a black-tipped shark sleeping in an underwater cavern, a pike hiding from predators in the reef, an octopus under a dead tree trunk that escapes into my buddy's BCD, colorful mandarin fish mating at sunset, a deadly box jellyfish held in my gloved hands, pygmy seahorses in a fern—so tiny that to discover them is a journey itself.

Looking back, diving has taught me more about life, the ups and downs, the good and bad, and to accept and deal with life's challenges. Everything I learn and discover underwater applies to the many different aspects of my life. It has also taught me that life is very short: I have to live in the moment or I will miss the opportunities that come my way. I allow myself to forget all my sorrow, despair and disappointments when I dive into the deep blue sea and savor the feelings of peacefulness and calmness. There is nothing around me but fish and corals, big and small. Floating along in silence with only the sound of my breath—*inhale and exhale*. An array of colors explodes in front of my eyes, colors that I never imagine I will discover again, an underwater rainbow as beautiful as the rainbow in the sky after a storm. As far as my eyes can

see, I look into the depth of the ocean with nothing to anchor me. The deeper I get, the darker it turns. From the light blue sky to the deep navy blue, even blackness into the void. As the horizon darkens, the feeding frenzy of the underwater world starts and the watery landscape comes alive. Total darkness surrounds me but the sounds that I can hear are the little clicks in addition to my breathing. My senses overload as I cannot see what is around me, but the sea tells me it is alive and it anchors me to the depth of my soul.

As Ralph Waldo Emerson once said: "The lover of nature is he whose inward and outward senses are truly adjusted to each other; who has retained the spirit of infancy even into the era of manhood." ... In the presence of nature, a wild delight runs through the man in spite of real sorrows...." The sea and diving have given me a new outlook on life, a different planet where I can float into and enjoy as an adult, a new, different perspective on how it is to be that child again. Time and time again as I enter into the sea, I feel innocent all over again.

Essay by Chris Chan, Portland State University, 2014. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

Teacher Takeaways
 "One of the more difficult aspects of writing a good descriptive essay is to use the description to move beyond itself — to 'think through writing.' This author does it well. Interspersed between the details of diving are deliberate metaphors and analogies that enable the reader to gain access and derive deeper meanings. While the essay could benefit from a more structured system of organization and clearer unifying points, and while the language is at times a bit sentimental, this piece is also a treasure trove of sensory imagery (notably colors) and descriptive devices such as personification and recursion."

— Professor Fiscaletti

Comatose Dreams

Her vision was tunneled in on his face. His eyes were wet and his mouth was open as if he was trying to catch his breath. He leaned in closer and wrapped his arms around her face and spoke to her in reassuring whispers that reminded her of a time long ago when he taught her to pray. As her vision widened the confusion increased. She could not move. She opened her mouth to speak, but could not. She wanted to sit up, but was restrained to the bed. She did not have the energy to sob, but she could feel tears roll down her cheek and didn't try to wipe them away. The anxiety overtook her and she fell back into a deep sleep.

She opened her eyes and tried to find reality. She was being tortured. Her feet were the size of pumpkins and her stomach was gutted all the way up her abdomen, her insides exposed for all to see. She was on display like an animal at the zoo. Tubes were coming out of her in multiple directions and her throat felt as if it were coated in chalk. She was conscious, but still a prisoner. Then a nurse walked in, pulled on one of her tubes, and sent her back into the abyss. Eventually someone heard her speak, and with that she learned that if she complained enough she would get an injection. It gave her a beautiful head rush that temporarily dulled the pain. She adored it. She was no longer restrained to the bed, but still unable to move or eat. She was fed like baby. Each time she woke she was able to gather bits of information: she would not be going back to work, or school.

She began to heal. They removed a tube or two and she became more mobile. She was always tethered to a machine, like a dog on a leash. The pain from the surgeries still lingered and the giant opening in her stomach began to slowly close. The couch was her safe haven.

She came closer to dying during recovery than she had in the coma. The doctors made a mistake. She began to sweat profusely and shiver all at the same time. She vomited every twenty minutes like clockwork. It went on like that for days and she was ready to go. She wanted to slip back into her sleep. It was time to wake up from this nightmare. She pulled her hair and scratched her wrists trying to draw blood, anything to shake herself awake.

She sat on a beach remembering that nightmare. The sun beat down recharging a battery within her that had been running on empty for far too long. The waves washed up the length of her body and she sank deeper into the warm sand. She lay on her back taking it all in. Then laid her hand on top of her stomach, unconsciously she ran her fingers along a deep scar.

The Devil in Green Canyon

The sky was painted blue, with soft wisps of white clouds that decorated the edges of the horizon like a wedding cake. To the West, a bright orb filled the world with warm golden light which gives life to the gnarled mountain landscape. The light casted contrasting shadows against the rolling foot hills of the Cascade Mountain Range. A lone hawk circled above the narrow white water river that lay beneath the steep mountain side. Through the hawk's eyes the mountains look like small green waves that flow down from a massive snow white point. Mt. Hood sits high above its surrounding foot hills, like that special jewel that sits on a pedestal, above all the others in a fancy jewelry store. The hawk soars into the Salmon River Valley, with hope of capturing a tasty meal, an area also known as the Green Canyon.

For hundreds of years, the Salmon River has carved its home into the bedrock. Filled from bank to bank with tumbled boulders, all strewn across the river bed, some as big as a car. Crystal clear water cascades over and around the rocky course nature has made with its unique rapids and eddies for the native salmon and trout to navigate, flanked by thick old growth forest and the steep tree studded walls of the canyon. Along the river lies a narrow two-lane road, where people are able to access tall wonders of this wilderness. The road was paved for eight miles and the condition was rough, with large potholes and sunken grades.

In my beat up old Corolla, I drove down windy roads of the Salmon River. With the windows down and the stereo turned up, I watched trees that towered above me pass behind my view. A thin ribbon of blue sky peeked through the towering Douglas Fir and Sequoia trees. At a particular bend in the road, I drove past an opening in the trees. Here the river and the road came around a sharp turn in the canyon. A natural rock face, with a patch of gravel at its base, offered

a place to park and enjoy the river. The water was calm and shallow, like a sheet of glass. I could see the rocky bottom all the way across the river, the rocks were round and smoothed by the continuous flow of water. It was peaceful as gentle flow of water created this tranquil symphony of rippling sounds.

As the road continued up the gentle slope guarded on the right by a thicket of bushes and tall colorful wild flowers giving red, purple, and white accents against lush green that dominated the landscape, followed by tall trees that quickly give way to a rocky precipice to the left. A yellow diamond shaped sign, complete with rusty edges and a few bullet holes indicated a one-lane bridge ahead. This was it! The beginning of the real journey. I parked my dusty Corolla as the gravel crunched under the balding tires, they skidded to a stop. As I turned the engine off, its irregular hum sputtered into silence. I could smell that hot oil that leaked from somewhere underneath the motor. I hopped out of the car and grabbed my large-framed backpack which was filled with enough food and gear for a few nights, I locked the car and took a short walk down the road. I arrived at the trail head, I was here to find peace, inspiration and discover a new place to feel freedom.

Devil's Peak. 16 miles. As the trail skirted its way along the cascading Salmon River. The well-traveled dirt path was packed hard by constant foot traffic with roots from the massive old fir trees, rocks and mud that frequently created tripping hazards along the trail. Sword Fern, Salmon Berry and Oregon Grape are among the various small plant growth that lined the trail. Under the shade of the thick canopy, the large patches of shamrocks created an even covering over the rolling forest floor like the icing on a cake. The small shamrock forests are broken by mountainous nursery logs of old decaying trees. New life sprouts as these logs nature and host their kin. Varieties of maple fight for space among the ever-growing conifers that dominate the forest. Vine maple arches over the trail, bearded with hanging moss that forms natural pergolas. It is easy to see why it is named Green Canyon, as the color touches everything. From the moss covering the floor, to the tops of the trees, many hues of green continue to paint the forest. These many greens are broken by the brown pillar like trunks of massive trees. Their rough bark provides a textural contrast to the soft leaves and pine needles. Wild flowers grow between the sun breaks in the trees and provide a rainbow of color. Near the few streams that form from artesian springs higher up, vicious patches of devil's glove, create a thorny wall that can tower

above the trail. Their green stalk bristling with inch long barbs and the large leaves some over a foot long are covered with smaller needles.

I can hear the hum of bees in the distance collecting pollen from the assorted wild flowers. Their buzz mixes in with the occasional horse fly that lumbers past. For miles the trail, follows the river before it quickly ascends above the canyon. Winding steeply away from the river, the sound of rushing water began to fade, giving way to the serene and eerie quiet of the high mountains. Leaves and trees make a gentle sound as the wind brushes past them, but are overpowered by the sound of my dusty hiking boots slowly dragging me up this seemingly never-ending hill. I feel tired and sweat is beading up on my brow, exhausted as I am, I feel happy and relieved. Its moments like this that recharge the soul. I continue to climb, sweat and smile.

Undergrowth gives way to the harsh steep rock spires that crown the mountain top like ancient vertebra. The forest opens up to a steep cliff with a clearing offering a grand view. The spine of the mountain is visible, it hovers at 5000 feet above sea level and climbs to a point close to 5200 feet. Trees fight for position on the steep hillside as they flow down to the edge of the Salmon River. This a popular turn around point for day hikes. Not for me; I am going for the top. The peak is my destination where I will call home tonight. Devil's Peak is a *destination*. Not just a great view point but it is also home to a historic fire watchtower. Here visitors can explore the tower and even stay the night.

From the gorge viewpoint the trail switchbacks up several miles through dense high-altitude forests. Passing rocky ramparts and a few sheer cliff faces the path ends at an old dirt road with mis from bygone trucks that leave faint traces of life. A hand carved wooden sign, nailed to a tree at the continuation of the trail indicates another 2.6 miles to Devil's Peak. The trail is narrow as it traces the spine of the mountain before steeply carving around the peak. There are instances where the mountain narrows to a few feet, with sheer drops on both sides, like traversing a catwalk. The trees at this altitude are stunted compared to the giants that live below. Most trees here are only a foot or two thick and a mere 50 feet in height. The thick under growth has dwindled to small rhododendron bushes and clumps of bear grass. The frequently gusting wind has caused the trunks of the trees to grow into twisted gnarled forms. It is almost like some demon walked through the trail distorting everything as it passed. Foxglove and other wild flowers find root holds in warm sunny spots along the trail. Breaks in the thick forest

provide snapshots of distant mountains: Mt. Hood is among the snowcapped peaks that pepper the distant mountains.

With sweat on my brow, forming beads that drip down my face, I reached the top. The trail came to a fork where another small sign indicates to go left. After a few feet the forest shrinks away and opens to a rocky field with expansive views that stretched for miles. There, standing its eternal watch, is the Devil's Peak watch tower. Its sun-bleached planks are a white contrast to the evergreen wall behind it. It was built by hand decades ago before portable power tools by hardened forest rangers. It has stood so long that the peak which once offered a 360-degree view now only has a few openings left between the mature trees that surround the grove in which the old devil stands, watching high above the green canyon. The lookout stands 30 feet in height. Its old weathered moss-covered wood shingled roof is topped with a weathered copper lightning rod. A staircase climbs steeply to the balcony that wraps around the tower. Only two feet wide, the deck still offers an amazing view where the forest allows. Mt. Hood stands proud to the North and the green mountains stretch South to the edge of the horizon.

The builders made window covers to protect the glass during storms. Once lined and supported with boards that have been notched to fit the railing, the tower is open filling the interior with daylight. In all the cabin is only twelve feet by twelve feet. The door has a tall window and three of the four walls have windows most of the way to the ceiling. The furnishing is modest, with a bed that has several pieces of foam and some sleeping bags to make mattress, it was complete with a pillow with no case. A table covered with carvings and some useful information and rules for the tower were taped to the surface. An old diary for the tower and a cup full of writing instruments next to it for visitors to share their experience lay closed in the middle of the table. In the South East corner, on a hearth made of old brick sat an old iron wood stove. The door had an image of a mountain and trees molded into it. The top was flat and had room to use for a cook top. Someone left a small pile of wood next the stove. The paint on the inside was weathered and stripping. The floor boards creaked with each step. Whenever the wind gusted the windows rattled. The air inside the cabin was musty and dry. It smelled old. But the windows all pivot and open to make the inside feel like its outside and as soon as the windows were opened the old smell is replaced with the scent of fresh pine.

Surrounded by small patches of wild flowers and rocks, all ringed by a maturing forest Devil's Peak watchtower sits high above the Green Canyon. On a high point near the tower where solid

rock pierces the ground there is a small round plaque cemented to the ancient basalt. It is a U.S. geological marker with the name of the peak and its elevation stamped into the metal. Standing on the marker I can see south through a large opening in the trees. Mountains like giant green walls fill the view. For miles, rock and earth rise up forming mountains, supporting the exquisite green forest.

The hawk circles, soaring high above the enchanting mountains. On a peak below, it sees prey skitter across a rock into a clump of juniper and swoops down for the hunt. There I stand on the tower's wooden balcony, watching the sunset. The blue horizon slowly turned pale before glowing orange. Mt. Hood reflected the changing colors, from orange to a light purple. Soon stars twinkled above and the mountain faded to dark. The day is done. Here in this moment, I am.

Essay by Franklin, who has requested his last name not be included. Portland Community College, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

Teacher Takeaways
 "This author's description is frequent and rich with detail; I especially like the thorough inventory of wildlife throughout the essay, although it does get a feel a bit burdensome at times. I can clearly envision the setting, at times even hearing the sounds and feeling the textures the author describes. Depending on their goals in revision, this author might make some global adjustments to pacing (so the reader can move through a bit more quickly and fluidly). At the very least, this student should spend some time polishing up mechanical errors. I noticed two recurring issues: (1) shifting verb tense [the author writes in both present and past tense, where it would be more appropriate to stick with one or the other]; and (2) sentence fragments, run-ons, and comma splices [all errors that occur because a sentence combines clauses ungrammatically]."

– Professor Wilhjelm

Part II: Telling a Story

"We're all stories, in the end." – Steven Moffat, *Doctor Who*
("The Big Bang." *Doctor Who*, written by Steven Moffat, BBC, 2010.)

Whether or not you've seen a single episode of *Doctor Who*, you can appreciate this quote. I love it for its ambiguities.

Of interest on this topic is the word *sonder*, defined at *The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows*: (n.) the realization that each random passerby is living a life as vivid and complex as your own—populated with their own ambitions, friends, routines, worries and inherited craziness—an epic story that continues invisibly around you like an anthill sprawling deep underground, with elaborate passageways to thousands of other lives that you'll never know existed, in which you might appear only once, as an extra sipping coffee in the background, as a blur of traffic passing on the highway, as a lighted window at dusk. (Koening, John. "Sonder." *The Dictionary of Obscure Sorrows,* 22 July 2012)

As I can tell, we can interpret the *Doctor Who* quote in at least four ways:

All we are is stories, in the end.
Our identities, our ambitions, our histories are all a composite of the many stories we tell about ourselves.

Each of us is a story, in the end.
Your entire life, while composed of many interlocking stories, is one story among many.

All of us are stories, in the end.
Our stories are never just our own: you share common stories with your parents, your friends, your teachers and bosses, strangers on the street.

We are stories (in all of the above ways), but only at the end.
Our individual stories have no definite conclusion until we can no longer tell them ourselves. What legacy will you leave? How can you tell a piece of your story while it's still up to you?

But perhaps that's enough abstraction: **narration** is a rhetorical mode that you likely engage on a daily basis, and one that has held significance in every culture in human history. Even when we're not deliberately telling stories, storytelling often underlies our writing and thinking:

- Historians synthesize and interpret events of the past; a history book is one of many narratives of our cultures and civilizations.

- Chemists analyze observable data to determine cause-and-effect behaviors of natural and synthetic materials; a lab report is a sort of narrative about elements (characters) and reactions (plot).

- Musical composers evoke the emotional experience of story through instrumentation, motion, motifs, resolutions, and so on; a song is a narrative that may not even need words.

What makes for an interesting, well-told story *in writing*? In addition to description, your deliberate choices in narration can create impactful, beautiful, and entertaining stories.

Vocabulary

characterization - the process by which an author builds characters; can be accomplished directly or indirectly.

dialogue - a communication between two or more people. Can include any mode of communication, including speech, texting, e-mail, Facebook post, body language, etc.

dynamic character - a character who noticeably changes within the scope of a narrative, typically as a result of the plot events and/or other characters. Contrast with static character.

epiphany - a character's sudden realization of a personal or universal truth. See dynamic character.

flat character - a character who is minimally detailed, only briefly sketched or named. Generally less central to the events and relationships portrayed in a narrative. Contrast with round character.

mood - the emotional dimension which a reader experiences while encountering a text. Compare with tone.

multimedia / multigenre - terms describing a text that combines more than one media and/or more than one genre (e.g., an essay with embedded images; a portfolio with essays, poetry, and comic strips; a mixtape with song reviews).

narration - a rhetorical mode involving the construction and relation of stories. Typically integrates description as a technique.

narrative pacing - the speed with which a story progresses through plot events. Can be influenced by reflective and descriptive writing.

narrative scope - the boundaries of a narrative in time, space, perspective, and focus.

narrative sequence - the order of events included in a narrative.

plot - the events included within the scope of a narrative.

point-of-view - the perspective from which a story is told, determining both grammar (pronouns) and perspective (speaker's awareness of events, thoughts, and circumstances).

round character - a character who is thoroughly characterized and dimensional, detailed with attentive description of their traits and behaviors. Contrast with flat character.

static character - a character who remains the same throughout the narrative. Contrast with dynamic character.

tone - the emotional register of the text. Compare with mood.

Techniques

Plot Shapes and Form

Plot is one of the basic elements of every story: put simply, plot refers to the actual events that take place within the bounds of your narrative. Using our rhetorical situation vocabulary, we

can identify "plot" as the primary **subject** of a descriptive personal narrative. Three related elements to consider are **scope**, **sequence**, and **pacing**.

Scope

The term **scope** refers to the boundaries of your plot. Where and when does it begin and end? What is its focus? What background information and details does your story require? I often think about narrative scope as the edges of a photograph: a photo, whether of a vast landscape or a microscopic organism, has boundaries. Those boundaries inform the viewer's perception. In this example, the scope of the left photo allows for a story about a neighborhood in San Francisco. In the middle, it is a story about the fire escape, the clouds. On the right, the scope of the story directs our attention to the birds. In this way, narrative scope impacts the content you include <u>and</u> your reader's perception of that content in context.

The way we determine scope varies based on rhetorical situation, but I can say generally that many developing writers struggle with a scope that is too broad: writers often find it challenging to zero in on the events that drive a story and prune out extraneous information.

Consider, as an example, how you might respond if your friend asked what you did last weekend. If you began with, "I woke up on Saturday morning, rolled over, checked my phone, fell back asleep, woke up, pulled my feet out from under the covers, put my feet on the floor, stood up, stretched…" then your friend might have stopped listening by the time you get to the really good stuff. Your scope is too broad, so you're including details that distract or bore your reader. Instead of listing every detail, you should consider narrowing your scope, focusing instead on the important, interesting, and unique plot points (events).

You might think of this as the difference between a series of snapshots and a roll of film: instead of twenty-four frames per second video, your entire story might only be a few photographs aligned together.

It may seem counterintuitive, but we can often say more by digging deep into a few ideas or events, instead of trying to relate every idea or event.

The most impactful stories are often those that represent something, so your scope should focus on the details that fit into the bigger picture. To return to the previous example, you could tell me more about your weekend by sharing a specific detail than every detail. "Brushing my teeth Saturday morning, I didn't realize that I would probably have a scar from wrestling that bear on Sunday" reveals more than "I woke up on Saturday morning, rolled over, checked my phone, fell back asleep, woke up, pulled my feet out from under the covers, put my feet on the floor, stood up, stretched…." Not only have you foregrounded the more interesting event, but you have also foreshadowed that you had a harrowing, adventurous, and unexpected weekend.

Sequence and Pacing

The **sequence** and **pacing** of your plot—the order of the events and the amount of time you give to each event, respectively—will determine your reader's experience. There are an infinite number of ways you might structure your story, and the shape of your story is worth deep consideration. Although the traditional forms for narrative sequence are not your only options, let's take a look at a few tried-and-true shapes your plot might take.

You might recognize Freytag's Pyramid from other classes you've taken:
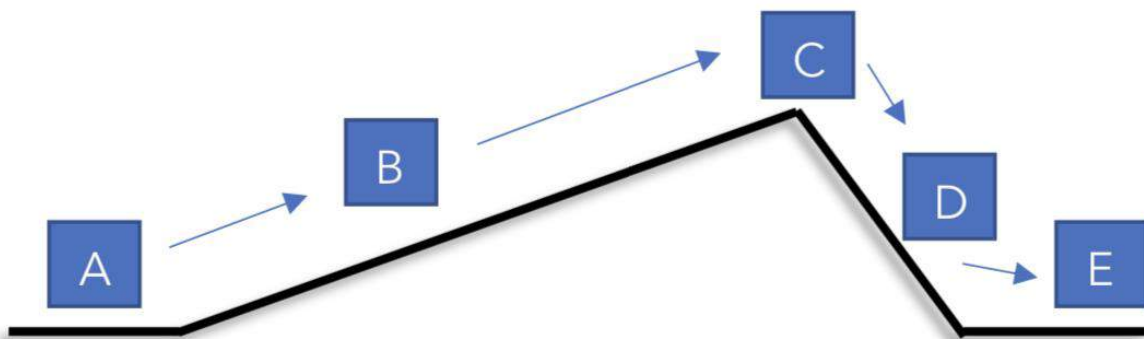
Gustav Freytag is credited with this particular model, often referred to as "Freytag's pyramid." Freytag studied the works of Shakespeare and a collection of Greek tragic plays to develop this model in *Die Technik des Dramas* (1863).

A. **Exposition**: Here, you're setting the scene, introducing characters, and preparing the reader for the journey.

B. **Rising action**: In this part, things start to happen. You (or your characters) encounter conflict, set out on a journey, meet people, etc.

C. **Climax**: This is the peak of the action, the main showdown, the central event toward which your story has been building.

D. **Falling action**: Now things start to wind down. You (or your characters) come away from the climactic experience changed—at the very least, you are wiser for having had that experience.

E. **Resolution**: Also known as dénouement, this is where all the loose ends get tied up. The central conflict has been resolved, and everything is back to normal, but perhaps a bit different.

This narrative shape is certainly a familiar one. Many films, TV shows, plays, novels, and short stories follow this track. But it's not without its flaws. You should discuss with your classmates and instructors what shortcomings you see in this classic plot shape. What assumptions does it rely on? How might it limit a storyteller? Sometimes, I tell my students to "Start the story where the story starts"—often, steps A and B in the diagram above just delay the most descriptive, active, or meaningful parts of the story. If nothing else, we should note that it is not necessarily the best way to tell your story, and definitely not the only way.

Another classic technique for narrative sequence is known as **in medias res**—literally, "in the middle of things." As you map out your plot in pre-writing or experiment with during the drafting and revision process, you might find this technique a more active and exciting way to begin a story.

In the earlier example, the plot is chronological, linear, and continuous: the story would move smoothly from beginning to end with no interruptions. *In medias res* instead suggests that you start your story with action rather than exposition, focusing on an exciting, imagistic, or important scene. Then, you can circle back to an earlier part of the story to fill in the blanks for your reader.

Using the previously discussed plot shape, you might visualize it like this:

Begin here!

Then circle back

Or …

Begin here!

B

A

B

C

D

E
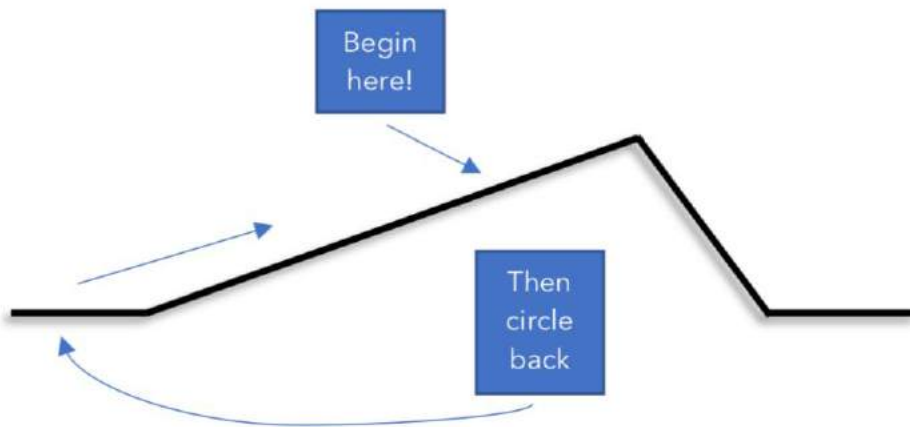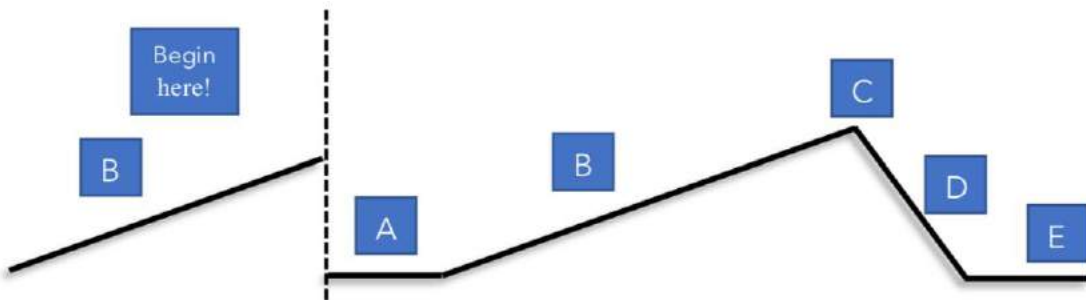
You can experiment with your sequence in a variety of other ways, which might include also making changes to your scope: instead of a continuous story, you might have a series of fragments with specific scope (like photographs instead of video), as is exemplified by "The Pot Calling the Kettle Black…." Instead of chronological order, you might bounce around in time or space, like in "Parental Guidance," or in reverse, like in the video "21." Some of my favorite narratives reject traditional narrative sequence.

I include *pacing* with *sequence* because a change to one often influences the other. Put simply, pacing refers to the speed and fluidity with which a reader moves through your story. You can play with pacing by moving more quickly through events, or even by experimenting with sentence and paragraph length. Consider how the "flow" of the following examples differs:

The train screeched to a halt. A flock of pigeons took flight as the conductor announced, "We'll be stuck here for a few minutes."

Lost in my thoughts, I shuddered as the train ground to a full stop in the middle of an intersection. I was surprised, jarred by the unannounced and abrupt jerking of the car. I sought clues for our stop outside the window. All I saw were pigeons as startled and clueless as I.

I recommend the student essay "Under the Knife," which does excellent work with pacing, in addition to making a strong creative choice with narrative scope.

Point-of-View

The position from which your story is told will help shape your reader's experience, the language your narrator and characters use, and even the plot itself. You might recognize this from *Dear White People* Volume 1 or *Arrested Development* Season 4, both Netflix TV series. Typically, each episode in these seasons explores similar plot events, but from a different character's perspective. Because of their unique vantage points, characters can tell different stories about the same realities.

This is, of course, true for our lives more generally. In addition to our differences in knowledge and experiences, we also interpret and understand events differently. In our writing, narrative position is informed by point-of-view and the emotional valences I refer to here as tone and mood.

point-of-view (POV): the perspective from which a story is told.
This is a grammatical phenomenon—i.e., it decides pronoun use—but, more importantly, it impacts tone, mood, scope, voice, and plot. (For the sake of brevity, the author has not included here a discussion of *focalization*, an important phenomenon to consider when studying point-of-view more in-depth.)

Although point-of-view will influence tone and mood, we can also consider what feelings we want to convey and inspire independently as part of our narrative position.

tone: the emotional register of the story's language.
What emotional state does the narrator of the story (not the author, but the speaker) seem to be in? What emotions are you trying to imbue in your writing?

mood: the emotional register a reader experiences.

Sometimes *tone* and *mood* align, and you might describe them using similar adjectives—a joyous tone might create joy for the reader. However, they sometimes don't align, depending largely on the rhetorical situation and the author's approach to that situation. For instance, a story's tone might be bitter, but the reader might find the narrator's bitterness funny, off-putting, or irritating. Often, tone and mood are in opposition to create irony: Jonathan Swift's matter-of-fact tone in "A Modest Proposal" is satirical, producing a range of emotions for the audience, from revulsion to hilarity.

What emotions do you want your reader to experience? Are they the same feelings you experienced at the time?

A Non-Comprehensive Breakdown of POV

	Pronoun Use	Definition	Examples
1st person	Narrator uses 1st person pronouns (I/me/mine or us/we/ours)	Can include internal monologue (motives, thoughts, feelings) of the narrator. Limited certainty of motives, thoughts, or feelings of other characters.	I tripped on the last stair, preoccupied by what my sister had said, and felt my stomach drop.
2nd person	Narrator uses 2nd person pronouns (you/you/your)	Speaks *to* the reader, as if the reader is the protagonist OR uses apostrophe to speak to an absent or unidentified person	Your breath catches as you feel the phantom step. O, staircase, how you keep me awake at night.
3rd person limited	Narrator uses 3rd person pronouns (he/him/his, she/her/hers, they/they/theirs)	Sometimes called "close" third person. Observes and narrates but sticks near one or two characters, in contrast with 3rd person omniscient.	He was visibly frustrated by his sister's nonchalance and wasn't watching his step.
3rd person omniscient	Narrator uses 3rd person pronouns (he/him/his, she/her/hers, they/they/theirs)	Observes and narrates from an all-knowing perspective. Can include internal monologue (motives, thoughts, feelings) of all characters.	Beneath the surface, his sister felt regretful. *Why did I tell him that?* she wondered.
stream-of-consciousness	Narrator uses inconsistent pronouns, or no pronouns at all	Approximates the digressive, wandering, and ungrammatical thought processes of the narrator.	But now, a thousand empty—*where?*—and she, with head shake, will be fine—AHH!

Typically, you will tell your story from the first-person point-of-view, but personal narratives can also be told from a different perspective; I recommend "Comatose Dreams" to illustrate this at work. As you're developing and revising your writing, try to inhabit different authorial positions: What would change if you used the third person POV instead of first person? What

different meanings would your reader find if you told this story with a different tone—bitter instead of nostalgic, proud rather than embarrassed, sarcastic rather than genuine?

Furthermore, there are many rhetorical situations that call for different POVs. (For instance, you may have noticed that this book uses the second-person very frequently.) So, as you evaluate which POV will be most effective for your current rhetorical situation, bear in mind that the same choice might inform your future writing.

Building Characters

Whether your story is fiction or nonfiction, you should spend some time thinking about **characterization**: the development of characters through actions, descriptions, and dialogue. Your audience will be more engaged with and sympathetic toward your narrative if they can vividly imagine the characters as real people.

Like description, characterization relies on specificity. Consider the following contrast in character descriptions:

My mom is great. She is an average-sized brunette with brown eyes. She is very loving and supportive, and I know I can rely on her. She taught me everything I know.

In addition to some of my father's idiosyncrasies, however, he is also one of the most kind-hearted and loving people in my life. One of his signature actions is the 'cry-smile,' in which he simultaneously cries and smiles any time he experiences a strong positive emotion (which is almost daily). Excerpt by an anonymous student author, 2016. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

How does the "cry-smile" detail enhance the characterization of the speaker's parent?

Characterization graphic

The word character appears in a large middle circle. Moving clockwise, there are 4 smaller circles around it. The topic circle says Description; the circle on the right side says Thoughts/Internal Monologue. The bottom circle says Speech/Dialogue while the circle on the

left side says Actions/Behaviors.

To break it down to process, characterization can be accomplished in two ways:

- **Directly**, through specific description of the character—What kind of clothes do they wear? What do they look, smell, sound like?—or,

- **Indirectly**, through the behaviors, speech, and thoughts of the character—What kind of language, dialect, or register do they use? What is the tone, inflection, and timbre of their voice? How does their manner of speaking reflect their attitude toward the listener? How do their actions reflect their traits? What's on their mind that they won't share with the world?

Thinking through these questions will help you get a better understanding of each character (often including yourself!). You do not need to include all the details, but they should inform your description, dialogue, and narration.

Round characters...	are very detailed, requiring attentive description of their traits and behaviors.	Your most important characters should be round: the added detail will help your reader better visualize,

		understand, and care about them.
Flat characters...	are minimally detailed, only briefly sketched or named.	Less important characters should take up less space and will therefore have less detailed characterization.
Static characters...	remain the same throughout the narrative.	Even though all of us are always changing, some people will behave and appear the same throughout the course of your story. Static characters can serve as a reference point for dynamic characters to show the latter's growth.
Dynamic characters...	noticeably change within the narrative, typically as a result of the events.	Most likely, you will be a dynamic character in your personal narrative because such stories are centered around an impactful experience, relationship, or place. Dynamic characters learn and grow over time, either gradually or with an epiphany.

Dialogue

Thanks to Alex Dannemiller for his contributions to this subsection.

dialogue: communication between two or more characters.

Think of the different conversations you've had today, with family, friends, or even classmates. Within each of those conversations, there were likely preestablished relationships that determined how you talked to each other: each is its own rhetorical situation. A dialogue with your friends, for example, may be far different from one with your family. These relationships can influence tone of voice, word choice (such as using slang, jargon, or lingo), what details we share, and even what language we speak.

As we've seen above, good dialogue often demonstrates the traits of a character or the relationship of characters. From reading or listening to how people talk to one another, we often infer the relationships they have. We can tell if they're having an argument or conflict, if one is experiencing some internal conflict or trauma, if they're friendly acquaintances or cold strangers, even how their emotional or professional attributes align or create opposition.

Often, dialogue does more than just one thing, which makes it a challenging tool to master. When dialogue isn't doing more than one thing, it can feel flat or expositional, like a bad movie or TV show where everyone is saying their feelings or explaining what just happened. For example, there is a difference between "No thanks, I'm not hungry" and "I've told you, I'm not hungry." The latter shows frustration, and hints at a previous conversation. Exposition can have a place in dialogue, but we should use it deliberately, with an awareness of how natural or unnatural it may sound. We should be aware how dialogue impacts the pacing of the narrative. Dialogue can be musical and create tempo, with either quick back and forth, or long drawn out pauses between two characters. Rhythm of a dialogue can also tell us about the characters' relationship and emotions.

We can put some of these thoughts to the test using the exercises in the Activities section of this chapter to practice writing dialogue.

Choosing a Medium

Narration, as you already know, can occur in a variety of media: TV shows, music, drama, and even Snapchat Stories practice narration in different ways. Your instructor may ask you to write a traditional personal narrative (using only prose), but if you are given the opportunity, you might also consider what other media or genres might inform your narration. Some awesome narratives use a **multimedia** or **multigenre** approach, synthesizing multiple different forms, like audio and video, or nonfiction, poetry, and photography.

In addition to the limitations and opportunities presented by your rhetorical situation, choosing a medium also depends on the opportunities and limitations of different forms. To determine which tool or tools you want to use for your story, you should consider which medium (or combination of media) will help you best accomplish your purpose. Here's a non-comprehensive list of storytelling tools you might incorporate in place of or in addition to traditional prose:

- Images
- Poetry
- Video
- Illustrations
- Comics, manga, or other graphic storytelling

- Audio recording
- "Found" texts (fragments of other authors' works reframed to tell a different story)
- Journal entries or series of letters
- Plays, screenplays, or other works of drama
- Blogs and social media postings

Although each of these media is a vehicle for delivering information, it is important to acknowledge that each different medium will have a different impact on the audience; in other words, the medium can change the message itself.

There are a number of digital tools available that you might consider for your storytelling medium, as well.

- Tips on podcasting and audio engineering: Transom
- Interactive web platform hosting: H5P
- Audio editing and engineering: Wavepad
- Whiteboard video creation (paid, free trial): Videoscribe
- Infographic maker: https://piktochart.com/
- Comic and graphic narrative software (free, paid upgrades): Pixton

Video: Storytelling with Robyn Vazquez

Vazquez, Robyn. Interview with Shane Abrams. 2 July 2017, Deep End Theater, Portland, OR.

Activities

Idea Generation: What Stories Can I Tell?

You may already have an idea of an important experience in your life about which you could tell a story. Although this might be a significant experience, it is most definitely not the only one worth telling. (Remember: first idea ≠ best idea.)

Just as with description, good narration isn't about shocking content but rather about effective and innovative writing. In order to broaden your options before you begin developing your story, complete the organizer on the following pages.

Then, choose three of the list items from this page that you think are especially unique or have had a serious impact on your life experience. On a separate sheet of paper, free-write about each of your three list items for no less than five minutes per item.

List five places that are significant to you (real, fictional, or imaginary)

1)

2)

3)

4)

5)

List three obstacles you've overcome to be where you are today

1)

2)

3)

List three difficult moments – tough decisions, traumatic or challenging experiences, or troubling circumstances

1)

2)

3)

List ten people who have influenced your life in some way (positive or negative, acquainted or not, real or fictional)

1)   6)

2)   7)

3)   8)

4)   9)

5)   10)

List ten ways that you identify yourself (roles, adjectives, or names)

1)   6)

2)   7)

3)   8)

4)   9)

5)   10)

Idea Generation: Mapping an Autobiography
This activity is a modified version of one by Lily Harris.

This exercise will help you develop a variety of options for your story, considered especially in the context of your entire life trajectory.

First, brainstorm at least ten moments or experiences that you consider influential—moments that in some way impacted your identity, your friendships, your worldview—for the better or for the worse. Record them in the table on the next page.

Then, rate those experiences on a degree of "awesomeness," "pleasurability," or something else along those lines, on a scale of 0 – 10, with 10 being the hands down best moment of your life and 0 being the worst.

Next, plot those events on the graph paper on the page following the table. Each point is an event; the x-axis is your age, and the y-axis is the factor of positivity. Connect the points with a line.

Finally, circle three of the events/experiences on your graph. On a clean sheet of paper, free-write about each of those three for at least four minutes.

10 Most influential Moments

Your age	Event, moment, or experience	Awesomeness Factor (0-10)

Your Age

"Awesomeness" Factor

10 9 8 7 6 5 4 3 2 1 0
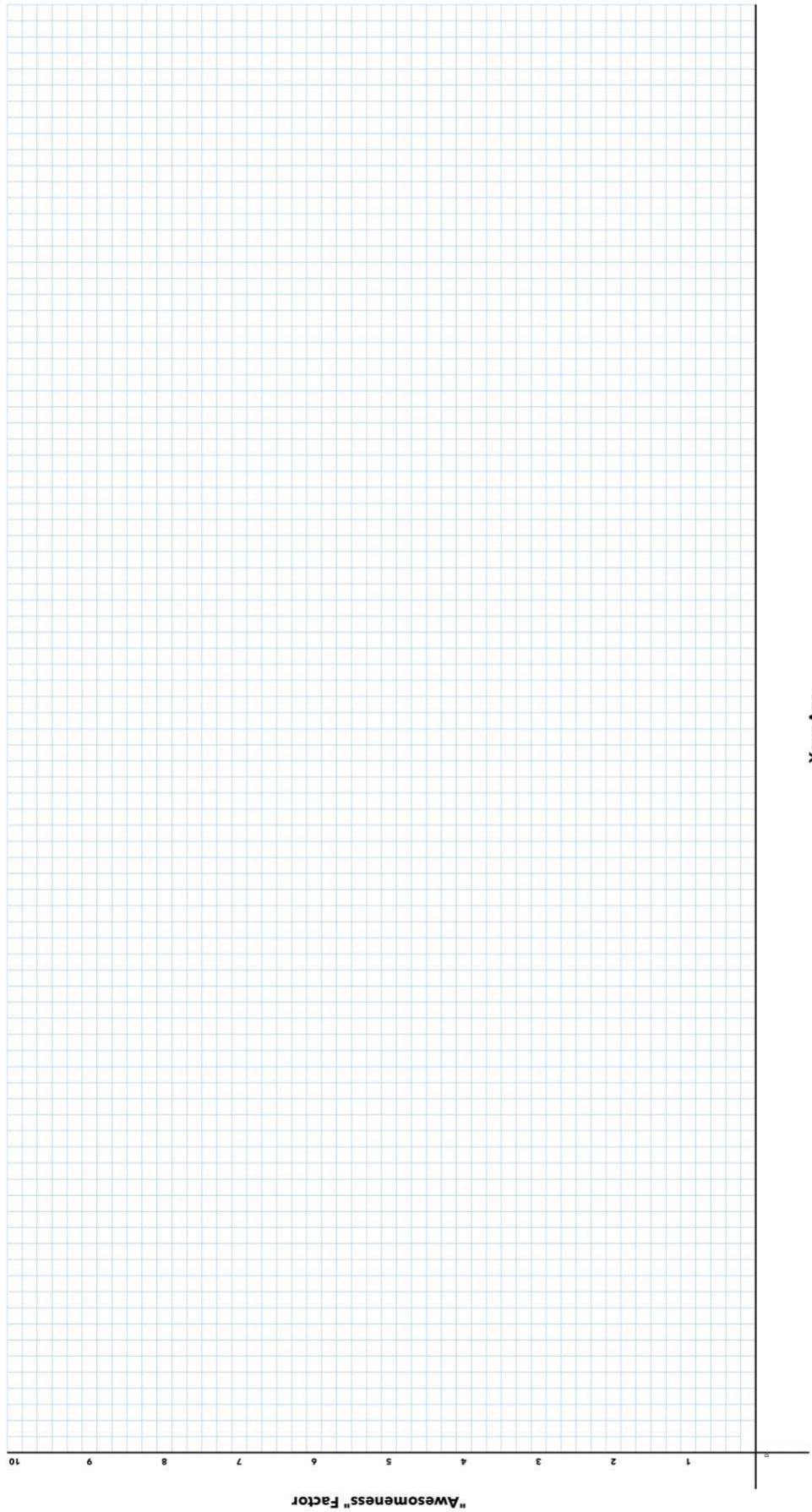
Experimenting with Voice and Dialogue
Thanks to Alex Dannemiller for his contributions to this subsection.

Complete the following three exercises to think through the language your characters use and the relationships they demonstrate through dialogue. If you've started your assignment, you can use these exercises to generate content.

The Secret

1) Choose any two professions for two imaginary characters.

2) Give the two characters a secret that they share with one another. As you might imagine, neither of them would reveal that secret aloud, but they might discuss it. (To really challenge yourself, you might also come up with a reason that their secret must be a secret: Is it socially unacceptable to talk about? Are they liable to get in trouble if people find out? Will they ruin a surprise?)

3) Write an exchange between those characters about the secret using only their words (i.e., no "he said" or "she said," but rather only the language they use). Allow the secret to be revealed to the reader in how the characters speak, what they say, and how they say it. Pay attention to the subtext of what's being said and how it's being said. How would these characters discuss their secret without revealing it to eavesdroppers? (Consider Ernest Hemingway's "Hills Like White Elephants" as a model.)

4) Draw a line beneath your dialogue. Now, imagine that only one of the characters has a secret. Write a new dialogue in which one character is trying to keep that secret from the other. Again, consider how the speakers are communicating: what language do they use? What sort of tone? What does that reveal about their relationship?

The Overheard

1) Go to a public space and eavesdrop on a conversation. (Try not to be too creepy—be considerate and respectful of the people.) You don't need to take avid notes, but observe natural inflections, pauses, and gestures. What do these characteristics imply about the relationship between the speakers?

2) Jot down a fragment of striking, interesting, or weird dialogue.

3) Now, use that fragment of dialogue to imagine a digital exchange: consider that fragment as a Facebook status, a text message, or a tweet. Then, write at least ten comments or replies to that fragment.

4) Reflect on the imaginary digital conversation you just created. What led you to make the choices you made? How does digital dialogue differ from real-life dialogue?

Beyond Words

As you may have noticed in the previous exercises, dialogue is about more than just what the words say: our verbal communication is supplemented by inflection, tone, body language, and pace, among other things. With a partner, exchange the following lines. Without changing the words, try to change the meaning using your tone, inflection, body language, etc.

a		B
"I don't want to talk about it."		"Leave me alone."
"Can we talk about it?"		"What do you want from me?"
"I want it."		"You can't have it."
"Have you seen her today?"		"Why?"

After each round, debrief with your partner; jot down a few notes together to describe how your variations changed the meaning of each word. Then, consider how you might capture and relay these different deliveries using written language—what some writers call "dialogue tags." Dialogue tags try to reproduce the nuance of our spoken and unspoken languages (e.g., "he muttered," "she shouted in frustration," "they insinuated, crossing their arms").

Using Images to Tell a Story

Even though this textbook focuses on writing as a means to tell stories, you can also construct thoughtful and unique narratives using solely images or using images to supplement your writing. A single photograph can tell a story, but a series will create a more cohesive narrative. To experiment with this medium, try the following activity.

1) Using your cell phone or a digital camera, take at least one photograph (of yourself, events, and/or your surroundings) each hour for one day.

2) Compile the photos and arrange them in chronological order. Choose any five photos that tell a story about part or all of your day.
   - How did you determine which photos to remove? What does this suggest about your narrative scope?
   - Where might you want to add photos or text? Why?

To consider models of this kind of narrative, check out Al Jazeera's "In Pictures" series.

In 2014, a friend of mine recorded a one-second video every day for a year, creating a similar kind of narrative — One Second Everyday 2014

Model Texts by Student Authors

Under the Knife

The white fluorescent lights mirrored off the waxed and buffed vinyl flooring. Doctors and nurses beelined through small congregations of others conversing. Clocks were posted at every corner of every wall and the sum of the quiet ticking grew to an audible drone. From the vinyl floors to the desks where decade old Dell computers sat, a sickly gray sucked all the life from the room. The only source of color was the rainbow circle crocheted blanket that came customary for minors about to undergo surgery. It was supposed to be a token of warmth and happiness, a blanket you could find life in; however, all I found in the blanket was an unwanted pity.

Three months ago doctors diagnosed me with severe scoliosis. They told me I would need to pursue orthopedic surgery to realign my spine. For years I endured through back pain and discomfort, never attributing it to the disease. In part, I felt as if it was my fault, that me letting the symptoms go unattended for so long led it to become so extreme. Those months between the diagnosis and the surgery felt like mere seconds. Every day I would recite to myself that everything would be okay and that I had nothing to worry about. However, then minutes away from sedation, I felt like this bed I was in—only three feet off the ground—would put me six feet under.

The doctors informed me beforehand of the potential complications that could arise from surgery. Partial paralysis, infection, death, these words echoed throughout the chasms of my mind. Anxiety overwhelmed me; I was a dying animal surrounded by ravenous vultures, drool dripping awaiting their next meal. My palms were a disgusting swamp of sweat that gripped hard onto the white sheets that covered me. A feeling of numbness lurked into my extremities and slowly infected its way throughout my body.

The vinyl mattress cover I was on felt like a porcelain toilet seat during a cold winter morning. It did not help my discomfort that I had nothing on but a sea blue gown that covered only the front and ankle high socks that seemed like bathroom scrubbers. A heart rate monitor clamp was tightly affixed onto my index finger that had already lost circulation minutes ago. The monitor was the snitch giving away my growing anxiety; my heart rate began to increase as I

awaited surgery. Attached to the bed frame was a remote that could adjust almost every aspect of the bed. I kept the bed at an almost right angle: I wanted to be aware of my surroundings.

My orthopediatrician and surgeon, Dr. Halsey, paced in from the hallway and gave away a forced smile to ease me into comfort. The doctor shot out his hand and I hesitantly stuck out mine for the handshake. I've always hated handshakes; my hands are incredibly sweaty and I did not want to disgust him with my soggy tofu hands. He asked me how my day was so far, and I responded with a concise "Alright." Truth was, my day so far was pretty lackluster and tiring. I had woken up before the birds had even begun to chirp, I ate nothing for breakfast, and I was terrified out of my mind. This Orthopedic Surgeon, this man, this human, was fully in charge of the surgery. Dr. Halsey and other surgeons deal with one of the most delicate and fragile things in the world—people's lives. The amount of pressure and nerves he must face on an everyday basis is incredible. His calm and reserved nature made me believe that he was confident in himself, and that put me more at ease.

An overweight nurse wheeled in an IV with a bag of solution hooked to the side. "Which arm do you prefer for your IV?" she inquired.

Needles used to terrify me. They were tiny bullets that pierced through your skin like mosquitos looking for dinner, but by now I had grown accustomed to them. Like getting stung by a bee for the first time, my first time getting blood taken was a grueling adventure. "Left, I guess," I let out with a long anxiety-filled sigh.

The rubber band was thick and dark blue, the same color as the latex gloves she wore. I could feel my arm pulse in excitement as they tightly wrapped the rubber band right above my elbow.

"Oh, wow! Look at that vein pop right out!" The nurse exclaimed as she inspected the bulging vein.

I tried to distract myself from the nurse so I wouldn't hesitate as the IV was going in. I stared intently at the speckled ceiling tiles. They were the same ones used in schools. As my eyes began to relax, the dots on the ceiling started to transform into different shapes and animals. There was a squirrel, a seal, and a do—I felt pain shock through my body as the IV needle had infiltrated into my arm.

Dr. Halsey had one arm planted to the bottom end of the bed frame and the other holding the clipboard that was attached to the frame. "We're going to pump two solutions through you.

The first will be the saline, and the second will be the sedation and anesthesia." The nurse leaned over and punched in buttons connected to the IV. After a loud beep, I felt a cooling sensation run down my arm. I felt like a criminal, prosecuted for murder, and now was one chemical away from finishing the cocktail execution. My eyes darted across the room; I was searching for hope I could cling to.

My mother was sitting on a chair on the other side of the room, eyes slowly and silently sweating. She clutched my father's giant calloused hands as he browsed the internet on his phone. While I would say that I am more similar to my mother than my father, I think we both dealt with our anxiety in similar ways. Just like my father, I too needed a visual distraction to avoid my anxiety. "I love you," my mother called out.

All I did was a slight nod in affirmation. I was too fully engulfed by my own thoughts to even try and let out a single syllable. What is my purpose in life? Have I been successful in making others proud? Questions like these crept up in my mind like an unwanted visitor. "Here comes the next solution," Dr. Halsey announced while pointing his pen at the IV bags. "10…," he began his countdown. "7...," Dr. Halsey continued the countdown.

I've enjoyed my life. I've had my fun and shared many experiences with my closest friends. If I'm not remembered in a few years after I die, then so be it. I'm proud of my small accomplishments so far.

"4…"

Although I am not the most decorated of students, I can say that at least I tried my hardest. All that really mattered was that I was happy. I had hit tranquility; my mind had halted. I was out even before Dr. Halsey finished the countdown. I was at ease.

Breathing Easy

Most people's midlife crises happen when they're well into adulthood; mine happened when I was twelve. For most of my childhood and into my early teen years, I was actively involved in community theater. In the fall of 2010, I was in the throes of puberty as well as in the middle of rehearsals for a production of *Pinocchio*, in which I played the glamorous and highly coveted role of an unnamed puppet. On this particular day, however, I was not onstage rehearsing with all the other unnamed puppets as I should've been; instead, I was locked backstage in a single-stall bathroom, dressed in my harlequin costume and crying my eyes out on the freezing tile floor, the gaudy red and black makeup dripping down my face until I looked like the villain from a low-budget horror movie.

The timing of this breakdown was not ideal. I don't remember exactly what happened in the middle of rehearsal that triggered this moment of hysteria, but I know it had been building for a long time, and for whatever reason, that was the day the dam finally broke. At the time, I had pinpointed the start of my crisis to a moment several months earlier when I started questioning my sexuality. Looking back now, though, I can see that this aspect of my identity had been there since childhood, when as a seven-year-old I couldn't decide if I would rather marry Aladdin or Princess Jasmine.

Up until the age of 16, I lived in Amarillo, Texas, a flat, brown city in the middle of a huge red state. Even though my parents had never been blatantly homophobic in front of me, I grew up in a conservative religious community that was fiercely cisheteronormative. My eighth-grade health teacher kicked off our unit on sex education with a contemptuous, "We aren't going to bother learning about safe sex for homosexuals. We're only going to talk about normal relationships." Another time, when I told a friend about a secret I had (unrelated to my

sexuality), she responded with, "That's not too bad. At least you're not gay," her lips curling in disdain as if simply saying the sinful word aloud left a bad taste in her mouth.

I laid in a crumpled mess on that bathroom floor, crying until my head throbbed and the linoleum beneath me became slick with tears and dollar-store face paint. By the time my crying slowed and I finally pulled myself up off the floor, my entire body felt weighed down by the secret I now knew I had to keep, and despite being a perfectionist at heart, I couldn't find it within myself to care that I'd missed almost all of rehearsal. I looked at my tear-streaked face in the mirror, makeup smeared all over my burning cheeks, and silently admitted to myself what I had subconsciously known for a long time: that I wasn't straight, even though I didn't know exactly what I was yet. At the time, even thinking the words "I might be gay" to myself felt like a death sentence. I promised myself then and there that I would never tell anyone; that seemed to be the only option.

For several years, I managed to keep my promise to myself. Whereas before I had spent almost all of my free time with my friends, after my episode in the bathroom, I became isolated, making up excuses anytime a friend invited me out for fear of accidentally getting too comfortable and letting my secret slip. I spent most of middle school and the beginning of high school so far back in the closet I could barely breathe or see any light. I felt like the puppet I'd played in that production of *Pinocchio*—tied down by fear and shame, controlled by other people and their expectations of me rather than having the ability to be honest about who I was.

Just as I ended up breaking down in that theater bathroom stall when I was twelve, though, I eventually broke down again. My freshman year of high school was one of the worst years of my life. Struggling with mental illness and missing large portions of school as I went in and out of psychiatric hospitals was hard enough, but on top of all of that, I was also lying about a core part of my identity to everyone I knew. After a particularly rough night, I sat down and wrote a letter to my parents explaining that I was pansexual (or attracted to all genders and gender identities). "I've tried to stop being this way, but I can't," I wrote, my normally-neat handwriting reduced to a shaky chicken scratch as I struggled to control the trembling of my hands. "I hope you still love me." With my heart pounding violently in my chest, I signed the letter and left it in the kitchen for them to find before locking myself in my room and pretending to go to sleep so I wouldn't have to deal with their initial response.

By some amazing twist of fate, my parents did not have the horrible reaction I'd been dreading for the past two years. They knocked on my door a few minutes after I'd left the letter for them, and when I nervously let them in, they hugged me and told me that they loved me no matter what; my dad even said, "Kid, you couldn't have picked a better family to be gay in." For the first time in years, I felt like I could breathe again. My fear of rejection was still there—after all, I still had to come out to most of my friends and extended family—but it seemed so much more manageable knowing I had my parents on my side.

Essay by an anonymous student author, 2016. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

Visions

Before I got sober I never paid attention to my dreams. I don't even remember if I had dreams. In the end I was spiritually broken, hopeless, scared and desperate. My life was dedicated to blotting out my miserable existence using copious amounts of booze and drugs. The substances stopped working. Every night was intoxicated tear soaked erratic fits of despair until I passed out. Only to wake up the next morning and begin the vicious cycle all over. Bending and writhing my way out of a five year heroin and alcohol addiction was just as scary. I was in jail. I had no idea how to live. I had no purpose in life. Then the dreams came back. Some of them were terrifying. Some dreams had inspiration. There is one dream I will never forget.

I am standing in a room full of people. They are all sitting looking up at me. I am holding a hand drum. My hands are shaking and I am extremely nervous. An old woman enters the room and walks up to me. The old woman is about half my height. She is barefoot and wearing a long green wool dress. She is holding a walking stick and is draped in animal furs. She has long flowing hair that falls over the animal furs. The old woman looks at all the people in the room. Then she looks at me and says, "It's okay, they are waiting, sing." My heart is racing. I strike the hand drum with all my courage. I feel the heartbeat of the drum. It's my heartbeat. I begin to sing, honoring the four directions. After each verse I pause and the old woman pushes me forward "It's okay," she says, "Sing." I am singing louder now. The third verse is powerful. I am striking the drum with all my strength. Many people singing with me. My spirit is strong. During the fourth verse sparks are flying from the contact between the beater stick and my drum. I am striking the drum with all our strength. We are all singing together. The room is shaking with spirit. The old woman looks over at me and smiles.

I woke up. My heart was racing. I took a deep breath of recirculated air. I could taste the institution. I looked over and saw my cellmate sleeping. I remembered where I was. I knew what I had to do. I had to get sober and stay sober. I had to find my spirit. I had to sing.

At six months of sobriety I was out in the real world. I was living on the Oregon Coast and I was attending local AA meetings. I was still lost but had the dream about singing with the drum in the back of my mind. One day an oldtimer walked into the meeting and sat down. He introduced himself, "My name is Gary, and I am an alcoholic from Colorado." We all respond, "Welcome Gary." Gary intrigued me. He was wearing old jeans, a sweatshirt and a faded old native pride hat with an eagle feather embroider on the front. Beneath the hat he wore round eyeglasses which sat on top of his large nose, below his nose was a bushy mustache. He resembled an Indian version of Groucho Marx. Something felt familiar about his spirit. After the meeting Gary walked up and introduced himself to me. I invited him to our native recovery circle we have on Wednesday nights.

Gary came to our circle that Wednesday. We made plans to hang out after the meeting. Gary is Oglala Lakota. He is a pipe carrier for the people. We decide to hold a pipe ceremony in order to establish connectedness and unite with one heart and mind. To pray and get to know each other. We went down to the beach and lit a fire. It was a clear, warm night. The stars were bright. The fire was crackling and the shadows of the flames were bouncing of the clear night

sky. I took my shoes off and felt the cool soft sand beneath my feet and between my toes. The ocean was rumbling in the distance. Gary started digging around in his bag. The firelight bounced off his glasses giving a twinkle in his eye as he gave me a little smile. He pulled out a hand drum. My heart stopped. He began to sing a song. I knew that song. He was honoring the four directions. My eyes began to water and a wave of emotion flooded over me. I looked up to the stars with gratitude. I asked Gary if he would teach me and he shrugged.

I began to hang around Gary a lot. I would just listen. He let me practice with his drum. He would talk and I would listen. Sometimes he would sing and I would sing along. We continued to go to our native recovery circle. It was growing in attendance. Gary would open the meeting by honoring the four directions with the song and we would smudge down. I would listen and sometimes sing along.

I had a year of sobriety when I got my first drum making supplies. I called Gary and he came over to help me make it. Gary showed me how to prep the hide. How to stretch the hide over the wooden hoop and how to lace it up in the back. I began to find purpose in the simple act of learning how to create stuff. I brought my drum to our native recovery circle. Around forty people attend our circle now. Many of them young and new still struggling with addiction. We lit the sage to open the meeting. The smoke began to rise into the sky. I inhaled the smoky scent deep and could feel the serenity and cleansing property of the sage medicine. I looked around at all the people. They were all looking at me and waiting. Then I looked at Gary. Gary smiled and said, "It's okay, they are all waiting, sing."

We now have another recovery circle here in Portland on Friday nights. Gary is gone. He had to move to Nashville, Tennessee. Many people come to our circle to find healing from drug and alcohol abuse. We light the sage and smudge down while I honor the four directions with the same song. I carry many of the traditional prayer songs today. Most of them given to me by Gary.

<u>Teacher Takeaways</u>
 "I love this essay. It's clear that the student is personally invested in the subject matter—that they've chosen something that is important to their identity and worldview—and they use

repetition to highlight the experience of learning and growing. If this author planned to revise further, I would encourage them to experiment with sentence structure: the author uses what we call 'simple sentences' predominantly, which leads to a rhythmic but sometimes monotonous cadence. For instance, instead of 'Gary is gone. He had to move to Nashville, Tennessee,' the student could try 'Because he had to move to Nashville, Tennessee, Gary is gone now.' (Neither sentence is inherently better, but variety in sentence structure keeps the reader more engaged.)"

– Professor Dawson

Part III: Reflecting on an Experience

One of my greatest pleasures as a writing instructor is learning about my students' life journeys through their storytelling. Because it is impossible for us to truly know anything beyond our own lived experience, sharing our stories is the most powerful form of teaching. It allows us a chance to learn about others' lives and worldviews.

To consider this phenomenon further, check out this video — "The Importance of Empathy."

Often, our rhetorical purpose in storytelling is to entertain. Storytelling is a way to pass time, to make connections, and to share experiences. Just as often, though, stories are didactic: one of the rhetorical purposes (either overtly or covertly) is to teach. Since human learning often relies on experience, and relating an experience constitutes storytelling, narrative can be an indirect teaching opportunity. Articulating lessons drawn from an experience, though, requires **reflection**.

Reflection is a way that writers *look back*

Reflection is a rhetorical gesture that helps you and your audience construct meaning from the story you've told. It demonstrates why your story matters, to you and to the audience more generally: how did the experience change you? What did it teach you? What relevance does it hold for your audience? Writers often consider reflection as a means of "looking back in order to look forward." This means that storytelling is not just a mode of preservation, nostalgia, or regret, but instead a mechanism for learning about ourselves and the world.

Vocabulary

reflection - a rhetorical gesture by which an author looks back, through the diegetic gap, to demonstrate knowledge or understanding gained from the subject on which they are reflecting. May also include consideration of the impact of that past subject on the author's future—"Looking back in order to look forward."

diegetic gap - from "diegesis," the temporal distance between a first-person narrator narrating and the same person acting in the plot events. I.e., the space between author-as-author and author-as-character.

Techniques

As you draft your narrative, keep in mind that your story or stories should allow you to draw some insight that has helped you or may help your reader in some way: reflection can help you relate a lesson, explore an important part of your identity, or process through a complicated set of memories. Your writing should equip both you and your audience with a perspective or knowledge that challenges, nuances, or shapes the way you and they interact with the world. This reflection need not be momentous or dramatic, but will deepen the impression of your narrative.

Reflection relies on what I call the **diegetic gap**. Diegesis is a term from the field of narratology referring to narration—the story as it is portrayed. In turn, this gap identifies that time has passed between the plot events and your act of writing. Simply put, the diegetic gap is the distance between you-the-author and you-the- character:
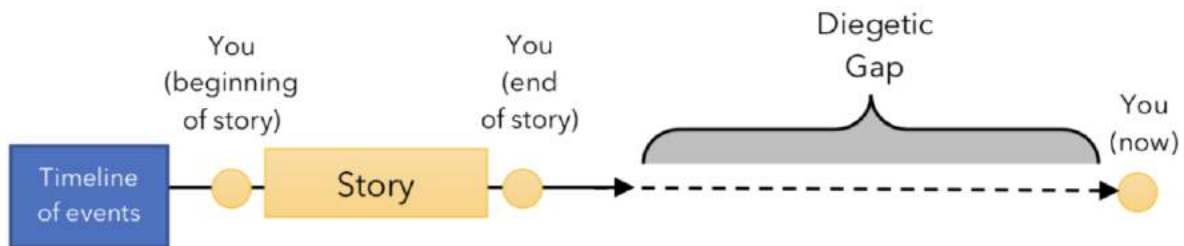
Because we are constantly becoming ourselves, shaped by our relationships and experiences, "you" are a different person at all three points. By looking back at your story, you can cultivate meaning in ways you could not during the events or immediately following them. Distance from an event changes the way we see previous events: time to process, combined with new experiences and knowledge, encourages us to interpret the past differently.

As you'll see in the upcoming activities, looking back through this gap is a gesture akin to the phrase "When I look back now, I realize that…"

This activity is a modified version of one by Susan Kirtley.

Wrap-up vs. Weave

Students often have a hard time integrating reflective writing throughout their narratives. In some cases, it is effective to use reflection to "wrap up" the story; it might not make sense to talk about a lesson learned before the story has played out. However, you should try to avoid the "tacked on" paragraph at the end of your story: if your reflective writing takes over at the end of the story, it should still feel like a part of the narrative rather than an afterthought. In other words, you should only reserve your reflective writing for the last paragraph or two if the story has naturally and fluidly brought us across the diegetic gap to present day.

You may notice that your choices in narration, including point-of-view, tense, and scope, will influence you're the way you develop
reflective writing.

Spelling it Out vs. Implying Meaning

Finally, you should be deliberate about how overt you should make your reflection. If you are trying to connect with your reader, sharing your story so they might better know you, the world you live in, or even themselves, you need to walk the fine line between subtlety and over-explanation. You need to be clear enough that your reader can generalize and relate. Consider the essay "Comatose Dreams" in the previous section: it does exceptional work with implication, but some readers have trouble knowing what they should take away from the story to apply to their own lives.

It is also possible, though, to be too explicit. Take, for example, Charles Perrault's 1697 publication of a classic folk story, "Little Red Riding Hood." As with many fairy tales, this story is overtly didactic, stating the following moral after Little Red Riding Hood's demise:

> *Moral: Children, especially attractive, well-bred young ladies, should never talk to strangers, for if they should do so, they may well provide dinner for a wolf. I say "wolf," but there are various kinds of wolves. There are also those who are charming, quiet, polite, unassuming, complacent, and sweet, who pursue young women at home and in the streets. And unfortunately, it is these gentle wolves who are the most dangerous ones of all.*

> (from Perrault, Charles. "Little Red Riding Hood." 1697. *Making Literature Matter*, 4th edition, edited by John Schlib and John Clifford, Bedford, 2009, pp. 1573- 1576.)

Admittedly, this story is a not the kind of narrative you will write if your teacher has assigned a descriptive personal narrative: it is fictional and in third person. For the purposes of studying reflection as a rhetorical gesture, though, "Little Red Riding Hood" does some of the same things that a personal narrative would: it uses a story to deliver a didactic message based on learning from experience.

I encourage you to discuss the misogynist leanings of this moral with your class. For our purposes here, though, let's consider what Perrault's "wrap-up" does, rhetorically. With a target audience of, presumably, children, Perrault assumes that the moral needs to be spelled out. This paragraph does the "heavy lifting" of interpreting the story as an allegory; it explains what the reader is supposed to take away from the fairy tale so they don't have to figure it out on their own. On the other side of that coin, though, it limits interpretive possibilities. Perrault makes the intent of the story unambiguous, making it less likely that readers can synthesize their own meaning.

Activities

What My Childhood Tastes Like

This exercise is loosely based on Gallagher, pp. 44-45.

To practice reflection, try this activity writing about something very important—food.

First, spend five minutes making a list of every food or drink you remember from childhood.

Mine looks like this:

> *- Plain cheese quesadillas, made by my mom in the miniscule kitchenette of our one-bedroom apartment*
> *- "Chicken"-flavored ramen noodles, at home alone after school*
> *- Cayenne pepper cherry Jell-O at my grandparents' house*
> *- Wheat toast slathered in peanut butter before school*
> *- Lime and orange freezy-pops*
> *- My stepdad's meatloaf—ironically, the only meatloaf I've ever liked*
> *- Cookie Crisp cereal ("It's cookies—for breakfast!")*
> *- Macintosh apples and creamy Skippy peanut butter*
> *- Tostitos Hint of Lime chips and salsa*
> *- Love Apple Stew that only my grandma can make right*
> *- Caramel brownies, by my grandma who can't bake anymore*

Then, identify one of those foods that holds a special place in your memory. Spend another five minutes free-writing about the memories you have surrounding that food. What makes it so special? What relationships are represented by that food? What life circumstances? What does it represent about *you*? Here's my model; I started out with my first list item, but then digressed—you too should feel free to let your reflective writing guide you.

> *My mom became a gourmet with only the most basic ingredients. We lived bare bones in a one-bedroom apartment in the outskirts of Denver; for whatever selfless reason, she gave four-year-old the bedroom and she took a futon in the living room. She would cook for me after caring for other mothers' four-year-olds all day long: usually plain cheese quesadillas (never any sort of add-ons, meats, or veggies—besides my abundant use of store-brand ketchup) or scrambled eggs (again, with puddles of ketchup).*

When I was 6, my dad eventually used ketchup as a rationale for my second stepmom: "Shane, look! Judy likes ketchup on her eggs too!" But it was my mom I remembered cooking for me every night—not Judy, and certainly not my father.
"I don't like that anymore. I like barbecue sauce on my eggs."

Reflection as a Rhetorical Gesture

Although reflection isn't necessarily its own rhetorical mode, it certainly is a posture that you can apply to any mode of writing. I picture it as a pivot, perhaps off to the left somewhere, that opens up the diegetic gap and allows me to think through the impact of an experience. As mentioned earlier, this gesture can be represented by the phrase "When I look back now, I realize that…" To practice this pivot, try this exercise.

1) Over five minutes, write a description of the person who taught you to tie your shoes, ride a bike, or some other life skill. You may tell the story of learning this skill if you want, but it is not necessary. (See characterization for more on describing people.)

2) Write the phrase "When I look back now, I realize that."

3) Complete the sentence and proceed with reflective writing for another five minutes. What does your reflection reveal about that person that the narrative doesn't showcase? Why? How might you integrate this "wrap-up" into a "weave"?

End-of-Episode Voice-Overs: Reflection in Television Shows

In addition to written rhetoric, reflection is also a tool used to provide closure in many television shows: writers use voiceovers in these shows in an attempt to neatly tie up separate narrative threads for the audience, or to provide reflective insight on what the audience just watched for added gravity or relevance for their lives. Often a show will use a voiceover toward the end of the episode to provide (or try to provide) a satisfying dénouement.

To unpack this trope, watch an episode of one of the following TV shows or one of the films (streaming on Netflix, Hulu, or Amazon Prime at the time of this writing or DVDs are available the Lewiston Public Library system (You may have to request it from another library in the system) and write a paragraph in response to the questions below:

- *Scrubs* (Hulu, DVD Lewiston)

- *Grey's Anatomy* (Netflix, Hulu, Amazon Prime, DVD Lewiston)

- *The Wonder Years* (Hulu, Amazon Prime)

- *How I Met Your Mother* (Hulu, DVD Lewiston)

- *Ally McBeal* (Hulu, Amazon Prime)

- *Jane the Virgin* (Netflix, Hulu, DVD Lewiston)

- *Sex and the City* (Amazon Prime, DVD Lewiston)

- *A Christmas Story* (DVD Lewiston)

- *Something Wicked This Way Comes* (DVD Lewiston)

- What individual stories were told in the episode? How was each story related to the others?
- Is there a common lesson at all the characters learned?
- At what point(s) does the voiceover use the gesture of reflection? Does it seem genuine? Forced? Satisfying? Frustrating?

Dr. Cox: "*Grey's Anatomy* always wraps up every episode with some cheesy voice-over that ties together all of the storylines, which, incidentally, is my least favorite device on television." …
Elliot: "I happen to like the voice-overs on *Grey's Anatomy*, except for when they're really vague and generic."
Voice-over (J.D.): And so, in the end, I knew what Elliot said about the way things were has forever changed the way we all thought about them. *— Scrubs*

The quote reproduced is from "My Scrubs." *Scrubs*, NBC Universal, 2007.

Model Texts by Student Authors

Slowing Down

I remember a time when I was still oblivious to it. My brother, sister, and I would pile out of the car and race through the parking lot to the store, or up the driveway to the house, never so much as a glance backward. I'm not sure exactly when it happened, but at some point I started to take notice, fall back, slow my pace, wait for him.

My dad wasn't always that slow. He didn't always have to concentrate so hard to just put one foot in front of the other. Memory has a way of playing tricks on you, but I swear that I can remember him being tall, capable, and strong once. When I was real little he could put me on his shoulders and march me around: I have pictures to prove it. I also have fuzzy memories of family camping trips—him taking us to places like Yosemite, Death Valley, and the California coast. What I remember clearly, though, was him driving to and from work every day in that old flatbed truck with the arc welder strapped to the back, going to fix boilers, whatever those were.

My dad owned his own business; I was always proud of that. I'd tell my friends that he was the boss. Of course, he was the sole employee, aside from my mom who did the books. I didn't tell them that part. But he did eventually hire a guy named David. My mom said it was to "be his hands." At the time I wasn't sure what that meant but I knew that his hands certainly looked different than other people's, all knotty. And he'd started to use that foam thing that he'd slip over his fork or toothbrush so he could grip it better. I supposed that maybe a new set of hands wasn't a bad idea.

When I was about 8, he and my mom made a couple of trips to San Francisco to see a special doctor. They said that he'd need several surgeries before they were through, but that they'd start on his knees. I pictured my dad as a robot, all of his joints fused together with nuts and bolts. I wondered if I'd have to oil him, like the tin man. It made me laugh to think about it: bionic dad. That wouldn't be so bad; maybe I could take him to show and tell. To be honest, I was sometimes a little embarrassed by the way he looked when he came to pick me up at school or my friend's house. He wore braces in his boots to help him walk, he always moved so slow, and his hands had all those knots that made them curl up like old grapevines. And then there was that dirty old fanny pack he always carried with him because he couldn't reach his wallet if it was in his pocket. Yeah, bionic dad would be an improvement.

It was around this time that my parents decided to give up the business. That was fine with me; it meant he'd be home all day. Also, his flatbed work truck quickly became our new jungle gym and the stage for many new imaginary games. Maybe it was him not being able to work anymore that finally made it click for me, but I think it was around this time that I started to slow down a bit, wait for him.

He could still drive—he just needed help starting the ignition. But now, once we'd get to where we were going, I'd try not to walk too fast. It had begun to occur to me that maybe walking ahead of him was kind of disrespectful or insensitive. In a way, I think that I just didn't want him to know that my legs worked better than his. So, I'd help him out of the car, offer to carry his fanny pack, and try to walk casually next to him, as if I'd always kept that pace.

I got pretty good at doing other stuff for him, too; we all did. He couldn't really reach above shoulder height anymore, so aside from just procuring cereal boxes from high shelves we'd take turns combing his hair, helping him shave, or changing his shirt. I never minded helping out. I had spent so many years being my dad's shadow and copying him in every aspect that I possibly could; helping him out like this just made me feel useful, like I was finally a worthy sidekick. I pictured Robin combing Batman's hair. That probably happened from time to time, right?

Once I got to high school, our relationship began to change a bit. I still helped him out, but we had started to grow apart. I now held my own opinions about things, and like most kids in the throes of rebellion, I felt the need to make this known at every chance I got. I rejected his music, politics, TV shows, sports, you name it. Instead of being his shadow we became more like reflections in a mirror; we looked the same, but everything was opposite, and I wasted no opportunity to demonstrate this.

We argued constantly. Once in particular, while fighting about something to do with me not respecting his authority, he came at me with his arms crossed in front of him and shoved me. I was taller than him by this point, and his push felt akin to someone not paying attention and accidentally bumping into me while wandering the aisles at the supermarket. It was nothing. But it was also the first time he'd ever done anything like that, and I was incredulous—eager, even— at the invitation to assert myself physically. I shoved him back. He lost his footing and flailed backwards. If the refrigerator hadn't been there to catch him he would have fallen. I still

remember the wild look in his eyes as he stared at me in disbelief. I felt ashamed of myself, truly ashamed, maybe for the first time ever. I offered no apology, though, just retreated to my room. In those years, with all the arguing, I just thought of my dad as having an angry heart. It seemed that he wasn't just mad at me: he was mad at the world. But to his credit, as he continued to shrink, as his joints became more fused and his extremities more gnarled, he never complained, and never stopped trying to contribute. And no matter how much of an entitled teenaged brat I was, he never stopped being there when I needed him, so I tried my best to return the favor.

It wasn't until I moved out of my parents' house that I was able to really reflect on my dad's lot in life. His body had started to betray him in his mid-20s and continued to work against him for the rest of his life. He was diagnosed with rheumatoid arthritis, the worst case that his specialists had seen, and eventually had surgery on both knees, ankles, wrists, elbows, and shoulders. Not that they helped much. He had an Easter-sized basket full of pills he had to take every day. When I was younger I had naively thought that those pills were supposed to help him get better. But now that I was older I finally realized that their only purpose was to mitigate pain. I decided that if I were him, I'd be pretty pissed off too.

I was 24 and living in Portland the morning that I got the call. I was wrong about his heart being angry. Turned out it was just weak. With all of those pills he took, I should have known that it was only a matter of time before it would give out; I'm pretty sure he did. When I think back on it, my dad had a lot of reasons to be angry. Aside from he himself being shortchanged, he had us to consider. I know it weighed on him that he couldn't do normal "dad" stuff with us. And then there was my mom. Their story had started out so wild and perfect, a couple of beautiful longhaired kids that met and fell in love while hitchhiking in Canada. She had moved across the country to marry him. The unfairness that life didn't go as they'd planned, that she'd be a young widow—these are things I know he thought about. But he never mentioned them. He never complained. He never talked about the pain he was in, even though I know now it was constant. I guess at some point he became like the fish that doesn't know it's in water. That, or he just made his peace with it somehow.

It took me a long time to find my own peace in his situation. Our situation. I was angry for myself and my family, but mostly I was angry for him. I was pissed that he had to spend the last twenty something years of his life in that prison he called a body. Eventually though, that anger gave way to other feelings. Gratitude, mostly. I don't think that my dad could have lived a

hundred healthy years and taught me the same lessons that I learned from watching him suffer. He taught me about personal sacrifice, the brevity of life, how it can be both a blessing and a curse. All kids are egocentric (I know I definitely was), but he was the first one to make me think outside of myself, without having to ask me to do it. He taught me what compassion and and patience looked like. He taught me to slow down.

Essay by Beth Harding, Portland State University, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

Untitled

The sky was white, a blank canvas, when I became the middle school's biggest and most feared bully. The sky was white and my hands were stained red with blood—specifically a boy named Garrett's blood. I was 12 years old, smaller than average with clothes-hanger collar bones but on that day I was the heavyweight champion. It wasn't as if I'd just snapped out of the blue; it wasn't as if he were innocent. He had just been the only one within arms-length at the time when my heart beat so loudly in my ears, a rhythm I matched with my fists. I was dragged off of him minutes later by stunned teachers (who had never seen me out of line before) and escorted to the Principal's Office. They murmured over my head as if I couldn't hear them. "What do you think that was about?" "Who started it?" I was tightlipped and frightened, shaking and wringing my hands, rusting with someone else's blood on them. Who started it? That particular brawl could have arguably been started by me: I jumped at him, I threw the only punches. But words are what started the fight. Words were at the root of my anger.

I was the kid who was considered stupid: math, a foreign language my tongue refused to speak. I was pulled up to the front of the classroom by my teachers who thought struggling my way through word problems on the whiteboard would help me grasp the concepts, but all I could ever do was stand there humiliated, red-faced with clenched fists until I was walked through the equation, step by step. I was the one who tripped over my words when I had to read aloud in English, the sentences rearranging themselves on the page until tears blurred my vision. I never spoke in class because I was nervous—"socially anxious" is what the doctors called it. Severe social anxiety with panic disorder. I sat in the back and read. I sat at lunch and read because books were easier to talk to than people my own age. Kids tease; it's a fact of life. But sometimes kids are downright cruel. They are relentless. When they find an insecurity, they will poke and prod it, an emotional bruise. A scar on my heart. Names like "idiot" and "loser" and "moron" are phrases chanted like a prayer at me in the halls, on the field, in the lunchroom. They are casual bombs tossed at me on the bus and they detonate around my feet, kicking up gravel and stinging my eyes. What is the saying? Sticks and stones will break my bones but words will never hurt me? Whoever came up with that has quite obviously never been a 12-year-old girl.

The principal stared at me as I walked in, his eyes as still as water. He told me my parents had to be called, I had to be suspended the rest of the week, this is a no-tolerance school. Many facts were rattled off. I began to do what I do best—tune him out—when he said something that glowed. It caught my attention, held my focus. "Would you like to tell me your side of the story?" I must have looked shocked because he half-smiled when he said, "I know there are always two sides. I know you wouldn't just start a fist fight out of nowhere. Did he do something to you?" An avalanche in my throat, the words came crashing out. I explained the bullying, how torturous it was for me to wake up every morning and know I would have to face the jeers and mean comments all day. I told him about how when I put on my uniform every morning, it felt like I was gearing up for a battle I didn't sign up for and knew I wouldn't win. The shame and embarrassment I wore around me like a shawl slipped off. He listened thoughtfully, occasionally pressing his fingers together and bringing them to his pursed lips, his still eyes beginning to ripple, a silent storm. When I was done he apologized. How strange and satisfying to be apologized to by a grown-up. I was validated with that simple "I'm sorry." I almost collapsed on the floor in gratitude. My parents entered the room, worry and anger etched on their faces, folded up in the wrinkles that were just then starting to line their skin. My parents listened as I retold my

story, admitted what I had been bottling up for months. I was relieved, I felt the cliché weight lifted off of my too-narrow shoulders. My principal assured my parents that this was also a no-tolerance stance on bullying and he was gravely sorry the staff hadn't known about the abuse earlier. I was still suspended for three days, but he said to make sure I didn't miss Monday's assembly. He thought it would be important for me.

The Monday I returned, there was an assembly all day. I didn't know what it was for, but I knew everyone had to be there on time so I hurried to find a seat. People avoided eye-contact with me. As I pushed past them, I could feel the whispers like taps on my shoulder. I sat down and the assembly began. It was a teenage girl and she was talking about differences, about how bullying can affect people more than you could ever know. I was leaning forward in my seat trying to hang onto every word because she was describing how I had felt every day for months. She spoke about how her own anxiety and learning disability isolated her. She was made fun of and bullied and she became depressed. It was important to her for us to hear her story because she wanted people like her, like me, to know they weren't alone and that words can do the most damage of all. R.A.D. Respect all differences, a movement that was being implemented in the school to accept and celebrate everybody. At the end of her speech, she asked everyone who had ever felt bullied or mistreated by their peers to stand up. Almost half of the school stood, and I felt like a part of my school for the first time. She then invited anyone who wanted to speak to come up and take the mic. To my surprise, there were multiple volunteers. A line formed and I found myself in it.

I heard kids I'd never talked to before speak about their ADHD, their dyslexia, how racist comments can hurt. I had no idea so many of my classmates had been verbal punching bags; I had felt utterly alone. When it was my turn I explained what it means to be socially anxious. How in classrooms and crowds in general I felt like I was being suffocated: it was hard to focus because I often forgot to breathe. How every sentence I ever spoke was rehearsed at least 15 times before I said it aloud: it was exhausting. I was physically and emotionally drained after interactions, like I had run a marathon. I didn't like people to stare at me because I assumed everyone disliked me, and the bullying just solidified that feeling of worthlessness. It was exhilarating and terrifying to have everyone's eyes on me, everyone listening to what it was like to be inside my head. I stepped back from the microphone and expected boos, or maybe silence.

But instead everyone clapped, a couple teachers even stood up. I was shocked but elated. Finally I was able to express what I went through on a day-to-day basis.

The girl who spoke came up to me after and thanked me for being brave. I had never felt brave in my life until that moment. And yes, there was the honeymoon period. Everyone in the school was nice to each other for about two weeks before everything returned to normal. But for me it was a new normal: no one threw things at me in the halls, no one called me names, my teachers were respectful of my anxiety by not singling me out in class. School should be a sanctuary, a safe space where students feel free to be exactly who they are, free of ridicule or judgment. School had never been that for me, school had been a warzone littered with minefields. I dreaded facing my school days, but then I began to look forward to them. I didn't have to worry about being made fun of anymore. From that moment on, it was just school. Not a place to be feared, but a place to learn.

Essay by Katherine Morris, Portland State University, 2016. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

Teacher Takeaways

"This author obviously has a knack for descriptive metaphor and simile, and for the sonic drive of repetition, all of which contribute to the emotional appeal of the narrative. The more vivid the imagery, the more accessible the event. However, the detailed narrative is only briefly interrupted by the author's current ideas or interpretations; she might consider changing the structure of the essay from linear recollection to a mix of narrative and commentary from herself, in the present. Still, the essay does serve as an example of implicit reflection; the author doesn't do much of the 'heavy lifting' for us."

– Professor Fiscaletti

Parental Guidance

"Derek, it's Dad!" I already knew who it was because the call was made collect from the county jail. His voice sounded clean: he didn't sound like he was fucked up. I heard from his ex-girlfriend about a year earlier that he was going to jail for breaking into her apartment and hiding under her bed with a knife then popping out and threatening her life; probably other stuff too. I wasn't all that surprised to hear from him. I was expecting a call eventually. I was happy to hear from him. I missed him. He needed a place to stay for a couple weeks. I wanted to be a good son.

I wanted him to be proud of me. My room-mates said it was alright. I gave him the address to our apartment and told him to come over. I was 19.

I am told when I was a toddler I wouldn't let my dad take the garbage outside without me hitching a ride on his boot. I would straddle his foot like a horse and hang onto his leg; even in the pouring rain. He was strong, funny and a good surfer. One time at the skatepark when I was 6 or 7 he made these guys leave for smoking pot in front of me and my little sister. He told them to get that shit out of here and they listened. He was protecting us. I wanted to be just like him.

When my dad got to the apartment he was still wearing his yellow jail slippers. They were rubber with a single strap. No socks, a t-shirt and jeans was all he had on. It was January: cold and rainy. He was clean and sober from what I could tell by his voice and eyes. He was there. I hugged him. I was hopeful that maybe he was back for good. I found my dad a pair of warm socks and a hoodie. We were drinking beer and one of my friends offered him one. He must have wanted one but he knows where that leads and he said no thanks. We all got stoned instead.

One time when I was in 7th grade my dad was driving me and my siblings home from school. He saw someone walking down the street wearing a nice snowboarding jacket. It looked just like my dad's snowboarding jacket which he claimed was stolen from the van while he was at work. He pulled the van over next to this guy and got out. He began threatening him. He was cursing and yelling and throwing his hands up and around. I was scared.

He said he only needed a couple weeks to get back on his feet. I was happy to have him there. As long as he wasn't drinking or using drugs he had a chance. He said he was done with all that other shit. He just needs to smoke some pot to relax at night and he will be fine. Sounded reasonable to me. It had been about a year since I dropped out of high school and moved out of my mom's. I worked full time making pizza and smoked pot and drank beer with my friends and roommates. Occasionally there was some coke or ecstasy around but mostly just beer, pot and video games.

One day in 4th grade when we were living in Coos Bay the whole family went to the beach to surf and hang out. My mom and dad were together and it seemed like they loved each other. My littlest sister was a toddler and ran around on the beach in the sun with my mom and our Rottweiler Lani. My older brother and other sister were in the ocean with me and my dad.

We all took turns being pushed into waves on our surfboards by dad. We all caught waves and had a great day. My mom cheered us on from the shore. He was a good dad.

Two weeks passed quickly and my dad was still staying at our apartment. One day while I was at work my dad blew some coke with my roommate. I could tell something was off when I got home. I was worried. He said he was leaving for a couple days to go stay with his friend who is a pastor. He needed some spiritual guidance or something like that. He sounded fucked up. Growing up we did a lot of board sports. My dad owned a surf shop in Lincoln City for a while and worked as a sales representative for various gear companies. We had surfboards, snowboards, windsurfers, sails, wakeboards, wetsuits: several thousand dollars' worth of gear. One day my dad told us someone broke into our garage and stole all the gear. The window in the garage was broken except it appeared to be broken from the inside. He didn't file a police report. My middle school surf club coach tried to get my surfboard from the pawnshop but it was too expensive and the pawn shop owner wouldn't give it back. I felt betrayed.

I came home from work and found my dad in my room passed out. I stumbled over an empty beer can on the way in and there were cheap whiskey bottles scattered about. It smelled horrible. He woke up and was ashamed. He looked up at me from my bed with a thousand pounds pulling down on his puffy eyelids and asked me for a cigarette. He was strung out. Half of our spoons went missing. It smelled like booze, heroin and filth. I was ashamed.

One day in 9th grade I came home from school to find my brother lifting blood stains out of the carpet with hydrogen peroxide. He said some guys came over and beat dad up. He owed them money or stole from them or something. I wanted to call my mom. I was scared.

I told my dad he had to leave. He pleaded to stay for another thirty minutes. I would be at work by then. While I was at work my friends escorted him out. He said he was going to his friend the pastor's house. I didn't hear from him for a couple years after that.

We learn a lot from our parents. Sometimes the best lessons are those on what not to do.

My two-year-old daughter calls me Papa, Daddy, Dad or Derek. Whatever she calls me it has a positive meaning. When we are driving she says from her car-seat, "Daddy's hand", "I want daddy's hand please" and I reach back and put it on her lap.

One day my daughter woke me up and said, "Oh hi Daddy! I wanna go forest. I wanna go hike!" She was smiling. We practiced the alphabet before breakfast then went for a walk in the woods: mama, papa and baby. I'm a good dad.

Essay by Derek Holt, Portland State University, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

Personal Narrative Assignments

Descriptive Personal Narrative

To synthesize what you've learned about description, narration, and reflection, you will write a personal narrative. This is generally a nonfiction, prose essay (similar to a memoir), but your instructor might provide additional guidelines in regard to genre, media, approach, or assessment standards.

Your task is to identify an influential place, event, or person from your life experience about which you can tell a story. Then, you will write a narrative essay that relates that story and considers the impact it had on you, your worldview, and/or your life path. Using model texts in this book as exemplars, you will tell a story (*narrate*) using vivid *description* and draw out meaning and insight using *reflection*.

As you'll evaluate below, descriptive personal narratives have a variety of purposes. One important one is to share a story that stands in for a bigger idea. Do not be worried if you don't know the "bigger idea" yet, but be advised that your final draft will narrate a focused, specific moment that represents something about who you are, how you got here, what you believe, or what you strive to be.

Literacy Narrative

Think about your experience reading and writing. Did you want to learn, or was it simply expected of you? Did you in any way teach yourself, or did you learn from a schoolteacher or a relative? What book or other text has been significant to you? Is there a particular writing or reading task that you found challenging? Write a literacy narrative, reflecting on a significant moment in your writing and/or reading experience. This experience can be from childhood or from the more recent past. As you write, keep in mind the following key features of a literacy narrative: vivid detail, well-told story, some indication of the narrative's significance.
Be sure to apply the concepts you learn in class to your writing.
Before you begin, consider your rhetorical situation:

Subject:	Occasion:

How will this influence the way you write?	How will this influence the way you write?
Audience:	Purpose:
How will this influence the way you write?	How will this influence the way you write?

Assignment: Descriptive Personal Narrative

Each student will write an essay which **narrates** an event or series of events influential to their life path. The essay will incorporate ideas and techniques explored in Section 1, including the use of **description** and the rhetorical gesture of **reflection**. The essay will demonstrate thoughtful pre-writing, drafting, and revision based on feedback from the instructor, classmates, and/or the Writing Center.

Criteria	Instructor Comments	Score
Ideas, Focus, and Content *Is the author telling a story? Is the scope of that story effective? Does the author appeal to their rhetorical audience?*		/___
Structure *Has the author sequenced their story effectively? Does the organization enhance the writing? Does the piece "flow?"*		/___
Style and Language *Is the author's voice authentic but rhetorically appropriate? Does the author use strong imagery and thick description?*		/___
Depth, Support, and Reflection *Does the author provide specific detail? Does the author reflect on the significance of the experience? Is that reflection genuine and integrated?*		/___
Mechanics *Does the essay read smoothly with minimal spelling/grammar/mechanical issues? Does it use proper format?*		/___
		/_____ pts. possible

Guidelines for Peer Workshop

In your Peer Workshop group (or based on your teacher's directions), establish a process for workshopping that will work for you. You may find the flowchart titled "Establishing Your Peer Workshop" useful.
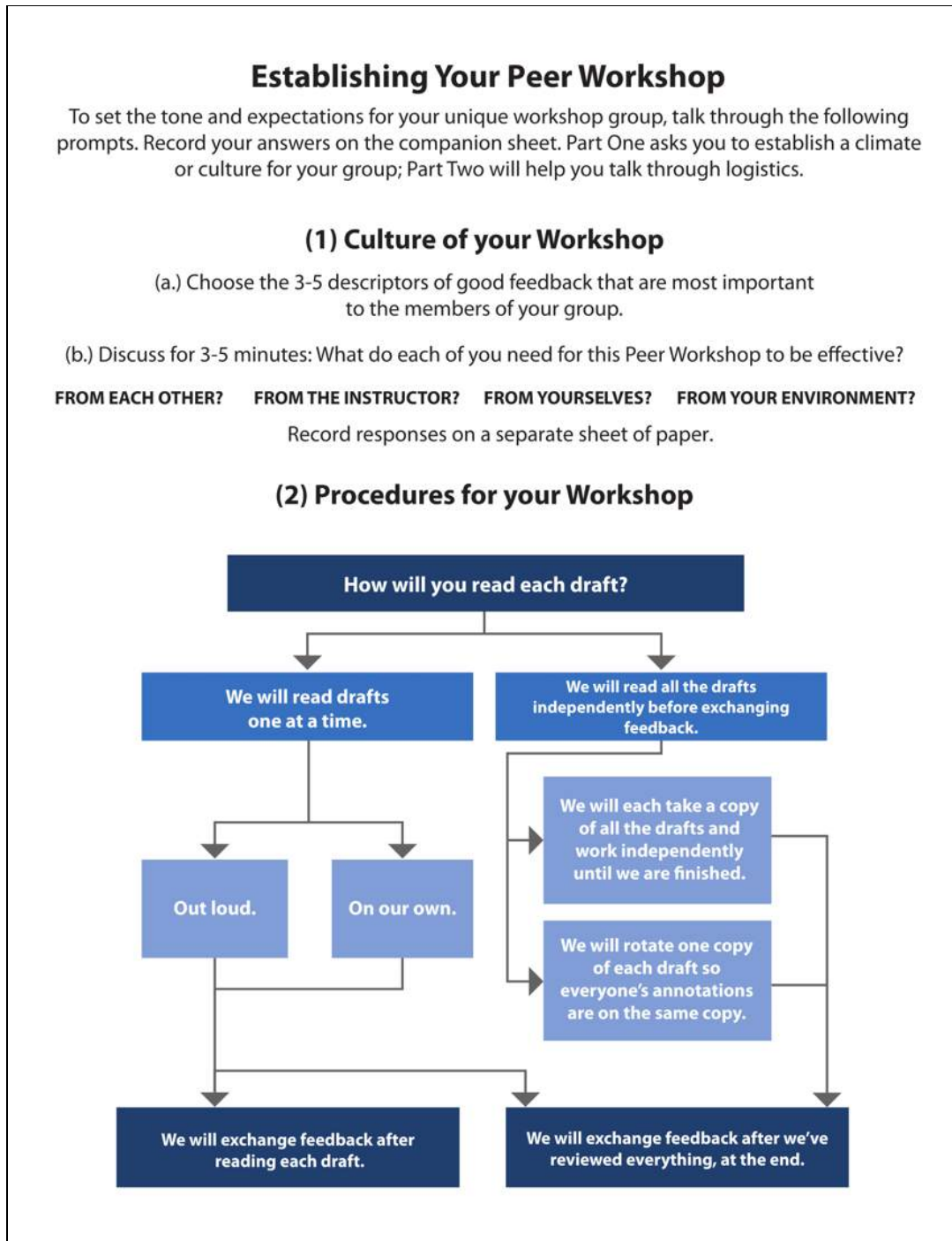
Establishing Peer Workshop Process:

Do you prefer written notes, or open discussion? Would you like to read all the drafts first, then discuss, or go one at a time? Should the author respond to feedback or just listen? What anxieties do you each have about sharing your writing? How will you provide feedback that is both critical and kind? How will you demonstrate respect for your peers?

One Example of a Peer Workshop Process

Before the workshop, each author should spend several minutes generating requests for support (#1 below). Identify specific elements you need help on. Here are a few examples:
- I need suggestions for new imagery.
- Do you think my reflective writing seems too "tacked on."
- Do you have any ideas for a title?
- I need help proofreading and polishing.

During the workshop, follow this sequence:
1) Student A introduces their draft, distributes copies, and makes requests for feedback. *What does the author want help with, specifically?*

2) As Student A reads their draft aloud, students B and C annotate/take notes. *As you listen, what do you notice as the draft is read aloud?*

3) After student A finishes reading their draft, the whole group discusses the draft, while student A takes notes. Use the following prompts as a reference to generate and frame your feedback. Try to identify specific places in your classmates' essays where the writer is successful and where the writer needs support. Consider **constructive**, **specific**, and **actionable** feedback.

- What is the author doing well? What could they do better?
- What requests does the author have for support? What feedback do you have on this issue, specifically?
- Identify one "golden line" from the essay under consideration—a phrase, sentence, or paragraph that resonates with you. What about this line is so striking?
- Consult either the rubric included above or an alternate rubric, if your instructor has provided one. Is the author on track to meet the expectations of the assignment? What does the author do well in each of the categories? What could they do better?
  - Think about Ideas, Content, Focus, Structure, Style and Language. Depth, Support, Reflection and Mechanics.
- What resonances do you see between this draft and others from your group? Between this draft and the exemplars you've read?

4) Repeat with students B and C.

After the workshop, try implementing some of the feedback your group provided while they're still nearby! For example, if Student B said your introduction needed more imagery, draft some new language and see if Student B likes the direction you're moving in. As you are comfortable, exchange contact information with your group so you can to continue the discussion outside of class.

Model Texts by Student Authors

The Pot Calling the Kettle Black…

"You aren't acting normal," my dad said with a dopy, concerned look on his face. He was a hard-working, soft and loving man. He was smaller than my mother, physically and figuratively. She sat beside him. She had a towering stature, with strong, swimmers' shoulders, but she was hunched often. She didn't really have eyebrows, but she didn't need them. She had no problem conveying emotion on her face, especially negative ones.

"What's wrong?" my mother asked. She took my hand frantically. Not the way one might take someone's hand to connect with or comfort them. She needed reassurance more than I did. My parents were sitting across from me on cushioned, bland-colored chairs in my dad's office, while I sat on a rickety, torturous wooden chair. My dad's office generally utilized natural light due to the expansive glass windows that allowed the light to drown the room, enclosing us in the chamber. I felt like an inmate being prepped for lethal injection. The weather was particularly gray and dismal. Perhaps it was the ambiguous, gray, confusing feelings I was breathing through. My parents had somewhat regular "interventions" to address my somewhat regular (sometimes public) emotional breakdowns, my self-medicating habits, and my general shitty attitude.

This week in particular, I had purposely destroyed two of my mother's collectible horses. She had a maniacal obsession for them. She also maniacally collected sunflower artwork, which was the one obsession, of many, I found endearing. My old babysitter noted at one point there were 74 collectible horses in the house. After my outburst, there were 72.

I could see behind my parents, through the glass-paned door, my two younger sisters were secretly observing the altercation from the dining room, hiding under the table. They were illuminated by the ominous weather, which was also watching in on the dismal conversation through the windows. I was envious, jealous even, of my spectating sisters. My sisters didn't have overflowing, excessive emotions. They didn't have emotions that were considered "excessive." I felt like an offender being put at the stocks: my parents were the executioners, and my sisters were the jesters.

"I'm angry."

"What about?" my dad asked, puzzled. "Did someone do something to you?"

"Honey, were you—" my mother looked to my dad, then concealed her mouth slightly with the other hand, "*raped*?"

I couldn't help but raise my voice. "No, Mom, I wasn't raped, Jesus." I took a moment to grind on my teeth and imagine the bit I was chomping at. Calm, careful, composed, I responded. "I'm just angry. I don't feel—"

"What don't you feel?" She practically jumped on me, while yanking my imprisoned hand toward her. She yanked at my reins.

"I don't feel understood!" My mind was bucking. I didn't know why I needed to react by raising my voice. It felt instinctive, defensive. Shouting forcefully, I jerked my hand away from her, but it remained in her clutches. I didn't feel satisfied saying it, though what I said was the truth.

"What are you talking about?" my dad asked mournfully. I knew he felt betrayed. But he didn't understand. He didn't know what it's like for things to be too much. Or to be too much. My dad looked at me longingly, hoping I would correct what I had said. He looked lost, incapable of understanding why I was doing what I was doing. My mother interjected, cutting off my dad's hypnotic, silent cry for connection.

"You're crazy!" she said, maintaining eye contact. My mother then let go of my hand, flipped it back to me. She reclined in her chair, retracting from me and the discussion entirely. She crossed her legs, then her arms. She turned her head away, toward the glass windows, and (mentally) left.

***

I was and am not "too much."

I was diagnosed with bipolar disorder at 18 years old.

***

I had just stepped off a squealing MAX line onto a broken sidewalk slab, gnarled from tree roots, when I felt my phone buzz rhythmically.

"I need you to come to the hospital. Mom had a little accident." My dad's voice was distant and cracking, like a wavering radio signal, calling for help.

"What's going on? Is she okay?" I asked while making my way to campus.

"Where are you?" He wasn't going to tell me anything over the phone. Adrenaline set in. I let him know I was downtown and headed to campus, but that I would catch a Lyft to wherever they were. "We're at Milwaukie Providence. How soon can you get here?

"I'll let you know soon." My assumption was that my parents had been in an argument, my mother left the house in a rage, and crashed her car. She'd been an erratic driver for as long as I could remember, and my parents had been arguing more than usual recently, as many new "empty-nesters" do. The lack of information provided by my dad, however, was unsettling. I don't really recall the ride to the hospital. I do remember looking over the river while riding from the west to east side of town. I remember the menacing, dark clouds rolling in faster than the driver could transport me. I remember it was quick, but it was too much time spent without answers.

When I arrived at Providence, I jumped out of the sedan and galloped into the lobby of the emergency room like a race horse on its final lap. My younger sister and Dad were seated on cushioned, bland-colored chairs in the waiting room. There were expansive glass windows that allowed the light to drown the room. The weather was particularly gray and dismal. Perhaps it was the ambiguous, gray, confusing feelings I was breathing through. I sat down beside my dad, in a firmer-than-anticipated waiting room chair beside him. He took my hand frantically. He took it in the way one might take someone's hand to connect with or comfort them. He needed reassurance more than I did.

"Where did she get in the accident?" I asked.

My sister, sitting across from me with her head in her knees, looked up at me with aquamarine, tear-filled eyes. She was staring through me, an unclouded window. "Mom tried to kill herself."

"What?" My voice crescendoed from a normal volume to a shriek in the span of a single word. My mind felt like it was bucking. I grabbed at my hair, pulling it back tight with my spare hand. The tears and cries reared, no matter how hard I yanked my mane.

"We got in another argument this morning, and she sent me a message saying she didn't want to be in pain anymore. She told me to tell you girls she's sorry. I'm so sorry." I'd never seen my dad cry before; I didn't know he could. I didn't know his tears would stream like gushing water from a broken dam. He looked lost, incapable of understanding why she was doing what she was doing. I looked from my dad to my sister to my hands. One hand remained

enveloped by my dad's gentle palm. At this point in life, I had not yet learned to be gentle with myself, or others. I cut off my dad's hypnotic, silent cry for connection.

"She's crazy!" I let go of my dad's hand, flipped it back to him. I reclined in the chair, retracting from the situation entirely. I crossed my legs, then my arms. I turned my head away, toward the glass windows, and (mentally) left.

<div align="center">***</div>

<div align="center">"Crazy" is a term devised to dismiss people.</div>

<div align="center">My mother was diagnosed with bipolar disorder at 50 years old.</div>

Essay by an anonymous student author, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

Teacher Takeaways

"*This essay makes excellent use of repetition as a narrative strategy. Throughout the essay, terms and phrases are repeated, generally with slight alterations, drawing the reader's attention to the moment in question and recontextualizing the information being conveyed. This strategy is especially powerful when used to disclose the separate diagnoses of bipolar disorder, which is central to the narrative. I also appreciate the use of dialogue, though it mostly serves an expository function here. In itself that's effective, but this narrative would be strengthened if that dialogue could serve to make some of the characters, especially the mother, more rounded.*"

– Professor Dunham

<div align="center">All Quiet</div>

"We can have you kicked out, you know." Miss Nick (as everyone addressed her) began digging her fists into her hips. She towered over me at six-foot-something, gravity pulling her wire-framed glasses to the end of her nose.

I recounted the empty threats my mom would make.

"*Ay nako nanlan! Putang ina!* I'll pull you out of that school! You want to go to Taft? Reseda?" Local public schools.

"Do it, you'll save a ton of money," I'd say.

"The only thing Catholic school is good for is producing my favorite unstable artists and writers," I'd joke with my friends. They had been in the Catholic school system far longer than I had—fourteen years. I was jaded, though it was only my fourth year.

All-girls' school was supposed to turn me around. But did my mother really expect the Northeastern elitism she hammered into me to fare well in Los Angeles? Especially surrounded by the daughters of television, radio and film legacies who lived in their hilly pseudo-ranches populated with their troupes of horses dancing around in golden Agouran fields? *Homogenized whole milk.*

Lodged right against the Santa Monica mountains was Louisville High School. The school was founded by the French sisters of Saint Louis, a French order founded by Abbé Louis Eugene Marie Bautain—whoever the hell that was. At the top of the rolling hills that were about as blonde as those who lived in them, was a small room that erupted with incense and the chatter of young women. These quarters belonged to this supposed gentle giant who chanted Mary Oliver poems *ad nauseam*. By her side was a new hire: an aspiring Christian songstress, also the daughter of an actor who had been typecast as a hundred high school bullies in the eighties. They, collectively, made up the "campus ministry."

"Why didn't you come to us first?" Miss Nick continued. "Why did you have to go straight online?" She had me there. I suppose it just ate at me. Maybe some sense of urgency. Maybe I was just playing their own game.

"Are you gonna cry?" The songstress almost demanded it. Her piercing blue gaze could only be summed up with lunacy. This was the first time I'd actually had any conversation with the religion department outside of class.

"No."

The Archdiocese of Los Angeles demands Catholic schools regularly hold these retreats in some picturesque Californian mountain range or seaside. A select number of student lectors were elected to tell their stories drawn from their own struggles. It was supposed to be a time of reflection about your faith or something, but it never felt wholly about that. It was a period where you got to know your teachers and your peers, and empathize with each other. For a lot of the closeted non-religious and agnostics, this was the only time they could identify with their school and community.

Once, during lunch at a retreat, I hailed down one of the most respected instructors of our school. As a seven-foot bleeding wood crucifix looked on, we sipped the punch prepared by the sisters.

"Hey Mr. Clark, what was the name of that cult leader in sixties?" I asked. Amber punched me. We all giggled.

"You mean Jonestown?" He paused. His voice grew stern. "Now ladies—behave."

Mr. Clark taught history and social sciences. He was the oldest member of the faculty and the most outspoken atheist of all. I'd spend hours in his room for detention, and we would have elusive conversations about Freud, Hunter S. Thompson, and his time in Boulder. The only way to enter campus ministry was through Mr. Clark's room.

A week prior Olivia had applied to be a student leader for a retreat. Olivia kept to herself for the most part, and though we differed a lot, I always found something to discuss with her. Her last name came right before mine, so we often worked together on a number of assignments and projects. Mostly, we'd just critique our religion classes which emphasized chastity and accused select girls of being hussies. Olivia was a model student with perfect attendance. She was an artist, a writer, and more importantly, my friend.

Olivia's application was readily denied in favor for the wealthy Catholic sweethearts and a select few who never disclosed certain information.

"I'd put on there that I was an atheist," she shrugged. I knew for a fact the retreat leadership was ridden with heathens. There, on the sunny knoll, I flipped through the handbook and showed her a clause that prohibited the act of denying anyone for their race, religion or creed. And I knew save for everything, Olivia was overwhelmingly more qualified than anyone to lead a retreat. She was articulate, an active contributor to all things art and writing, and had come from years of struggle. She'd been living with Type I Diabetes her entire life, and her parents had just divorced. Her brother frequently got in trouble with the law, and she had managed to maintain perfect grades and demeanor for the past year. She actively contributed her art and writing in various forms, and was loved and championed by many teachers. *If there's anyone who deserves this position, it's her,* I thought.

I went home late after serving another detention. I opened my computer, lazed around, wondered for a moment. *It's our last year of high school. Fuck it.*

I typed in the search bar, "Petitions."

I spent a couple hours, which could have easily been spent completing all my assignments, formatting and outlining my 95 theses. I typed and typed with the fury and angst that coincided with the suffix of my age. I clicked submit and shared the URL for my peers to see—namely, my closest friend at the school, Amber, another artist who had recently painted a depiction of a dark-skinned Jesus. Amber naturally became fired up.

The next day, parades of teachers, parents, and students voiced their opinion to me.

"What you're doing is wonderful," uttered my art teacher. "I hope she gets the position." So far, the whole idea was met with so much positivity. Olivia would get her voice.

"Can I speak to you for a moment?" The math and earth science teacher stopped me in my tracks between classes. She, an advocate for the environment and reason, would surely shower the petition with nothing but affirmations.

"I'd put an end to this before it escalates. This is a Catholic school. This is a private school." I was blindsided. It was not until then I realized what I was doing could be considered wrong.

Endlessly, I cited the handbook. It was their constitution—their code of conduct. Often, I just nodded in confusion. I did not know what to reply. More and more teachers looked at me with disdain and discouraged me from continuing forth. No one would listen to the citation. Why couldn't anyone just admit that this clause was being broken? Opponents would only say that the campus ministry could conduct business as they wanted. It was their school.

Amber, vehement and by my side, became my spokesperson. She was the recipient of the arts scholarship. That, coupled with the death of her father years ago, granted her the honor of being selected as a senior lector. Students could not apply for this position—rather, they had to be nominated by a member of faculty. The thing was, Amber was a fervent atheist—more so than Olivia.

"She's a cunt," Amber protested, "she's a fucking cunt." I envied her absoluteness. It came so naturally to her. But I couldn't say the same.

From across the knolly pasture I saw my religion teacher, someone I found solace in. He had gone through seminary. He lapsed, and married a former student of our school. He found himself in some sweat lodge deep in New Mexico, where his Catholic faith had been lingering all along. Here, an adult teacher, admitted his agnosticism and his doubt. I admired it so. He had

a liberal nature similar to my own: he talked of rogue Catholic sisters who were pro-choice and advocated for birth control.

"I understand your intention," he told me, "but I don't think you're seeing it in the right light. It's a *perceived* injustice. I'm not sure it really is one." My heart dropped.

I finally piped up after an hour-and-a-half into the harangue.

"So, you would have let her speak if she lied about her beliefs? That's all she had to do?" I could feel my voice rupturing.

"Yes." Miss Nick replied. I silently stood up.

"Thank you." I left.

I took down the petition at the instruction of the principal.

"It was very brave what you did," she smirked, "but we can't have that on our record, you know how it is." She gave me a wink. I did not know what to make of that.

Amber was also subject to their lectures. She was told she had to forfeit her position as a student leader for being a "convicted atheist"—more specifically, that she had no business leading because of her system of beliefs. She argued that she was nominated by faculty, and that Mr. Clark was also an atheist embraced by the staff. To no avail.

Olivia thanked me. She said it was the best thing anyone had ever done for her. As an act of compromise, the campus ministry let her say a prayer over the intercom system. People were moved. Silence reigned. Our art teacher, Mrs. Dupuy, cried.

In a city of millions and a country of hundreds of millions, one girl in a small Catholic high school was viewed as threatening to the point of disrupting the entire framework. How could something so miniscule pose such a threat to our adult overseers? I never attacked their religion, but they were so adamant in attacking anyone's lack thereof. They preach "universality," but where? They lost all credibility with me.

After that, I became passive, stopped participating, and kept to myself. I often found myself cheek first against my desk in religion classes while Miss Nick ignited a pro-life/pro-choice debate that swept across the room. The songstress rallied for nigh fundamentalist practices that I'd never seen within a Catholic church. In the yearbook's senior superlatives, there's a picture of me under "Class Rebel," but it didn't mean anything. An embarrassment. No one seemed sincere after that. Self-interest ruled everyone around me: the lenses I had on

determined that everyone was doing and saying anything to further their personal convictions, regardless of how uninformed they were, or anyone who defied them.

Including myself. Especially myself.

So, I shut up. *Everyone is self-serving*, I'd remind myself. I became cynical of everyone's intentions. I longed for authentic empathy. *No, unachievable*. I muted myself behind layers upon layers of verbal irony. No one could attack me if I followed my lines with nervous laugh, and *I don't know! Just kidding!* I prescribed myself large doses of Charlie Kaufman films, acid, and absurdist texts. At least Beckett and Camus see the gray.

"Now ladies," Mr. Clark said. "I know you don't agree with her, but she's had a rough life. Please try to understand where she came from."

I don't think anyone there would have done the same.

Essay by Carlynn de Joya, Portland State University, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

Teacher Takeaways

 "This author's use of dialogue is especially striking to me. Because the individual characters (and the way they speak) are each so vivid, I am more invested in the way the narrative plays out. I also appreciate this author's reflection; it's a good reminder that reflective writing doesn't haven't to sound like a self-help book or motivational speaker. On a global level, I would love to see this author apply their skill with dialogue to tell this story from multiple perspectives. What if Olivia was a first-person narrator in one section? What if we saw Miss Nick in her office alone after the confrontation?"

– Professor Dawson

Blood & Chocolate Milk

The stick of gauze, the tinny primal taste of blood and the sweet creaminess of chocolate milk is what I remember. It was a spring day of my junior year in high school. It was the day I lost my wisdom teeth.

The night before my surgery Dad showed up and cooked us dinner. He made spaghetti, those meatballs he makes with the drop of plum sauce on the top, and a salad of spring greens topped with bright balsamic dressing and twirls of carrot. Then Mom, Dad and I watched a movie and Dad tucked me in for the first time in a long time. He slept on the couch.

***

It was strange that we were all together. My parents divorced before I could talk. I don't think about them as a pair. Other than birthdays and drop-offs they were never in the same place. They were always separate entities that I saw half a week at a time.

***

The next morning we woke bright and early. The dental assistant had told me to wear something comfortable but my cashmere cardigan and slippers did little to calm my nerves. In the car on the way to the dental surgeon's office we made groggy early-morning small talk. Mom was at the helm of our beat-up, dark blue minivan, La Fiesta. Dad sat in the passenger seat and I was behind them on the first bench seat wringing my hands.

The waiting room was sterile and white, it smelled of disinfectant and mint. Copies of various parenting magazines, *Life* and *People* scattered the low generic coffee table. More catching up. We asked dad how things were going with his new girlfriend, he was happy and we were happy for him. I fidgeted in the uncomfortable pastel green chair.

In the surgical consult they had said that the roots of my wisdom teeth were too close to the nerves in my lower jaw, it was possible that I could lose feeling in my lower lip. I was terrified of that possibility. I watched the hands on the clock tick away. I wanted to get it over with already.

A serious woman in scrubs finally appeared to lead me to the surgical room. I hugged dad and he stayed behind in the waiting room, Mom came with me. There were machines beeping and blinking. I handed Mom my sweater and shoes and she gave me a tight squeeze.

***

Mom and I are a good team. It's always been us against the world. Dad has moved away twice but Mom has always been right here.

My parents were young hippies when I was born. They didn't have life figured out yet and their relationship disintegrated but their love for me never faded. Mom always says "You were a surprise but never a mistake. If I could go back in time I wouldn't change a thing because I got you and you just kind of came along for the ride. Whatever I did, you did too."

<div align="center">***</div>

As I laid down on the grey vinyl chair, the stale frigid air and my racing heart prompted tiny goose bumps to appear on my arms. Everything in that room was a dull pastel color or unnatural white. The pastels were unsettling — not the kind that reminded you of a sweet Easter morning but the kind that brought to mind dreary hospitals and desolate nursing homes. Mom held my hand, the tiny IV needle pricked into my vein and I was gone.

Hours later I was semiconscious with a mouth full of cotton and four less teeth. My parents got me to the car and dad sat in the back with me, letting my limp medicated body lean on his. Blood and drool seeped out of my numb lips and onto his ratty Patagonia jacket. He held me the whole way home.

<div align="center">***</div>

Mom is my rock but I know she was glad to have a partner that day. She couldn't have carried me the way Dad did and she couldn't have seen me so broken without someone to assure her that I was going to be fine. Dad isn't always around but when he is, he gives all he can.

<div align="center">***</div>

Mom and dad helped me wobble into bed and I floated away, my body heavy with anesthesia and Vicodin. I drifted in and out. The light came in my window, soft and pink like the creamy walls of my room.

My eyes opened slightly as I sensed movement in the room. "Hey Mai, how are you feeling?" Mom said, concern and sweetness heavy in her high voice. "It's time for some more medicine, does your mouth hurt?"

"A little bit," I said as best as I could with numb lips. The words came out muffled and strange. Gauze thick with blood and saliva was tucked over the wounds from the excavation. My mouth had become a foreign landscape with mountains of gauze and slippery rivers of blood. My tongue tried to ignore the upset. The blood was unnerving.

Dad reached into my mouth to deftly extract the blood soaked wads of gauze. Mom handed me the pills and dad held the bottle of chocolate milk, letting me sip it bit by bit to get the pills down. The milk was cool. Thick. Chalky. Chocolaty. A lazy breeze drifted in and Dad tucked fresh gauze over the wounds at the back of my mouth. They let me succumb to sleep again.

Hours or minutes later, Dad came into my room holding the *Seattle Times*. "Hey Sweetie, how are you feeling? I have some good articles to read to you," Dad said softly. He was wearing his jeans that didn't fit quite right and a ratty flannel. He sat down on the edge of my full-sized cloud, his back against the window sill, his legs outstretched horizontally and crossed at the ankle. His tall lanky body looked so out of place in my room but I was grateful to have him there.

***

He didn't have to come. Maybe it was the medical nature of the event that made that more important in his mind than the school events or performances he'd missed. He could justify the trip and missing a night of work—to himself and his boss—because it was my body that needed hire, not my heart.

***

Mom came in to check on me. She sat down next to dad on the edge of my bed. She touched my forehead, her hand was cool and steady. They looked at me with so much love, the pain was there but they lessened it. We were all under the same roof and on the same page, they were a team taking care of me, Mom handled the important things and dad handled the laughs.

Our journey has been hard but I know that they were always doing their best. They are both here for me in their own way. I grinned as much as I could; my puffy cheeks aching and straining against the gauze. My mouth felt broken but I felt whole. All I need is them, soft light, a warm breeze and chocolate milk.

Teacher Takeaways

 "This essay caught my attention for a number of reasons. Primarily, I appreciate the content—this essay is about wisdom tooth surgery, but not really. The surgery is a way for the author to explore their family dynamic. Next, the imagery in this essay is vivid and appeals to a variety of senses. Finally, I really enjoy the structural choice this author has made: in order to weave reflection in with narration, they alternate each mode, indicating the shift with asterisks (***). This choice, I feel, is very effective. However, it also runs the risk of choppiness, as the abrupt changes might interrupt the 'flow' for some readers."

– Professor Dawson

Personal Narratives by Professional Writers

- Alexie, Sherman. "The Joy of Reading and Writing: Superman and Me." *Los Angeles Times*. 19 April 1998.

- Bragg, Rick. "Chapter 1" from *All Over but the Shoutin'.* 1998. Available at the Lewiston City Library.

- Douglass, Frederick. "Chapter VII" (Learning to Read & Write) from *Life of an American Slave*. (Also available as an audio file.)

- Kerman, Piper Kerman, Chapter 3, "#11187-424," from *Orange is the New Black: My Year in a Women's Prison.* Available at the Lewiston City Library.

- Sedaris, David. "Stepping Out." *New Yorker Magazine*. 30 June 2014.

- Wright, Richard. "Chapter VIII" (The Library Card) from *Black Boy.* Available at the LCSC Library.

Personal Narratives as Videos

- *The Bookmobile* from StoryCorp Shorts / PBS / Point of View

- Curtis "Wall Street" Carroll, *How I Learned to Read – and Trade Stocks – in Prison*, TED Talk

More Examples of Personal Narratives

Digital Archive of Literacy Narratives - The DALN is an open public resource made up of stories from people just like you about their experiences learning to read, write, and generally communicate with the world around them.

The following essay, "My College Education" is from Chapter 15.2 – Narrative Essay, *Writing for Success*, University of Minnesota Libraries.

My College Education

The first class I went to in college was philosophy, and it changed my life forever. Our first assignment was to write a short response paper to the Albert Camus essay "The Myth of Sisyphus." I was extremely nervous about the assignment as well as college. However, through all the confusion in philosophy class, many of my questions about life were answered.

I entered college intending to earn a degree in engineering. I always liked the way mathematics had right and wrong answers. I understood the logic and was very good at it. So when I received my first philosophy assignment that asked me to write my interpretation of the Camus essay, I was instantly confused. What is the right way to do this assignment, I wondered? I was nervous about writing an incorrect interpretation and did not want to get my first assignment wrong. Even more troubling was that the professor refused to give us any guidelines on what he was looking for; he gave us total freedom. He simply said, "I want to see what you come up with."

Full of anxiety, I first set out to read Camus's essay several times to make sure I really knew what was it was about. I did my best to take careful notes. Yet even after I took all these notes and knew the essay inside and out, I still did not know the right answer. What was my interpretation? I could think of a million different ways to interpret the essay, but which one was my professor looking for? In math class, I was used to examples and explanations of solutions.

This assignment gave me nothing; I was completely on my own to come up with my individual interpretation.

Next, when I sat down to write, the words just did not come to me. My notes and ideas were all present, but the words were lost. I decided to try every prewriting strategy I could find. I brainstormed, made idea maps, and even wrote an outline. Eventually, after a lot of stress, my ideas became more organized and the words fell on the page. I had my interpretation of "The Myth of Sisyphus," and I had my main reasons for interpreting the essay. I remember being unsure of myself, wondering if what I was saying made sense, or if I was even on the right track. Through all the uncertainty, I continued writing the best I could. I finished the conclusion paragraph, had my spouse proofread it for errors, and turned it in the next day simply hoping for the best.

Then, a week or two later, came judgment day. The professor gave our papers back to us with grades and comments. I remember feeling simultaneously afraid and eager to get the paper back in my hands. It turned out, however, that I had nothing to worry about. The professor gave me an A on the paper, and his notes suggested that I wrote an effective essay overall. He wrote that my reading of the essay was very original and that my thoughts were well organized. My relief and newfound confidence upon reading his comments could not be overstated.

What I learned through this process extended well beyond how to write a college paper. I learned to be open to new challenges. I never expected to enjoy a philosophy class and always expected to be a math and science person. This class and assignment, however, gave me the self-confidence, critical-thinking skills, and courage to try a new career path. I left engineering and went on to study law and eventually became a lawyer. More important, that class and paper helped me understand education differently. Instead of seeing college as a direct stepping stone to a career, I learned to see college as a place to first learn and then seek a career or enhance an existing career. By giving me the space to express my own interpretation and to argue for my own values, my philosophy class taught me the importance of education for education's sake. That realization continues to pay dividends every day.

Writing Project Two: Process of Writing an Expository Essay

Overview

Exposition is writing that explains, informs, or describes. This type of writing is also known as the **informative mode** in that the main objective is not to narrate a story or persuade readers of something but rather to convey factual information, including observations and personal/others' experiences. However, when writing an expository essay, you can include elements from other modes (storytelling, analysis, writer impressions, persuasion, etc.) although these would be secondary aims or even implied. The expository composition is a practical, authentic kind of writing that can stand on its own or serve as the foundation for your more developed research essays.

Key Characteristics
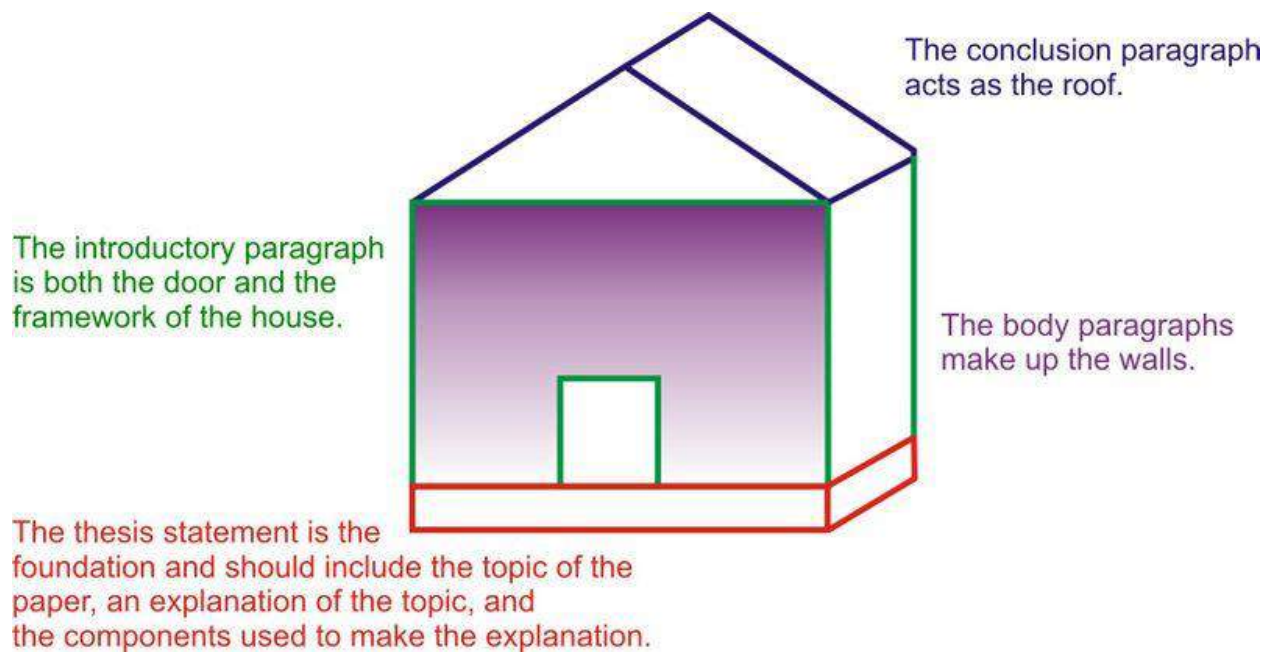
Expository writing generally exhibits the following:
- Emphasis on facts, observations, or personal/others' experiences
- Organization marked by a logical flow or progression of information; chronological, order of importance/priority, or the step-by-step approach are the most common; transitions that guide the reader
- Close attention to detail and description
- No noticeable writer bias

Introduction to the Expository Essay

From "3.1 Expository Essay," *Commonsense Composition* by Crystle Bruno

The main aim of an expository essay is to provide an effective explanation of a topic. While a descriptive essay strives to describe a subject or a narrative essay seeks to show personal growth, an expository essay tries to explain a topic or situation. Thus, expository essays are written as if the writer is explaining or clarifying a topic to the reader. Since an expository essay is trying to clarify a topic, it is important that it provides the categories or reasons that support the clarification of the paper. Moreover, these categories and reasons also provide the framework for the organization of the paper.

The conclusion paragraph acts as the roof.

The introductory paragraph is both the door and the framework of the house.

The body paragraphs make up the walls.

The thesis statement is the foundation and should include the topic of the paper, an explanation of the topic, and the components used to make the explanation.

Components of the expository essay as the parts of a house.

Much like the categories are essential to clarifying the topic, organization is the key to any well-developed essay. When composing your essay, think of its organization as a house, with each component of an essay representing a major part of a house. Just as the foundation provides support on which a house can be built, a thesis represents the foundation upon which to build an essay. The introductory paragraph then functions as both the door and framework for an expository essay. Like a house door, the introductory paragraph must allow the reader to enter into the essay. Additionally, just as walls are built upon the framework of a house, the body paragraphs of an essay are organized around the framework or organizational scheme, presented in the introductory paragraph. The body paragraphs, much like the walls of a house, must be firm, strong and complete. Also, there must always be as many body paragraphs as

the framework of the introductory paragraph indicates otherwise your essay will resemble a house that is missing a wall. Finally, an essay must include a conclusion paragraph that tops off the essay much like a roof completes a house. As the roof cements the structure of the house and helps hold the walls in place, the conclusion paragraph must reiterate the points within your body paragraphs and complete an essay.

Although the overall organization of an expository essay is important, you must also understand the organization of each component (the introductory, body and conclusion paragraphs) of your essay. The chart below identifies the essential parts of each component of your essay, explaining the necessary information for each type of paragraph. While the guidelines listed below may feel constrictive, they are merely meant to guide you as a writer. Ultimately, the guidelines should help you write more effectively. The more familiar you become with how to organize an essay, the more energy you can focus on your ideas and your writing. As a result, your writing will improve as your ability to organize your ideas improves. Plus, focusing your energy on your argument and ideas rather than the organization makes your job as a writer more exciting and fun.

This is an outline of the organization of the expository essay with detailed information about each section below.

Introductory Paragraph:

- Introduce the issue.
- Present the topic and its explanation or clarification.
- Provide the categories used to explain the topic.
- Provide the thesis statement.

Body Paragraphs:

- Begin with a topic sentence that reflects an explanation of the paper and the category being discussed in the paragraph.
- Support the argument with useful and informative quotes from sources such as books, journal articles, etc.
- Provide 2-3 quotes that connect the category being discussed to the explanation
- Provide 2-3 sentences explaining each quote more full, drawing stronger connections between the category and the explanation.
- Ensure that the information in these paragraphs is important to the thesis statement.

- End each paragraph with a transition sentence which leads into the next body paragraph.

Concluding Paragraph:

- Begin with a topic sentence that reflects the argument of the thesis statement.
- Briefly summarize the main points of the paper.
- Provide a strong and effective close for the paper.

Introductory Paragraphs

A strong introductory paragraph is crucial to the development of an effective expository essay. Unlike an argumentative essay which takes a stand or forms an opinion about a subject, an expository essay is used when the writer wishes to explain or clarify a topic to the reader. In order to properly explain a topic, an expository essay breaks the topic being addressed into parts, explains each component in relation to the whole and uses each component to justify the explanation of the topic. Thus, when writing an introductory paragraph, it is crucial to include the explanation or clarification of the topic and the categories or components used to produce this explanation.

Introductory Paragraph:

- Introduce the issue.
- Present the topic and its explanation or clarification.
- Provide the categories used to explain the topic.
- Provide the thesis statement.

Since the success of the paper rests on the introductory paragraph, it is important to understand its essential components. Usually, expository papers fail to provide a clear explanation not because the writer's lacks explanations or clarifications but rather because the explanations are not properly organized and identified in the introductory paragraph. One of the most important jobs of an introductory paragraph is that it introduces the topic or issue. Most explanations cannot be clarified without at least some background information. Thus, it is essential to provide a foundation for your topic before you begin explaining your topic. For instance, if you wanted to explain what happened at the first Olympic Games, your introductory paragraph would first need to provide background information about how the first games happened. In doing so, you ensure that your audience is as informed about your topic as you are and thus you make it easier for your audience to understand your explanation.

On the next page is a table describing and explaining the main jobs of the introductory paragraph.

Introductory paragraphs introduce the topic and suggest why it is important.

Example:
An analysis of the essay exam results of the new English class shows that the new class format promotes close reading and better essay organization.

This sentence tells the reader both that the topic of the paper will be the benefits of the new English class and that the significance of these benefits is the improvement of close reading and essay organization.

Introductory paragraphs outline the structure of the paper and highlight the main ideas.

Example:
Considering the results of the High School Exit Exam, it is apparent that school curriculum is not properly addressing basic math skills such as fractions, percentages and long division.

This sentence indicates that main ideas (fractions, percentages and long division) of the essay and indicates the order in which they will be presented in the body paragraphs.

Introductory paragraphs state the thesis.

Example:
California high schools will require all students to take a resume and cover letter writing workshop in order to better prepare them for employment.

This thesis statement indicates the explanation of the paper.

In addition to introducing the topic of your paper, your introductory paragraph also needs to introduce each of the arguments you will cover in your body paragraphs. By providing your audience with an idea of the points or arguments you will make later in your paper, your introductory paragraph serves as a guide map, not only for your audience but also for you. Including your main sub-points in your introduction not only allows your audience to understand where your essay is headed but also helps you as a writer remember how you want to organize your paper. This is especially helpful if you are not writing your essay in one sitting

as it allows you to leave and return to your essay without forgetting all of the important points you wanted to make.

Things to always do	Things to never do
Capture the interest of your reader. Introduce the issue to the reader. State the problem simply. Write in an intelligible, concise manner. Refute any counterpoints. State the thesis, preferably in one arguable statement. Provide each of the arguments that will be presented in each of the body paragraphs.	Apologize: Do not suggest that you are unfamiliar with the topic. Example: "*I cannot be certain, but...*" Use sweeping generalizations. Example: "*All men like football...*" Use a dictionary definition. Example: "*According to the dictionary, a humble person is...*" Announce your intentions: Do not directly state what you will be writing about. Example: "*In the paper I will...*"

Most importantly, when writing an introductory paragraph, it is essential to remember that you must capture the interest of your reader. Thus, it is your job as the writer to make the introduction entertaining or intriguing. In order to do so, consider using a quotation, a surprising or interesting fact, an anecdote or a humorous story. While the quotation, story or fact you include must be relevant to your paper, placing one of these at the beginning of your introduction helps you not only capture the attention or the reader but also introduce your topic and argument, making your introduction interesting to your audience and useful for your argument and essay.

Body Paragraphs

In an expository essay the body paragraphs are where the writer has the opportunity to explain or clarify his or her viewpoint. By the conclusion paragraph, the writer should adequately clarify the topic for the reader. Regardless of a strong thesis statement that properly indicates the major sub-topics of the essay, papers with weak body paragraphs fail to properly explain the topic and indicate why it is important. Body paragraphs of an expository essay are weak when no examples are used to help illuminate the topic being discussed or when they are poorly organized. Occasionally, body paragraphs are also weak because the quotes used

complicate from rather than simplify the explanation. Thus, it is essential to use appropriate support and to adequately explain your support within your body paragraphs.

In order to create a body paragraph that is properly supported and explained, it is important to understand the components that make up a strong body paragraph. The bullet points below indicate the essential components of a well-written, well-argued body paragraph.

Body Paragraph Components

- Begin with a topic sentence that reflects the argument of the thesis statement.
- Support the argument with useful and informative quotes from sources such as books, journal articles, expert opinions, etc.
- Provide 1-2 sentences explaining each quote.
- Provide 1-3 sentences that indicate the significance of each quote.
- Ensure that the information provided is relevant to the thesis statement.
- End with a transition sentence which leads into the next body paragraph.

Just as your introduction must introduce the topic of your essay, the first sentence of a body paragraph must introduce the main sub-point for that paragraph. For instance, if you were writing a body paragraph for a paper explaining the factors that led to US involvement in World War II, one body paragraph could discuss the impact of the Great Depression on the decision to enter the war. To do so, you would begin with a topic sentence that explains how the Great Depression encouraged involvement in the war because the war effort would stimulate certain aspects of the economy. Following this sentence, you would go into more detail and explain how the two events are linked. By placing this idea at the beginning of the paragraph, not only does your audience know what the paragraph is explaining, but you can also keep track of your ideas.

Following the topic sentence, you must provide some sort of fact that supports your claim. In the example of the World War II essay, maybe you would provide a quote from a historian or from a prominent history teacher or researcher. After your quote or fact, you must always explain what the quote or fact is saying, stressing what you believe is most important about your fact. It is important to remember that your audience may read a quote and decide it is indicating something entirely different than what you think it is explaining. Or, maybe some or your readers think another aspect of your quote is important. If you do not explain the quote and indicate what portion of it is relevant to your clarification, than your reader may become confused or may be unconvinced of your explanation. Consider the possible interpretations for the statement below.
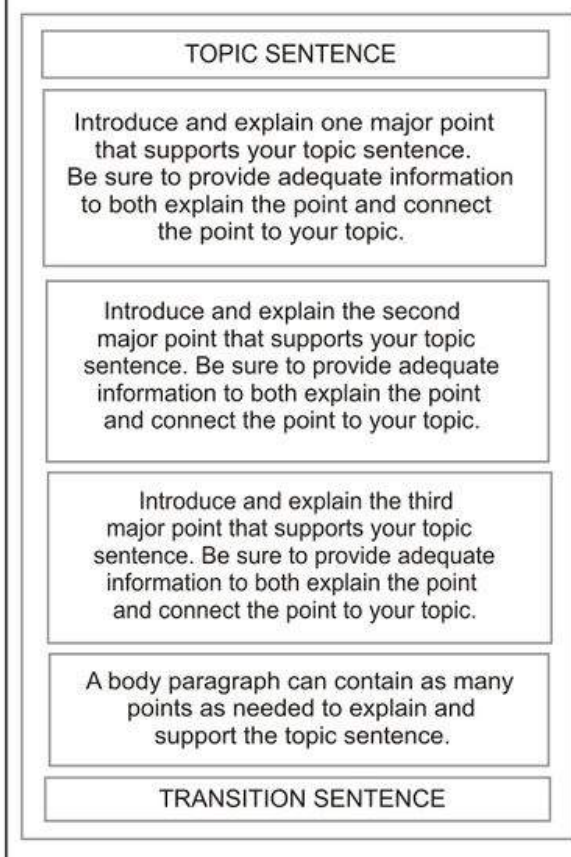
Example

> While the U.S. involvement in World War II was not the major contributor to the ending of the Great Depression, the depression was one of the primary motives for entering the war.

Interestingly, this statement seems to be saying two things at once – that the Great Depression helped spark involvement in the war and that World War II did not end the depression alone. On the one hand, the historian seems to say that the two events are not directly linked. However, on the other hand, the historian also indicates that the two events are linked in that the depression caused U.S. involvement in the war. Because of the tension in this quotation, if you used this quote for your World War II essay, you would need to explain that the significant portion of the quote is the assertion that links the events.

In addition to explaining what this quote is saying, you would also need to indicate why this is important to your explanation. When trying to indicate the significance of a fact, it is essential to try to answer the "so what." Image you have just finished explaining your quote to someone and they have asked you "so what?" The person does not understand why you have explained this quote, not because you have not explained the quote well but because you have not told him or her why he or she needs to know what the quote means. This, the answer to the "so what," is the significance of your paper and is essentially your clarification within the body paragraphs. However, it is important to remember that generally a body paragraph will contain more than one quotation or piece of support. Thus, you must repeat the Quotation-Explanation-Significance formula several times within your body paragraph to fully explain the one sub-point indicated in your topic sentence.

Example of an expository body paragraph paired with an explanation of its parts.

There are several reasons why graduating from college is harder than graduating from high school; however, the most important reason is the lack of support [Topic Sentence]. While in high school, the school and the teachers monitor and enforce a student's attendance, yet in college a student's attendance is not monitored and he or she can decide whether or not to attend class. As a result ,many students may choose to go to the beach or to the mall rather than school. Unlike in high school, there are no disciplinary consequences for missing a class. Though a college student's grades may suffer from missing a scheduled class meeting high school students are given detention or other forms of punishment. To many college students this lack of consequences seems freeing, yet it actually reflects a lack of support Without the college or professors supporting a student's attendance, the student must make these decisions on his or her own. This situation can also be exacerbated by a lack of nearby family and friends. A large number of college students move away from home to attend college, whereas most high school students stills live with their parents. Due to this, college students may not have the same support system as high school students. What is more, some college students may be the only individual from their high school to attend a university. Thus, in addition to leaving his or her family, a student may find him or herself friendless. Despite the hazardous effects that this lack of support may produce, there are also several other factors that affect a college student's ability to succeed [Transition Sentence].

TOPIC SENTENCE
Introduce and explain one major point that supports your topic sentence. Be sure to provide adequate information to both explain the point and connect the point to your topic.
Introduce and explain the second major point that supports your topic sentence. Be sure to provide adequate information to both explain the point and connect the point to your topic.
Introduce and explain the third major point that supports your topic sentence. Be sure to provide adequate information to both explain the point and connect the point to your topic.
A body paragraph can contain as many points as needed to explain and support the topic sentence.
TRANSITION SENTENCE

Conclusion Paragraph

The conclusion paragraph of an expository essay is an author's last chance to create a good impression. Hence, it is important to restate the thesis statement at the beginning of the paragraph in order to remind the reader of your topic and explanation. Since it is at the end of the paper, the conclusion paragraph also should add a sense of closure and finality to the clarification of the paper. It is important to re-emphasize the main idea without being repetitive or introducing an entirely new idea or subtopic. While you can conclude your conclusion paragraph by suggesting a topic for further research or investigation, do not make this question the focus of the paragraph. Thus, you should briefly and concisely reiterate the strongest clarifications of the paper, reminding the reader of the validity of your thesis or explanation and bringing closure to your paper.

Concluding Paragraph:
- Begin with a topic sentence that reflects the argument of the thesis statement.
- Briefly summarize the main points of the paper.
- Provide a strong and effective close for the paper.

Things to **always** do in a concluding paragraph	Things to **never** do in a concluding paragraph.
Include a brief summary of the main idea. **Be concise.** **Provide a sense of closure.**	Rework your introduction or thesis statement. Use overused phrases. Example: "*In summary…*" or "*In conclusion…*" Announce what you have written in the body of the essay. Example: "*In this paper I have emphasized the importance of…*" Apologize. Example: "*Although I do not have all the answers…*" Make absolute claims. Example: "*This proves that the government should…*"

You may feel that the conclusion paragraph is redundant or unnecessary; However, do not forget that this is your last chance to explain the significance of your argument to your audience. Just as your body paragraphs strive to present the significance of each fact or quote you use, your conclusion paragraph should sum up the significance of your argument. Thus, you should consider making a bold statement in your concluding paragraph by evoking a vivid image, suggesting results or consequences related to your argument or ending with a warning. Through using these components, you not only make your conclusion paragraph more exciting, but you also make your essay and your argument, more important.

Review Questions

What are three of the main purposes of an introductory paragraph?
1. What should you never do in an introductory paragraph?
2. How should you refute counterpoints?
3. What is the formula for a well-argued body paragraph?
4. What should you include in a conclusion paragraph? What should never include in a conclusion paragraph?

Expository Writing Checklist

	Note if the item is Consistent, Present but Inconsistent, or Missing.	Comments
From		
Content		
Writing has purpose and theme, not just a topic.		
Topic is appropriately narrow.		
Information is supported by credible sources from various points of view.		
Personal knowledge and experiences are synthesized with outside sources.		
Writing contains fresh, new insights.		
Readers' questions are anticipated and addressed.		
Organization		
A powerful title engages readers and provides a clue to the purpose of the paper.		
Writing is built around an important, interesting theme.		
Introduction engages interest about the theme and topic.		
Transitions connect ideas that build on each other naturally.		
Writing flows at an appropriate pace.		
Conclusion leaves readers with an important message or idea to think about.		
Paragraphing enhances meaning.		
Voice		
Writing connects with readers by showing what is interesting and important about the topic.		

Writing provides compelling reasons why the information is important.		
Writing reflects the author's commitment to the topic.		
Writing includes meaningful, relevant personal details.		
Language		
Language is precise and accurate.		
Words are powerful and vivid.		
Technical terms are defined, if necessary.		
Sentence Fluency		
Sentences are varied in length and structure.		
Sentence beginnings are varied.		
Writing has rhythm.		
Conventions		
Sentence fragments are used appropriately.		
Spelling is correct.		
Punctuation is correct.		
Capitalization is correct.		
Standard English is used throughout the writing.		
Conventions are appropriately manipulated to enhance meaning.		

Suggested Expository Assignments

Process Analysis

Walk readers through a day, event, activity, or state of mind, making sure to focus on facts and authentic descriptions. In the sample readings below, two people focused on their addiction to

video games. In one example, the writer walks us through his day playing a video game while in the other, the speaker concentrates mostly on the reasons he became addicted to games and touches briefly on how to prevent this addiction.

You will be the expert and teach your reader how to do something. You will focus on writing the main steps to completing this process and organizing based on chronology or priority of steps. This essay could be demonstrative in nature (ex. How to bathe and groom a dog at home or how to make banana nut muffins) or philosophically-based (ex. How to not fail your freshman classes or how to survive being a camp counselor).

Profile

Interview a person who has a compelling story to share or with whom you can focus on a particular angle. Interweave direct quotes, observations, and narrative elements to help readers understand this person or his/her perspective better.

This should not be a full biography of this person or a career profile although biographical elements and details on jobs held may be woven in as appropriate. Perspective/angles can include but are not limited to this person's relationship with: technology, ecology/the environment, politics, religion/spirituality, gender roles, family/what family means to them, love, betrayal, etc.

Observation

The point of an observation paper is to give your thoughts, impressions, or reasons about something and offer the "so what"--the rationale for why readers should care about this thing, person, place, culture or how might they better understand its revealing or important elements.

- Taking down as many details as you can (with a strong focus on sensory: smell, taste, hear, see, touch, and temperature), write down your observations of people dealing with the natural elements (rain, snow, cold, windy day, hot day, etc.).
- Find a place on campus to observe (library, gym, Student Union, a classroom, etc.) and using sensory descriptions, describe the people, their reactions or attitudes; write down interactions, utterances, and any other meaningful activity.
- Do the same as above, but observe your workplace, a community event (rodeo, drum circle, theatre production), or outdoor venue (beach, campsite, playground).
- Observe a person (child, teenager, elderly person), couple, professional at work, boss and employee in their element. Do the same as above in a way that helps readers to understand this person, their role, their duties or responsibilities, or their relationship better.
- Choose a favorite movie or book, paying special attention to why a certain book or movie is your favorite. Be sure to briefly summarize the movie or book in order to provide a concise and comprehensible explanation. The majority of this essay should not be summary, however. Simply summarizing the plot will not explain to the reader why the book or movie is entertaining to you. Instead, body paragraphs should be comprised of concrete details and examples from the work to explain why you enjoy this particular book or movie or find it meaningful or thought provoking.
- Select an important historical event, indicating at least three factors that contributed to its development. For instance, you could discuss how factors, such as World War I, led to the Women's Suffrage Movement. A factor could be an event, an individual, or a movement that is historically significant. In order to properly show how certain factors caused or contributed to a specific event, you must clarify both the factors and the event itself.

Definition

The purpose is to define a term, concept, or idea. You will typically lay the foundation with a dictionary definition (denotative) of the word but will move out to an extended definition

(connotative). You are using a combination of the literal and implied meanings of a word or idea in addition to historical information to help readers understand the topic more effectively. You usually you can define a term or concept that is complex in nature or that can be misconstrued. Legal, business, and scientific terms or concepts typically work well for essays such as these. For example, take the term manslaughter; the literal and implied meanings can help to understand this sometimes-misinterpreted crime. The definition paper can stand on its own or an abbreviated version can serve as part of a larger argumentative, analytical, or research paper.

- Take an abstract, complex, controversial word or a term that is personal to you. Using a dictionary definition as well as your own and others' interpretations, craft an extended definition essay with the purpose of giving a more insightful, comprehensive, and layered understanding of this particular term.

News Story

Journalistic writing provides third-person practical skills in delivering the most important information to inform (and sometimes entertain) readers. Hard news articles focus on current events and the *who, what, when, where, why*, and *how*. Quotes from relevant people are intertwined within the news article to break up the blocks of information and observations. News stories should not contain your opinion or bias although they can incorporate opinion from the people being interviewed as long as those are properly sourced. Features are similar to news stories in that they rely on fact-based writing, but they are typically more in-depth and have a more storytelling aspect to them. Both types of news require high standards of accuracy and reliability.

- Write a **hard news story** about an event that happened on campus or in the community. Use your 5 w's and an h to construct a story around the facts and observations of the event, making sure to leave out any bias. Interview event planners, performers, or people who attended and directly quote them as part of this assignment.
- Write a **feature** story about someone on campus or in the community, offering a particular angle, or reporting and elaborating on an event or situation. If you are writing about a person, this should <u>not</u> be their life story. Instead, you want to focus on one interesting or compelling aspect of their life or the work they do. For example, maybe you want your angle to be about persistence. Interview someone who has encountered challenging circumstances (illness, addiction, prison, death). You can walk us through

the situation, turning point, and aftermath. You could also focus on angles that are timely, relevant, or cultural in nature or that are linked to national and/or global issues (the #MeToo movement, mental health awareness, Black History Month, etc.).

Suggested Readings & Examples for Expository Writing

Process Analysis

from 10.5 Process Analysis, *Writing For Success*

The Purpose of Process Analysis in Writing

The purpose of a process analysis essay is to explain how to do something or how something works. In either case, the formula for a process analysis essay remains the same. The process is articulated into clear, definitive steps.

Almost everything we do involves following a step-by-step process. From riding a bike as children to learning various jobs as adults, we initially needed instructions to effectively execute the task. Likewise, we have likely had to instruct others, so we know how important good directions are—and how frustrating it is when they are poorly put together.

Writing at Work

The next time you have to explain a process to someone at work, be mindful of how clearly you articulate each step. Strong communication skills are critical for workplace satisfaction and advancement. Effective process analysis plays a critical role in developing that skill set.

Process Activity 1

On a separate sheet of paper, make a bulleted list of all the steps that you feel would be required to clearly illustrate three of the following four processes:

- Tying a shoelace
- Parallel parking
- Planning a successful first date
- Being an effective communicator

The Structure of a Process Analysis Essay

The process analysis essay opens with a discussion of the process and a thesis statement that states the goal of the process.

The organization of a process analysis essay typically follows chronological order. The steps of the process are conveyed in the order in which they usually occur. Body paragraphs will be constructed based on these steps. If a particular step is complicated and needs a lot of explaining, then it will likely take up a paragraph on its own. But if a series of simple steps is easier to understand, then the steps can be grouped into a single paragraph.

The time transition phrases covered in the Narration and Illustration sections are also helpful in organizing process analysis essays (see Table 10.1 "Transition Words and Phrases for Expressing Time" and Table 10.2 "Phrases of Illustration"). Words such as first, second, third, next, and finally are helpful cues to orient reader and organize the content of essay.

Tip
Always have someone else read your process analysis to make sure it makes sense. Once we get too close to a subject, it is difficult to determine how clearly an idea is coming across. Having a friend or coworker read it over will serve as a good way to troubleshoot any confusing spots.

Process Activity 2

Choose two of the lists you created in Process Activity 1 previously and start writing out the processes in paragraph form. Try to construct paragraphs based on the complexity of each step. For complicated steps, dedicate an entire paragraph. If less complicated steps fall in succession, group them into a single paragraph.

Writing a Process Analysis Essay

Choose a topic that is interesting, is relatively complex, and can be explained in a series of steps. As with other rhetorical writing modes, choose a process that you know well so that you can more easily describe the finer details about each step in the process. Your thesis statement should come at the end of your introduction, and it should state the final outcome of the process you are describing.

Body paragraphs are composed of the steps in the process. Each step should be expressed using strong details and clear examples. Use time transition phrases to help organize steps in the process and to orient readers. The conclusion should thoroughly describe the result of the process described in the body paragraphs. See Chapter 15 "Readings: Examples of Essays" to read an example of a process analysis essay.

Key Takeaways

- A process analysis essay explains how to do something, how something works, or both.
- The process analysis essay opens with a discussion of the process and a thesis statement that states the outcome of the process.
- The organization of a process analysis essay typically follows a chronological sequence.
- Time transition phrases are particularly helpful in process analysis essays to organize steps and orient reader.

Process Analysis Examples

Professional examples of process analysis

Bissell, Tom. "Video Games: The Addiction." *The Guardian*. 20 Mar. 2010.

Adair, Cam. TedXTalks. "Escaping Video Game Addiction: Cam Adair at TEDxBoulder." *YouTube*, 17 Oct. 2013.

Student example of the process analysis

How to Grow Tomatoes from a Seedling

Growing tomatoes is a simple and rewarding task, and more people should be growing them. This paper walks readers through the main steps for growing and maintaining patio tomatoes from a seedling.

The first step in growing tomatoes is determining if you have the appropriate available space and sunlight to grow them. All tomato varieties require full sunlight, which means at least six hours of direct sun every day. If you have south-facing windows or a patio or backyard that receives direct sunlight, you should be able to grow tomatoes. Choose the location that receives the most sun.

Next, you need to find the right seedling. Growing tomatoes and other vegetables from seeds can be more complicated (though it is not difficult), so I am only discussing how to grow tomatoes from a seedling. A seedling, for those who do not know, is typically understood as a young plant that has only recently started growing from the seed. It can be anything from a newly germinated plant to a fully flowering plant. You can usually find tomato seedlings at your local nursery for an affordable price. Less than five dollars per plant is a common price. When choosing the best seedling, look for a plant that is short with healthy, full leaves and no flowers. This last point tends to be counterintuitive, but it is extremely important. You do not want a vegetable plant that has already started flowering in the nursery because it will have a more difficult time adapting to its new environment when you replant it. Additionally, choose a plant with one strong main stem. This is important because the fewer stems that a tomato plant has, the more easily it can transport nutrients to the fruit. Multiple stems tend to divide nutrients in less efficient ways, often resulting in either lower yields or smaller fruit.

Once you have found the right seedlings to plant back home, you need to find the best way of planting them. I recommend that you plant your tomatoes in containers. If you have the space and sunlight, then you can certainly plant them in the ground, but a container has several advantages and is usually most manageable for the majority of gardeners. The containers can be used in the house, on a patio, or anywhere in the backyard, and they are portable. Containers also tend to better regulate moisture and drain excess water. Choose a container that is at least 10 inches in diameter and at least 1 foot deep. This will provide sufficient room for root development.

In addition to the container, you also need the appropriate soil mixture and draining mechanisms. For the best drainage, fill the bottom of your container with 2 or 3 inches of gravel. On top of the gravel, fill ¾ of the container with soil. Choose a well-balanced organic soil. The three main ingredients you will find described on soil bags are N-P-K—that is, nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium. Without going into too much detail about the role of each element in plant growth, I will tell you that an average vegetable will grow fine in a 10-5-5 mixture. This ratio, too, will be easy to find at your local nursery.

Once you have the gravel in the bottom of the container and the soil on top, you are ready to transplant the tomato. Pick up the tomato in the plastic container it comes in from the nursery. Turn it upside down, and holding the stem between your fingers, pat the bottom lightly several times, and the plant should fall into your hand. Next, you should gently break up the root ball

that formed in the nursery container with your hands. Be gentle, but be sure to rip them up a bit; this helps generate new root growth in the new container. Be careful not to damage the roots too much, as this could stunt the growth or even destroy the plant altogether.

Next, carve out a hole in the soil to make space for the plant. Make it deep enough to go about an inch higher than it was previously buried and wide enough so all the roots can comfortably fit within and beneath it. Place the seedling in the hole and push the removed soil back on top to cover the base of the plant. After that, the final step in planting your tomato is mulch. Mulch is not necessary for growing plants, but it can be very helpful in maintaining moisture, keeping out weeds, and regulating soil temperature. Place 2–3 inches of mulch above the soil and spread it out evenly.

Once the mulch is laid, you are mostly done. The rest is all watering, waiting, and maintenance. After you lay the mulch, pour the plant a heavy amount of water. Water the plant at its base until you see water coming through the bottom of the container. Wait ten minutes, and repeat. This initial watering is very important for establishing new roots. You should continue to keep the soil moist, but never soaking wet. One healthy watering each morning should be sufficient for days without rain. You can often forego watering on days with moderate rainfall. Watering in the morning is preferable to the evening because it lessens mold and bacteria growth.

Choosing to grow the patio variety of tomatoes is easiest because patio tomatoes do not require staking or training around cages. They grow in smaller spaces and have a determinate harvest time. As you continue to water and monitor your plant, prune unhealthy looking leaves to the main stem, and cut your tomatoes down at the stem when they ripen to your liking. As you can see, growing tomatoes can be very easy and manageable for even novice gardeners. The satisfaction of picking and eating fresh food, and doing it yourself, outweighs all the effort you put in over the growing season.

Online Process Analysis Essay Alternatives

Professionally Written Examples

Fish, Stanley, Getting Coffee Is Hard to Do, *New York Times*, 6 Aug 2007

Koeppel, Dan, How to Fall 35,000 Feet and Survive, *Popular Mechanics*, 29 Jan 2010

Miller, Arthur Get It Right: Privatize Executions, *New York Times*, 8 May 1992

Profile

The Purpose of a Profile

Apparently *The New Yorker's* offices, with what we've come to know as their timeless production of something close to journalistic and literary genius, used to buzz early on with the statement that the magazine's founding editor, Harold Ross, invented the Profile. "If a Profile is a biographical piece—a concise rendering of a life through anecdote, incident, interview, and description (or some ineffable combination thereof)" says current editor of *The New Yorker* David Remnick (2000), "well, then, it's a little presumptuous to stick Ross at the front of the queue"(p. ix).But if by profile we mean something slightly different, something a little more complicated and difficult to emulate—"something sidelong and ironical, a form that prized intimacy and wit over biographical completeness or, God forbid, unabashed hero worship"(p. ix)—then Ross may claim the genesis. Later on, editors and writers at *The New Yorker* and publications elsewhere carried it out and have evolved it over time. Remarking from a book titled Life Stories: Profiles from *The New Yorker* that he has compiled from the stacks and stacks of them written for the magazine over the years, Remnick (2000) speaks of the style in what he and his *The New Yorker* cohorts would probably like to think of as profiles in their highest form. They span from profiles of "malice" to profiles of "praise," ones about "identity" and ones about "the strangeness of American fame," jumping from dark to humorous, from insight to amusement, and often both within the same piece. "What had been conceived of as a form to describe Manhattan personalities now travels widely in the world and all along the emotional and occupational registers..." said Remnick (2001). "[But]...one quality that runs through nearly all the best Profiles...is a sense of obsession. So many of these pieces are about people who reveal an obsession with one corner of human experience or another" (p. xi).

I'd agree that there's something fascinating about a sense of obsession bleeding through the pages of a profile, whether it stems from the subjects themselves or through the fixated writer. But it might be discouraging to read Remnick's words and assume that if you're not interviewing a person who is particularly obsessive, or you as a writer aren't particularly fanatical about the subject either, that you are doomed from writing an excellent profile. What can be equally impressive, in fact, is speaking to what appears to be a remarkably dull person, unearthing a crevice of their life that is interesting, and writing about it in a way that reflects that fascination.

Perhaps a broader, more forgiving word for the concept that Remnick speaks of is "focus." There is undoubtedly a thread that runs through profile subjects and writers of intense

focused energy and attention. The individuals we choose are intriguing because they are incredibly concentrated on something, whether it's Dave Grohl's rise from Nirvana grunge rocker to devoted father and president of his own record label (see the *Financial Times Magazine's* 2011 profile of him and the Foo Fighters [Wilkinson, 2011]), or Jeffrey Goldberg's hotheadedness and polarizing reporting on Israel (see *The Washingtonian's* 2013 profile on "Washington's Most Pugnacious Journalist" [Starobin, 2013]). Similarly, writers of good profiles are engrossed in their subjects, never counting details out of the big picture, and they strive to capture the entire essence of a person, with a narrow slant, in one relatively short piece.

I'm not sure any of this means they are always obsessive, though. Remnick is right in the sense that many of the best profiles I've read maintain a central theme of obsession, but it's not the sole, or required, foundation for a remarkable profile.

There's something so intriguing about the concept of a profile. It's only one piece of someone's biography—just a few snapshots, the rest left as mystery, for figuring out, for piecing together—but it is somehow able to encompass so many aspects of their life story nonetheless. This characteristic, of only focusing on one featurette of a person's life, is perhaps one of the two most important identifying factors of a profile. Unlike a biography, a profile's aim is not in documenting all the available facts of an individual's life and filling in the entirety of their most important experiences with intimate details. In biographies, readers are given one long, generally chronological, recording of a person virtually from birth or childhood until death, or at least up to their current age or peak of interest. In reading most biographies, we feel like we know the subject well—as if we were a bystander for each stage of their life, listening in and watching their life unfold, standing transparent in the corners—and get an overarching sense of who they were and how their life events shaped them. In a profile, however, the writer narrows in on only one frame of interest in the subject's life. It might be centered on the person of intrigue's current influential role in an industry, their rare talent for a certain skill, their business chops, their salvation, their survival, or their uniqueness among blandness; either way, profiles only give readers access to the subject through this narrowed lens, yet the quality and pixilation of this frame heightens our overall perception of them. "Sometimes, profiles seem to take place in real time," says John Trimbur, author of *The Call to Write* and specialist in composition and writing studies. "Such profiles create a sense of immediacy and intimacy…" (Trimbur, 2014, p. 202-203). Unlike in a biography, readers sense that they're not only witnessing the subject's life, but are immersed in it, brushing shoulders with them and being a participant. "Readers of profiles have come to expect that they will be able to visualize people and places, to hear what people sound like, and to witness revealing incidents," (p. 203) says Trimbur, and that is what they are given. The difficulty of a profile— but the beauty of it if we can achieve such a level—is to narrate the subject in such a way that readers know the subject intimately through the profile's depth, yet there is also a certain

distance between the subject and reader that stems from the piece's narrower breadth and generates an intriguing figure of secrecy; it seems that the writer has chosen these particular segments and the rest have been curtained off for the VIPs and closest companions. Profiles aren't generally written to be relatable (or, sometimes they are, briefly, because all individuals share certain threads of humanity), but there's an overarching sense of celebrity about the subject that puts them on a different tier.

 The second characteristic is that we choose these specific windows of subjects' lives in order to report a particular slant about them. Profiles aren't entirely comprehensive, but instead report on segments of a subject's life to give us an overall impression of them filtered through the writer's perception. These slants maybe Steve Jobs's behind-the-scenes coarseness despite his genius (see *Rolling Stone's* "The Steve Jobs Nobody Knew" [Goodell, 2011]), rocker Jack White's "carefully curated world" (see *The New York Times Magazine's* profile "Jack Outside the Box" [Eells, 2012]), or a sort of un-funny Jon Stewart with the "burden of history" (see Esquire's profile of him, although Esquire doesn't seem to interview him directly [Junod, 2011]). But regardless of the slant, it's ideally something surprising, something we don't already know about the subject that is provocative or stimulating. When we do stray away from the immediate frame and slant—transporting readers back to some scenes from the subject's childhood, or if the profile is more about a subject's "past life," lurching readers forward in time to what they'd eventually become—it's to complement both, to support our perception of them, whether it's good or bad, to fill in some of the missing pieces. All profiles will make use of slant, whether it's subtle or not, sloping readers towards liking a subject, hating them, exposing them, explaining them, or simplifying them. "No matter how immediate a profile seems to be, it's helpful to remember we are not seeing a person or a place or a group directly, but rather through the eyes of the writer," says Trimbur (2014). "A profile—and the impact it has on readers—depends as much on the writer as on the subject profiled. Profiles express, explicitly or implicitly, the author's point of view" (p. 203). Profiles aren't written simply to document a person's life—although they do—but to present them under an intentionally selected and crafted light. When Sarah Corbett (2006) wrote a profile on reggaetón artist Daddy Yankee for *The New York Times Magazine*, she, interestingly, broke Daddy Yankee up into three parts: Daddy Yankee "El Rey" and reggaetón superstar, whom women flock to and men want to hang out with; Raymond Ayala, the "real" guy who grew up in a housing project in Puerto Rico; and the "sneaker version" of Daddy Yankee, which is an extension of "El Rey," but seems to also serve as some indication of his future on a continuously global and profitable scale.

> *By the time Daddy Yankee stepped out of his silver BMW sedan into the steamy heat of midday, dressed nattily in a black T-shirt and an impeccably pressed pair of jeans, two pancake-size diamond-crusted "DY" medallions dangling auspiciously from his neck, San*

Juan's lunch hour was in full swing...Heads swiveled. Traffic slowed. Drivers lowered their windows...

..."'It's unified the Latin masses,' Daddy Yankee told me, adding that he believes reggaetón is especially popular with second generation immigrants, even those who don't speak Spanish. 'The music makes them feel Latino,' he said. 'It's in their heart.'"...

Yankee seemed pleased with his sneaker, and also with the complete "DY" apparel line Reebok intends to introduce in the spring. The proposed copy for the print advertising campaign was 'For the people.' Yankee nodded his head as this was explained to him. 'The concept is good, powerful,' he said. 'The message is there: I'm representing you.'"

Despite this nuanced division, the parts about "Raymond" still oscillate between past and present in order to complement the chosen frame (Daddy Yankee at present, who is Raymond Ayala's luxurious and idolized alter ego) and slant (how "keeping it real," staying true to his street-life roots and promoting raw Puerto Rican music to wider audiences, is contrasted with growing transcontinental stardom and wealth).

To write a good profile is to understand that everyone has an intriguing story tucked away into the forgotten, or perhaps ignored, crevices of our daily lives. We uncover these narratives through profiles and submit them to popular culture because people intrigue us, and writers' takes on them—after having had the chance to connect with the subject on some level—intrigue us even more.

Profile Examples

Student Examples

Joseph Larson, who surprised everyone but himself

Sometimes in life we think we have drive. Then we hear stories like *Joseph Larson's. *Name has been changed for privacy

If you happen to catch Joseph Larson grabbing his double shot espresso every morning, he looks much like the suit-and-tie, briefcase-in-hand worker we expect to brush elbows with some of the government's most influential employees.

Every morning, he makes the fifteen-minute walk from his home in Northern Virginia to the metro station and commutes on the Orange and Green Lines to Washington, D.C. I've made a similar Arlington-to-Washington commute during rush hour, observing the hard-faced, overtired, overachieving men and women in suits whom I'd like to offer a smile and a cup of strong coffee. But something tells me Larson would catch my eye. Even if I weren't aware of his profession, something about the quizzical, concentrated, and analytical way he was reading the newspaper might tip me off: he's a lawyer.

But he's not the guy with an earpiece in, swiping and tapping his iPhone screen. He's the kind of man who—perhaps by his legal training, but more likely because of his inherent disposition—pensively absorbs information; the kind of man who, on a daily basis, makes critical legal decisions, yet is far beyond the intellectual limits of taking one's self too seriously.

One thing I wouldn't guess about Larson by my metro observation, though, is this: he is a high school dropout. Without a high school diploma, or even a GED, to his name, Larson climbed himself out of a broken family, an abandoned home, and a completely "adult" life thrust upon him at the shy age of ten years old.

Growing up in the Los Angeles basin, Larson spent the first ten or eleven years of his life in what he described vividly as a typical one-story, single-family house in the foothills of the San Bernadino mountains. He fondly recalled running barefoot and shirtless through the orange and lemon groves surrounding his house, basking in the 70s-and-sunny atmosphere of Southern California.

Larson described himself as a great student who enjoyed performing well and achieving good grades. "At the start of the year in second grade they gave me some tests and sent me to a third grade class," he explained. But being a year younger and physically smaller than his classmates, Larson felt socially removed from his peers (he joked that, standing about 5'5" now, he was small to begin with). "I spent a lot of time in the library at recess instead of on the playground. I read a lot and was a bit reclusive."

Still today, there's something quite reserved yet so present about his demeanor—the type of person who often lets the extroverts of the world do the talking, but, when prompted, could shock any loudmouth to silence with his quick wit and unwavering knowledge on a subject of anyone's choosing.

At about the same time that his home life became shaken, his time spent at school grew a bit rockier as well. "I remember around sixth grade being unwilling to accept authority that I felt was unjust," he described. "I mostly got along with teachers, but there were a couple of really insecure, bullying types, and I really didn't accept that well."

As Larson read about and studied education, he became increasingly convinced that the school system he belonged to was flawed. "I was openly critical of some of my teachers' methods, which landed me in the principal's office," he admitted. "I remember telling one poor science teacher in middle school that he was wasting our time."

Behind the series of disagreements between Larson and his teachers, however, was a childhood falling apart at its seams. "My parents were really smart and loving people, and we had a very close family until I was about ten or eleven years old," Larson said. "At that point, my family began to fall apart. My poor mother had a very rough time of it, and I ended up taking care of her while she went through a very difficult self-destructive stage after my father left."

Larson revealed that while his mother did wind up marrying a nice guy, it only followed after a couple remarriages and various failed relationships. Amid these unsteady relationships, however, the men his mother kept as company were neither friendly nor accepting of having Larson around. He and his mother lost contact for quite a while. His relationship with his father wasn't much better. "My father was mostly absent after that point in my life," Larson said. "He tried to stay in touch, and I know he really loved me and my sister, but he was busy living his life, so we didn't spend much time together." His older sister, likewise, had a difficult time adjusting to the family's new dynamic and lived with her boyfriends in the years following.

"My family house was vacant, as my father had left and my mother had moved out, and I actually lived there alone for a while, until the house was sold as a part of their divorce and I had to find another place to sleep," Larson explained. "It was just as well, as the house kind of gave me nightmares—I'm sure just remnants of the family I had lost."

Surprisingly, Larson remained confident, self-sufficient, and found various jobs as he tackled his newfound independence as a youngster. He didn't get into trouble and seemed satisfied with the freedom he acquired, kept an emotional distance from others, and grew a hard shell.

Still, the combination of his battered home life and his resistance to the school system culminated in his decision to leave high school. "I gradually came to the realization when I got to high school that I had better things to do than sit in a classroom. I had really read a lot about education at that point, and became convinced that I could pretty much learn what I needed to learn in other ways," he said.

So, he stuck out his sophomore year, got straight As to prove he could handle the work, and then dropped out.

"This was absolutely perfect for me at the time, since I really was living from one friend's apartment floor to the next, and loved the anonymity. It was really liberating, and I was perfectly happy to move on," Larson recalled. "It was insanely easy for a kid that age, at that time, to kind of disappear into the suburban landscape."

Hearing Larson's viewpoints toward formal education at the time is reminiscent of a California-bred, more put-together, Will Hunting—minus the attitude and the bitterness. It seemed clear to Larson that learning was a matter beyond the confines of structured education; no matter if he maintained enrollment at an institution, his desire to learn would naturally crop up in all aspects of his life.

After leaving high school, Larson made his living from a variety of small jobs— everything from dishwashing, bussing tables, cooking fast food, painting houses, and working as a tech in animal hospitals. He explained that he never spent money on anything other than food, so these jobs were sufficient.

Describing himself as having long hair and dressing poorly, Larson became a "hippie" and protested the Vietnam War at a young age. "I was fascinated by the counterculture, and read a lot," Larson remembered. Still a lover of literature, Larson read everything "from Ginsburg's

poetry ('Howl') to Ken Kesey ('One Flew Over the Cuckoo's Nest') to Thoreau's 'Walden' and pretty much everything written by Hermann Hesse." He often hitchhiked to get around, and made trips to the San Francisco area as it was a "Mecca" for hippies at the time.

It wasn't until he was about seventeen that he truly acknowledged the wounds he'd never healed. After attending a self-development course, Larson was able to tap into deep seated feelings about those turbulent years. Surprised at his own grief after years of independence, he admitted, "I was shocked to find that I was heartbroken by the loss of my happy family and cried and cried about it at the training. I had a chance to grieve the loss, finally, which I think helped me move on."

Despite his resistance to formal education in his early years, Larson was still an academic at heart. Soon, he grew bored of his life without the thrill of education in it, so he enrolled in several courses at the local community college as well as the local State Polytechnic University (Cal Poly Pomona). Meanwhile, Larson landed a job in a lab at the City of Hope where he assisted in lab work on animals for human disease research. "The doctors in the lab took an interest in me and encouraged me to get a degree," he said. "I applied to the University of California at San Diego and was shocked to find I got in."

At UCSD, Larson studied Linguistics and fell in love with it. He also enrolled in a French class, which led to him studying abroad. Describing himself as an opportunist, Larson discovered that he could get a student loan and spend a year in France during his junior year without working. After graduating from UCSD, he soon attended American University for law school.

Larson recalled a conversation he had with the registrar at American University about his lack of a high school degree or GED. "I remember the registrar looking at my transcript and noting, shocked, that I never graduated from high school. I remember asking if that was going to be a problem, but she just said, 'No, I just haven't ever seen this before!'"

What is perhaps most notable about Larson is the normalcy with which he treats his road to success and his forgiveness of the situation he was tossed into. "I think everyone has adversity and challenges," Larson said. "I loved the freedom I had as a youngster. I think it gave me a great deal of confidence, and I had some amazing experiences."

Speaking to his humility and compassion, Larson actually attributed much of his success to his family. Remembering his early childhood fondly, Larson feels grateful for the love his

family showed him in his early years. Being rooted in such a solid foundation was key when Larson was forced to make difficult choices later on.

Although it may not have been the easiest path, Larson was always confident in his ability to rise out of life's challenges. "There was the occasional reality check, those times grilling burgers with a jerk for a boss, or loading trucks late at night, which would motivate me," he said. "I always knew I would do more than those jobs, and those tough realities are just the thing to motivate a person to move on."

There seems to be something intrinsically laced in Larson's character that drives him to success and is fueled by a love for learning—something beyond motivation and the often shallow push from parents to succeed, which Larson lacked anyway in his formative years. Looking at his background on paper, I'd expect to find Larson, at worst, drug addicted and alone. At best, still cooking fast food and struggling to make ends meet. But seeing the challenges he's faced as opportunities, Larson doesn't see that there were any other options: he had to succeed.

In his own California-roots fashion, Joseph Larson takes time to absorb and study the world around him. He has an appreciation for those who have chosen to live life differently, and he values the family and life he now has. He's been given the opportunity to decide what he wanted to do and who he wanted to be, and so he invites others to do the same.

"What motivates us ultimately to do what we do, to me, is still a big mystery," he said.

This speaks to Larson's enigmatic self as well. He had every opportunity to fail, was the thought that pervasively and dogmatically prodded at my mind. And yet, with tenacity that is difficult to fathom, he picked up the pieces his family left behind and, without a blink, proved he had every tool to succeed.

When the necktie comes off, it drags with it all stereotypical assumptions we might have conjured about this metropolitan man. It's anyone's game as to what Larson is up to once he steps out of lawyer mode (although, if it's trivia or crossword puzzles, I've been warned not to challenge him). Often, he's tending to the various animals for which he couldn't refuse a place in his home. He's watching the Washington Nationals game over dinner. He's putting that suit and tie back on for a night at The Shakespeare Theatre in DC. He's listening to everything from Native American flute music to Neil Young. Or, he is—after multiple hip replacements on both sides—running and training for his next marathon.

Amid the surprises and the proved-everyone-wrongs, perhaps only three things are certain about Joseph Larson: his love of learning, his love of life, and that double shot espresso.

Professional Profile Examples

Brown, DeNeen. 27 May 2011. "Six-Pack Abs at Age 74" *The Washington Post*.

Herzog, Werner. 9 Aug 2013. *From One Second to the Next: Texting While Driving Documentary*. Video

Laitner, Bill. 2 Feb 2015. "Heart and Sole: Detroiter's Lengthy Commute Part of Life" *Lansing State Journal*.

Walters, Joanna. 16 June 2017. "Inside the Rehab Saving Young Men from their Internet Addiction" *The Guardian*.

Observation

The Purpose of Observation

The observation pulls much from the description method often used as part of personal narratives. Please revisit the Personal Narrative section of this book for a review of description tips and strategies.

For a detailed explanation of an observation paper read "[The Observation Essay: How to Make More Brilliant Observations](#)" by Susan M. Inez.

Observation Student Examples

The following examples are from _Teaching Autoethnography: Personal Writing in the Classroom_ by Melissa Tombro (pp. 76, 86, and 88-89):

The Battle

by Emma Suleski

She smacked together cherry red lips and turned her head towards the window. Boston's underground tunnels reflected fleetingly in her polished sunglasses before she put her head back down to her phone. She lifted her sunglasses to push back ashy-blonde curls. She stared at the screen of her phone then shut her eyes momentarily. Her posture was unflinching, shoulders remained poised, neck taut, chin up, yet her lip quavered and her eyes weren't simply shut, they were squeezed tight. After a sharp inhale, she looked back down at her phone and typed a reply. A short, "okay" or maybe, "on my way."

The T jolted back and forth on uneasy tracks and her eyes darted from person to person, scanning unfamiliar faces, seemingly wanting to get lost in their stories and away from her own. Her heavy lids fell back down and she imagined better days. She dreamed of spring break in Mexico three years ago where she acquired the small bird tattoo on her left forearm. She could've sworn she was breaking free that year. She let memories of her childhood flurry around her crowded mind. A smile crept across her face thinking of her dad, much younger back then, tossing her up and down in the

living room, making her believe she could fly. Her mom, listening to music as she cooked in the kitchen until Dad interrupted her by asking for a dance. Her younger brother walking in the door triumphantly parading his basketball and a smile on his face, "I beat Dad this time! By a whole six points!"

The train jolted her out of her dreams and the mechanical voice indicated, "Longwood." She gathered her belongings, a black backpack and small duffel, and stepped out of the train car.

Walking quickly she dialed a number on her phone.

She spoke quickly and clearly, "Hey, Kathy? I just got off the T. Yeah I'll be there soon. What room number?" Her Aunt Kathy was always in charge of any family emergency. She had an incredible levelheadedness about her that nobody else seemed to possess. It would be a comfort to see her and hear another of her timely updates.

Blond curls tangling in the city wind, she turned left into Massachusetts General Hospital's driveway. Ironically, at this point she pulled out a cigarette and stopped to smoke. She had planned to quit the habit but then all of this happened with her dad and she needed a simple comfort, no matter how unhealthy. She tossed the cigarette to the ground and used the tip of her nude flats to extinguish it. She couldn't put this off any longer. She walked up to the big revolving door and entered the hospital.

The elevator took exactly twenty-four seconds to arrive. When it did, she traveled up eight floors and down a long hallway. It was the typical hospital scene; nurses power walking this way and that, doctors in lab coats updating patients. She finally entered room 815 and looked at her sickly father on the bed in front of her. He looked just as he always did, yet totally different. The peaceful rise and fall of his chest indicated a sleep she hadn't had in days. Kathy greeted her with a sympathetic smile that spoke for itself; there was no news.

She let her bags drop to the floor and took over the seat closest to her dad. She smiled briefly, then picked up his hand and rested her head on his shoulder.

This battle had only just begun.

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Angelic Atmosphere
by Chadbourne Oliver

The door at the back of the car slides left, and in reels a bent old man. Dark are his sunglasses, his weathered boots, his skin. Pale and dirty are his shirt and hair, neither of which retain their presumptive original color. His torso leans forward of his legs at an obtuse angle that flirts cruelly with ninety degrees. A short cane of gnarled and polished wood bends a little under his right hand.

About his neck is harsh cord that pulls tightly on the red indented skin it touches, supporting a large gray bucket wherein the hearts of artichokes once dwelled. With his left hand he lends some support to the bucket and his strained neck upon which it weighs. Where the brine of vegetables once sloshed there now comes the muted drum of filthy coins oiled by thousands of hands. The bucket is his wallet, his salvation, and above the reckless rumble of the Q train he gives it yet another purpose.

With a laborious step he heaves the bucket up and lowers it with a clunk; the entrance of his solemn percussion section. With another he thrusts the cane towards the floor and it resonates loudly. And then, with a passion that suggested the car from whence he has just come contained a yawning chasm that plunged down beneath even the loneliest depths of the New York City subway, his voice erupts forth from somewhere within that bony breast and spills into the atmosphere like smoke into fog. His rich voice is loud and unrestrained, uninhibited by the angle at which he projects towards the floor. He is an itinerant Stevie Wonder, complete with clouded, unseeing eyes and an angelic voice.

Step by step he moves arduously through the car, each left foot in sync with his coin-and-bucket bass drum, each right foot with his makeshift snare. His pace surpasses slow. It is rhythmic, it is careful, it is burdensome. It is the backbeat to a hymn, a funeral procession trudging along a path thickened by rain. And yet it is no dirge that the bent man with his gilded vocal cords does intone, but an air of rather different morals. "If you want my body, and you think I'm sexy, come on sugar, let me know," he cries. Rod Stewart's piece has never been spewed from unlikelier lips. Could he have picked a better song? Could he have picked one worse? All the passengers are awestruck. Their eyes are transfixed, their jaws sag. Several bohemians aboard the train are practically groveling. Coins and bills are drawn forth hastily and thrown into the bucket to swell the tide of metal that breaks with each thunderous step against the plastic sides. The bent man issues appropriate thanks for each donation between lines, "If you really need me, God bless, just reach out and touch me, God bless, come on honey, tell me so, God bless." He reaches the end of the car. The door slides

right and then left, wavers, and then shuts fast.

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Sylvia

by Tyana Soto

Sylvia's hands shook as she gently placed an embellished gold necklace into its felt box It was beautiful to her, so beautiful that she almost didn't want to sell it. She placed it on the table next to the other necklaces and admired how stunning it looked in the morning light. After staying up for hours polishing and cleaning it carefully she couldn't help but smile at the sight of

it. It was perfect, and she was so glad that she was able to put it on her table next to all of the other knickknacks. She straightened a golden frame with an antique picture, and looked around at the crowd that was beginning to come already.

She felt her heart beating.

Oh, how she loved these mornings; the weekends of the flea market, the weekends of her life. All week her hands would flutter around her precious trinkets with anxiety, just waiting and longing for the weekend to arrive. On Friday night she would lie in bed extra early with her eyes shut tight hoping that the next morning had arrived. She loved waking up and hauling her things to the small white tent. It was magic seeing the different people come, and the way that they swarmed to her table and admired all of her things. She was a big seller, and seemed to be one of the most successful

ones in the market.

Pulling the soft cloth from her pocket, Sylvia walked over to her porcelain section and began wiping off the dust fondly. Even though she had done it before she left she still felt it necessary to do it again. If something looked clean people were more likely to look and possibly buy. There was nothing worse than something dirty and uncared for. People wanted bright and shiny. It was the first rule of the flea market.

When she was finished buffing and cleaning all glass objects, she slowly shuffled to the center of her square of tables and sat down slowly into her green and yellow lawn chair. She remembered when she had first started selling at flea markets. Her kids were young, her marriage had just begun, and life was good. She and John would load the kids in the van with things they had bought at garage sales, and they would sell all day. John would be the ultimate salesman, bringing people over with his magnetic smile, and always making a sale no matter how big or small. The kids would gallop through the streets like horses, talking to vendors and playing games with the other children. They

were all so happy, and so drawn to the life of buying and selling.

But then the kids got older, the van was traded in for a newer car, and John got sick. The weekends at the flea market were scarce, and eventually they stopped going. Now that everyone was gone she could do that again.

No, she was not that vibrant woman she once was. The one with jet black hair and a tiny waist who would always catch stares on the streets. Her clothes were looser, hair grey, and body

a little slower. She used to be able to haul everything from the van into the tent with no problems at all. Now she needed help. But life was just the same, and Sylvia could almost hear her kids running towards her, mouths stained red and blue from the ice pops they had eaten. Smiles big as the sun. She may be alone now, and her life may consist of tiny porcelain dolls with perfect faces, but that life made her

happy.

"Excuse me, but is this real gold? It's beautiful."

Sylvia glanced up to see a woman holding the gold necklace in the velvet box. With a smile she slowly got up from her chair and said, "Yes honey, 100% authentic 14-karat gold. A special necklace for a special woman like you."

Life was going to be all right.

Additional examples of the observation can be found at "2 Observation Essay Examples to Watch Closely" by Susan M. Inez.

Discussion Questions for Observation Essays

- Why would somebody want to read this piece (the "Who cares?" factor)?
- Can you clearly identify the author's intention for the piece?
- How well does the author support the intention of the piece? Cite specific details that support or take away from the author's intention.
- Is there information missing from this piece that would make its intention clearer?
- What else would you like to know?
- Does the author portray herself as a round character? How does she do this?
- Do you trust the author of this piece? Why or why not?
- How clearly does the author establish a sense of setting/space in this piece? Cite specific details that support your claim.
- How clearly does the author establish characters other than the self in this piece? Cite specific details that support your claim.
- Did you learn anything new from reading this piece? If so, what?
- Are there particular passages with engaging language/description that stood out to you? Describe the appeal of these passages.
- Would you read more writing from this author? Why or why not?

Definition

From *Writing for Success* Ch. 10.6 Definition

The Purpose of Definition

The purpose of a definition essay may seem self-explanatory: the purpose of the definition essay is to simply define something. But defining terms in writing is often more complicated than just consulting a dictionary. In fact, the way we define terms can have far-reaching consequences for individuals as well as collective groups.

Take, for example, a word like alcoholism. The way in which one defines alcoholism depends on its legal, moral, and medical contexts. Lawyers may define alcoholism in terms of its legality; parents may define alcoholism in terms of its morality; and doctors will define alcoholism in terms of symptoms and diagnostic criteria. Think also of terms that people tend to debate in our broader culture. How we define words, such as marriage and climate change, has enormous impact on policy decisions and even on daily decisions. Think about conversations couples may have in which words like commitment, respect, or love need clarification.

Defining terms within a relationship, or any other context, can at first be difficult, but once a definition is established between two people or a group of people, it is easier to have productive dialogues. Definitions, then, establish the way in which people communicate ideas. They set parameters for a given discourse, which is why they are so important.

Tip
When writing definition essays, avoid terms that are too simple, that lack complexity. Think in terms of concepts, such as hero, immigration, or loyalty, rather than physical objects. Definitions of concepts, rather than objects, are often fluid and contentious, making for a more effective definition essay.

Writing at Work

Definitions play a critical role in all workplace environments. Take the term sexual harassment, for example. Sexual harassment is broadly defined on the federal level, but each company may have additional criteria that define it further. Knowing how your workplace defines and treats all sexual harassment allegations is important. Think, too, about how your company defines lateness, productivity, or contributions.

Activity: Defining a Word

On a separate sheet of paper, write about a time in your own life in which the definition of a word, or the lack of a definition, caused an argument. Your term could be something as simple as the category of an all-star in sports or how to define a good movie. Or it could be something with higher stakes and wider impact, such as a political argument. Explain how the conversation began, how the argument hinged on the definition of the word, and how the incident was finally resolved.

Please share with a classmate and compare your responses.

The Structure of a Definition Essay

The definition essay opens with a general discussion of the term to be defined. You then state as your thesis your definition of the term.

The rest of the essay should explain the rationale for your definition. Remember that a dictionary's definition is limiting, and you should not rely strictly on the dictionary entry. Instead, consider the context in which you are using the word. Context identifies the circumstances, conditions, or setting in which something exists or occurs. Often words take on different meanings depending on the context in which they are used. For example, the ideal leader in a battlefield setting could likely be very different than a leader in an elementary school setting. If a context is missing from the essay, the essay may be too short or the main points could be confusing or misunderstood.

The remainder of the essay should explain different aspects of the term's definition. For example, if you were defining a good leader in an elementary classroom setting, you might define such a leader according to personality traits: patience, consistency, and flexibility. Each attribute would be explained in its own paragraph.

Tip

For definition essays, try to think of concepts that you have a personal stake in. You are more likely to write a more engaging definition essay if you are writing about an idea that has personal value and importance.

Writing at Work

It is a good idea to occasionally assess your role in the workplace. You can do this through the process of definition. Identify your role at work by defining not only the routine tasks but also those gray areas where your responsibilities might overlap with those of others. Coming up with a clear definition of roles and responsibilities can add value to your résumé and even increase productivity in the workplace.

Activity: In Your Own Words

On a separate sheet of paper, define each of the following items in your own terms. If you can, establish a context for your definition.

1. Bravery
2. Adulthood
3. Consumer culture
4. Violence
5. Art

Writing a Definition Essay

Choose a topic that will be complex enough to be discussed at length. Choosing a word or phrase of personal relevance often leads to a more interesting and engaging essay.

After you have chosen your word or phrase, start your essay with an introduction that establishes the relevancy of the term in the chosen specific context. Your thesis comes at the end of the introduction, and it should clearly state your definition of the term in the specific context. Establishing a functional context from the beginning will orient readers and minimize misunderstandings.

The body paragraphs should each be dedicated to explaining a different facet of your definition. Make sure to use clear examples and strong details to illustrate your points. Your concluding paragraph should pull together all the different elements of your definition to ultimately reinforce your thesis.

Activity: Definition Essay

Create a full definition essay from one of the items you already defined in the previous activity. Be sure to include an interesting introduction, a clear thesis, a well-explained context, distinct body paragraphs, and a conclusion that pulls everything together.

Key Takeaways
- Definitions establish the way in which people communicate ideas. They set parameters for a given discourse.
- Context affects the meaning and usage of words.
- The thesis of a definition essay should clearly state the writer's definition of the term in the specific context.
- Body paragraphs should explain the various facets of the definition stated in the thesis.
- The conclusion should pull all the elements of the definition together at the end and reinforce the thesis.

Definition Examples

From *Writing for Success* [Ch. 15.7 Definition Essay](#)

Student Sample

Defining Good Students Means More Than Just Grades

Many people define good students as those who receive the best grades. While it is true that good students often earn high grades, I contend that grades are just one aspect of how we define a good student. In fact, even poor students can earn high grades sometimes, so grades are not the best indicator of a student's quality. Rather, a good student pursues scholarship, actively participates in class, and maintains a positive, professional relationship with instructors and peers.

Good students have a passion for learning that drives them to fully understand class material rather than just worry about what grades they receive in the course. Good students are actively engaged in scholarship, which means they enjoy reading and learning about their subject matter not just because readings and assignments are required. Of course, good students will complete their homework and all assignments, and they may even continue to perform research and learn more on the subject after the course ends. In some cases, good students will pursue a subject that interests them but might not be one of their strongest academic areas, so they will not earn the highest grades. Pushing oneself to learn and try new things can be difficult, but good students will challenge themselves rather than remain at their educational comfort level for the sake of a high grade. The pursuit of scholarship and education rather than concern over grades is the hallmark of a good student.

Class participation and behavior are another aspect of the definition of a good student. Simply attending class is not enough; good students arrive punctually because they understand that tardiness disrupts the class and disrespects the professors. They might occasionally arrive a few minutes early to ask the professor questions about class materials or mentally prepare for the day's work. Good students consistently pay attention during class discussions and take notes in lectures rather than engage in off-task behaviors, such as checking their cell phones or daydreaming. Excellent class participation requires a balance between speaking and listening, so good students will share their views when appropriate but also respect their classmates' views when they differ from their own. It is easy to mistake quantity of class discussion comments with quality, but good students know the difference and do not try to dominate the conversation. Sometimes class participation is counted toward a student's grade, but even without such clear rewards, good students understand how to perform and excel among their peers in the classroom.

Finally, good students maintain a positive and professional relationship with their professors. They respect their instructor's authority in the classroom as well as the instructor's privacy outside of the classroom. Prying into a professor's personal life is inappropriate, but attending office hours to discuss course material is an appropriate, effective way for students to demonstrate their dedication and interest in learning. Good students go to their professor's office during posted office hours or make an appointment if necessary. While instructors can be very busy, they are usually happy to offer guidance to students during office hours; after all, availability outside the classroom is a part of their job. Attending office hours can also help good students become memorable and stand out from the rest, particularly in lectures with hundreds enrolled. Maintaining positive, professional relationships with professors is especially important for those students who hope to attend graduate school and will need letters of recommendation in the future.

Although good grades often accompany good students, grades are not the only way to indicate what it means to be a good student. The definition of a good student means demonstrating such traits as engaging with course material, participating in class, and creating a professional relationship with professors. While every professor will have different criteria for earning an A in their course, most would agree on these characteristics for defining good students.

Student Sample 2

From *English Composition I: Rhetorical Methods*

Chris Thurman
Cohen
English 111
12/01/10
Extended Definition Essay

When one thinks of the most important quality in a friend or a family member, trust immediately comes to mind. It can be defined as reliance on the integrity, strength, ability, and surety of a person or thing. But what does it really mean? Trust, in simple terms, is faith in another person, despite a lack of an assured outcome.

One characteristic that makes trust unique is its fragility. To gain the trust of a parent or friend, one must continuously prove one's honesty and reliability. To gain the complete trust of someone can take years, but can be lost in a single moment. A perfect example of the delicate nature of trust can be found in marriage. Two spouses must constantly support and be honest with each other to gain real trust. However, this bond can be easily broken if one of the spouses is caught cheating with someone else. Trust in another person can make one feel secure and loved, while broken trust can lead to the feeling of anger and vulnerability.

One very important question arises when examining trust: If one knows the outcome of something before it happens, is there any trust involved? For example, a friend asks to borrow $10,000 so that he can invest it in a company, and receive more money in return. If one already knew that they would get the money back at the time of the loan, there is no trust involved. However, if the investment seems very risky, and the only thing that made one approve is the friend's promise of success, than genuine trust takes place. The person that is doing the trusting should have faith in the person making the promise, not in the event itself. Real trust is not tested in times of certainty; rather, genuine trust occurs when we are not certain of the outcome.

Trust can be a found in simple things, like a dog relying on his master to feed him, or it can be found in more complex things relationships such as two police officers looking out for each other. Most friendships are based on trust as well. Friends will not let other friends make bad decisions and will expect that others will do the same for them. Trust can be proven to others by doing the right thing even when one is not asked. If other people know that one can handle

responsibility and can manage to do the right thing, even when they are not asked, they will not falter in providing friendship and support.

       Trust has always been a part of everyone's life whether or not they are aware of it. From the time we are born, we know that our mother will care for us and show us love and affection. In our teenage years we hope that our friends and family alike will support our decisions and correct us if we are wrong. To our college years, we expect that our teachers will accurately grade everything we do. We even expect our spouse to support and love us throughout our adult years. We rely on others to take care of our every need when we are old. Even on the day that we die, we know that our friends and family will be at our funeral to bid us farewell into the afterlife. We hope that there is a heaven and a hell, one of which will be our final destination. But throughout our lives, trust follows us everywhere we go and these trusting relationships that we develop will help lead and guide us. But when it all comes down to it, who can we trust?

Professional Definition Essays

Brady, Judy. 1971. "I Want a Wife." Ms. *Magazine*.

Smith, Gayle Rosenwald 2 July 2001. "The Wife-Beater." *Philadelphia Inquirer.*

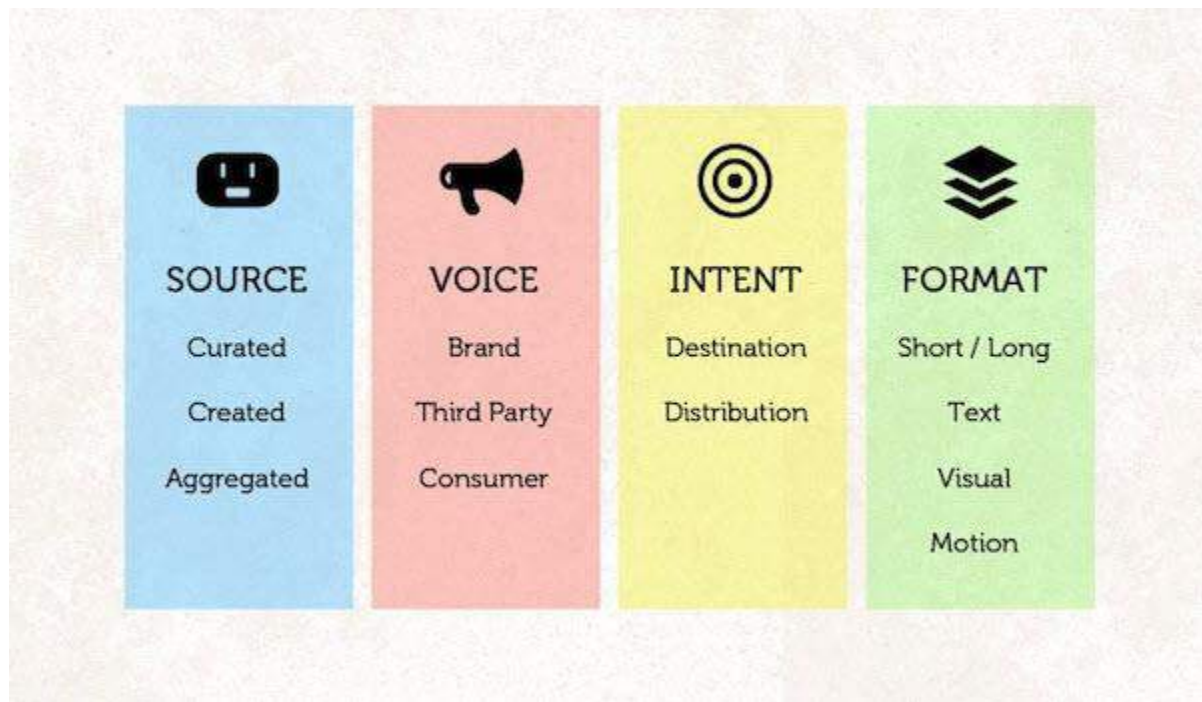Levine, Philip. 1992. "What Work Is." *The Poetry Foundation*. (poem)

News Story

From Chapter 2.7 Storytelling and the Information Strategy in Information Strategies for Communicators

The Purpose of a News Story

The way information is crafted into the final media message depends on two key factors:

- How the message is being delivered (a story in a newspaper versus on a mobile device, a TV brand ad or one in an interactive magazine)
- The audience for whom the message is intended

The storytelling techniques you use must take into account the media format in which the information is delivered and the audience expectations for the message.

SOURCE	VOICE	INTENT	FORMAT
Curated	Brand	Destination	Short / Long
Created	Third Party	Distribution	Text
Aggregated	Consumer		Visual
			Motion

Beth Kanter – Storytelling – CC BY 2.0

While this course does not delve into the actual construction of the messages themselves – you will get those skills in your reporting or strategic writing classes – it is worthwhile to acknowledge some of the considerations that message creators must keep in mind – and the information requirements there might be for different storytelling conventions.

Goals of Storytelling

Storytelling can serve different kinds of goals. Determining the intention or purpose of the story or message is an important first step in crafting the message. As you have learned, messages can inform or enlighten people about current events or issues or about the availability of products or services. They can provide background and context to a discussion of ideas. Stories can be written to persuade people to make certain purchases or hold certain views. News, advertising and public relations messages perform some or all of these functions while employing different storytelling techniques and formats to communicate with audiences in the most effective way.

There are a number of different storytelling decisions to make as a producer of media content. Regardless of which type of media you are working within, it is important that you, the communicator, are aware of the fundamental storytelling devices you might want to use to tell your story in a way that is direct, efficient, and appropriate for the story's objective. Therefore, you will want to have a full and accessible set of tools that you are ready to employ for any kind of message, depending on the type of media you are creating, your chosen channel of communication, as well as the specific style, tone, and needs of your story subject.

Characteristics of Good Storytelling

Usually the word "story" implies something fictional. But in the case of media messages "story" refers to fact-based information about products, or events, or the actions taken by a company. The distinction between fiction and nonfiction stories is an absolutely critical one for you to grasp. It affects every decision that you make about the selection and evaluation of information for messages.

Good storytelling consists of knowing your audience. Is the audience going to be reading the story, hearing it, experiencing it in a non-linear fashion online? What kind of background information does the audience for the story already have about the topic?

Good storytelling also begins with a foundation in the subject matter. The storyteller must have a firm grasp of the subject matter in order to effectively communicate the story to someone else.

Good storytelling demands that the storyteller have command of the mechanics of writing.

Good storytelling understands how different media elements play into the effective telling of the story.

Good storytelling demonstrates ethical standards for accuracy, truth, verifiability, sufficient evidence and information reliability. Nonfiction stories, especially, require solid grounding in factual information that can withstand scrutiny by the most skeptical audience members.

Storytellers must deliver within the parameters and requirements of the story assignment. They must:
- meet the deadline
- follow directions on the expected length and focus for the story
- meet the expectation for clean, distribution-ready copy
- use proper grammar, word choice and style
- apply the appropriate story characteristics for the channel of message delivery

The information strategy skills you will learn in this course will provide you with the tools you need to meet these storytelling requirements. Moving confidently through the information strategy process will help you identify your audience, locate the relevant content for your message, ensure the accuracy of your information and provide the details that will make your message stand out.

Types of News Stories
From Chapter 25 Types of News Stories in *Writing for Strategic Communication Industries*

Straight news/Hard news

Stories that report only the most essential information in a concise and impartial manner are referred to as straight or hard news stories. This type of story typically follows the inverted pyramid style, which organizes information by descending order of importance or places the most newsworthy information at the beginning of the article. This style will be discussed in more detail below. Examples of hard news stories include those about political topics and crime.

Features

The primary difference between a feature story and a straight news story is the style. A feature article is more in-depth than a traditional hard news article and uses the types of storytelling

devices and details that you might find in novels. Feature stories are considered soft news and do not focus merely on the basic facts.

Writers typically have more flexibility to use a wider range of formats, provide rich descriptions, and include scene-setting anecdotes. Features often are given more space on the page and are accompanied by pictures, illustrations, graphics, maps, and other visual components. A profile of an athlete or a political figure is an example of a feature article. The characteristics of feature writing will be explained further in the next section.

Editorial

Although journalistic ethical standards call for general news writing to be objective in content and tone, newswriters also have the opportunity to communicate personal points of view about current events and topics. The editorial is a type of news story used to develop an argument about an issue and even sway readers' opinions. The essay also represents the official view of an editorial board that determines what views to share after some kind of deliberative process.

News or Opinion?

by Christine Photinos, 01 July 2018 from _Writing Commons_

Research we do on the web and through library databases often leads us to content from newspapers, magazines, and news agencies (such as Reuters and the Associated Press). What all news content has in common is that it connects in some way to something that is in the news.

News content can be roughly divided into the categories of news and opinion. News articles attempt to provide information on a current event, while opinion pieces attempt to persuade readers to adopt a particular position on that event.

The distinction between news and opinion is not black and white. An example of one grey area is "advocacy reporting"—when news is reported from an explicit perspective. For example, news articles published in the Humane Society magazine—_All Animals_—generally serve the organization's larger agenda of promoting humane treatment of animals ("Big Changes at SeaWorld" _All Animals,_ May/June 2016).

Another subcategory of news that can at times seem to enter into this grey area is "news analysis"—news writing that pushes beyond surface answers to the 5 W's and H (Who? What?

Where? When? Why? and How?) to explore causes and consequences of news events (
"Grammy Awards 2018: How the Recording Academy has Evolved Toward Relevance" *Los Angeles Times,* Nov. 28, 2017).

More generally, we should recognize that the way in which news is presented—including what information is selected for inclusion, and what words and images are used to communicate that information—can encourage particular understandings or perspectives. We should always be alert to such factors in news reporting, and to significant departures from accepted standards of journalistic fairness and accuracy.

But to reject the journalistic distinction between news and opinion is to turn all sources into an undifferentiated mass of "information." An analogy: These days many movies contain commercial messages (for example, product placement) and many commercials have taken on movie-like qualities (consider this AT&T ad—titled "Whole New World," for example). Yet we still value the ability to distinguish between these two types of content and to refer to them by different names. (Without different names for these two types of content, how would we express frustration with a feature-length Burger King ad? What words would we use?)

Skillful researchers are able to identify sources by type, even in circumstances when they do not believe a source has achieved the highest ideals of its type.

Below (Table 1) are some defining features of "news" and "opinion."

News	Opinion
The writer reports the news. People's opinions may appear as part of that reporting ("According to Mr. Smith…"), but the writer does not explicitly present his/her own views.	The writer shares his or her own views and explicitly seeks to persuade readers to adopt those views as their own.

Below are some sub-categories of news and opinion:

News		
	News Article	An article written to inform readers about recent events. The author reports essential information (who/what/where/when/why/how).
	News Analysis	An article written to inform readers about recent events. The author reports and attempts to deepen understanding of recent events—for example, by providing background information and other kinds of additional context.
	Feature Article	Compared with news articles, feature articles are often more creative or exploratory and less focused on efficient delivery of essential information. For example, while a news article may detail the most recent revelations about a politician's extramarital affair, a feature article may offer in-depth reporting on a single aspect of the revelations, or the revelations may function as a "news peg" for the feature article's more general exploration of infidelity. Other types of news content that are generally categorized as "feature" writing include how-to-do-it articles (for example, how to shop for a new phone) and profiles (for example, an article about a movie actor starring in a recently-released film).
Opinion		
	Editorial	An unsigned opinion piece that represents the views of the news organization's editorial staff.
	Opinion Piece	An opinion article by a staff columnist or guest columnist. (If a guest columnist, the writer's credentials will almost always be identified.)
	Review	An evaluation of a book, movie, album, live performance, etc.

Distinguishing between News and Opinion: An Example

Compare the two texts that follow. In the first, "Get Children Off Web and in Libraries," the reporter quotes the opinions of others but does not offer her own opinions. In the second, "Why Libraries are Key," the author explicitly takes a stand and seeks to persuade readers to adopt a particular position on an issue.

News

"Get children off web and in libraries, says Laureate"

> *Children are failing to learn properly because they are churning out facts copied from the internet instead of going to the library, according <u>to the new Children's Laureate.</u>*

> *Julia Donaldson, the best-selling author of The Gruffalo, set out her stall on the day of her appointment by speaking out against the Government's planned library closures, arguing that they <u>are vital for children's education.</u>.*

Opinions are attributed to another person (Donaldson). They are not presented as the reporter's own view.

Source: Singh, Anita. "Get Children Off Web and in Libraries, says Laureate." *The Daily Telegraph*, 8 June 2011, 8.

Opinion

"Why libraries are key to our kids' futures"

> *Children's use of libraries has increased every year for the past six years.*

> *As the Children's Laureate <u>I want to make sure that</u> continues, and to do all I can to keep libraries open so that children can use them.*

> *Without this resource <u>I'm convinced that we will</u>₂ have far fewer avid child readers and consequently lose a large percentage of our future adult readers.*

Notice that the author presents her own views, credentials, and objectives.

Source: Donaldson, Julia. "Why Libraries are Key to Our Kids Futures." *The Sun*, 14 October 2011, 40.

News or Opinion? Test your understanding.

Identify each excerpt that follows as an example of news or opinion. (Discussion of each example appears at the end of this section.)

"Jeremy Hunt: No Public Interest in Nude Prince Harry Photographs"

Speaking to BBC News this morning, Mr. Hunt said: "Personally I cannot see what the public interest was in publishing those."

"But we have a free press," he added, "and I don't think it is right for politicians to tell newspaper editors what they can and cannot publish. That must be a matter for the newspaper editors."

He suggested that the public should give the Prince "a break", days after the daily tabloid published photographs obtained by gossip website TMZ.

Source: "Jeremy Hunt: No Public Interest in Nude Prince Harry Photographs." *The Telegraph*, 26 August 2012,

"Social Media Content Could Make, Break Professional Life"

Do you remember your last tweet? What about last month's Facebook or Instagram posts? It is all out there somewhere, and employers very well may see something that could hurt their opinion of you.

Tyler Willingham, a senior in marketing and a peer career adviser, was curious to know exactly what an employer's goal is when perusing a prospective employee's social media. After speaking with a mentor from a previous internship Willingham held, he found his answer.

"It's not really an issue of what they look for," Willingham said "but what they try not to find."

Career Services interim director Stephanie Kit said some of the things employers hope not to find are pictures and posts involving alcohol or drug usage, negative comments about a current or previous employer and any discriminatory content.

Source: Lipps, Michael. "Social Media Content Could Make, Break Professional Life." *University of Tennessee Daily Beacon*, 15 April 2015,

"'Kid Nation' Lesson: Be Careful What You Pitch"

On Friday, the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, the union that represents performers but not contestants on reality shows, said it was investigating whether the children on "Kid Nation" should have been covered by the union's work rules.

With "Kid Nation," CBS confronted several new situations created by the fact that it was working with children rather than adults.

If "Kid Nation" had been set in California, New York or several other states, it would have been subject to laws that limit the amount of time a child could spend on the set of the program each day. It chose instead to shoot the program in New Mexico, where until this summer there was no law addressing children's work on television or film productions.

That is not to say that New Mexico had not contemplated such limits. Before CBS took the 40 children to the state, its Legislature had already passed a bill that would have outlawed much of what CBS had planned.

On April 3, two days after CBS started shooting the 13-episode reality series, Gov. Bill Richardson of New Mexico signed the bill into law. It limits children ages 8 to 15 to eight to nine hours' work a day on television and film productions.

On the set of "Kid Nation," the children regularly worked more than 12 hours a day, and their contract required that they be available to the show's producers to be videotaped 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

But because the new law was not scheduled to go into effect until June 15, roughly one month after "Kid Nation" finished production, lawyers for CBS have contended that everything they did was in compliance with the law "in effect at the time of production."

But it is not clear whether CBS was in compliance. New Mexico child-labor statutes limit children under the age of 14 to 44 hours of work in one week and eight hours in any day, unless a special permit has been granted. [...]

Source: Wyatt, Edward. "'Kid Nation' Lesson: Be Careful What You Pitch." *New York Times*, 25 August 2007, B7.

"Sometimes, the Teachers Bully the Students"

The government of Alberta has re-introduced its Education Act, which addresses the issue of student bullying in schools. The bill affirms that students are entitled to learning environments that are welcoming, caring, respectful and safe.

The government is to be commended both for its process in engaging the community, and for the resulting new provisions.

For example, the bill's definition of bullying acknowledges that bullying is intentional and repetitive, and that it can cause harm, fear and distress to victims in the school community. Moreover, the bill wisely addresses not just the situation where a student bullies fellow students, but where a student bullies other individuals in the school community. Such recognition that students can bully adults is important because research suggests that students often bully their teachers.

Yet, the bill fails to acknowledge that the imbalance of power between teachers and students creates an opportunity for bullying of students by adults. [...] The bill ought to recognize and address the possibility of bullying behavior by adults who work in schools.

Source: Buchfink, Jaclyn, and Juliet Guichon. "Sometimes, the Teachers Bully the Students." *Calgary Herald*, 21 February 2012, A13.

Discussion

"Jeremy Hunt: No Public Interest in Nude Prince Harry Photographs"
    Speaking to BBC News this morning, Mr. Hunt said: "Personally I cannot see what the public interest was in publishing those."

    "But we have a free press," he added, "and I don't think it is right for politicians to tell newspaper editors what they can and cannot publish. That must be a matter for the newspaper editors."

    He suggested that the public should give the Prince "a break", days after the daily tabloid published photographs obtained by gossip website TMZ.

News: This piece deals almost exclusively with an opinion, but the opinion is not that of the author. Rather, the author is reporting on the opinion of a public figure (British Culture Secretary Jeremy Hunt).

    "Social Media Content Could Make, Break Professional Life"
    Do you remember your last tweet? What about last month's Facebook or Instagram posts? It is all out there somewhere, and employers very well may see something that could hurt their opinion of you.

Tyler Willingham, a senior in marketing and a peer career adviser, was curious to know exactly what an employer's goal is when perusing a prospective employee's social media. After speaking with a mentor from a previous internship Willingham held, he found his answer.

"It's not really an issue of what they look for," Willingham said "but what they try not to find."

Career Services interim director Stephanie Kit said some of the things employers hope not to find are pictures and posts involving alcohol or drug usage, negative comments about a current or previous employer and any discriminatory content.

News: This is an example of a "feature"-style news piece. The presentation is more creative than that of a news article, and the headline expresses a claim. But the author is still primarily reporting on the views of others.

"'Kid Nation' Lesson: Be Careful What You Pitch"

On Friday, the American Federation of Television and Radio Artists, the union that represents performers but not contestants on reality shows, said it was investigating whether the children on "Kid Nation" should have been covered by the union's work rules.

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But it is not clear whether CBS was in compliance. New Mexico child-labor statutes limit children under the age of 14 to 44 hours of work in one week and eight hours in any day, unless a special permit has been granted.

News: This is an example of a "News Analysis" article. It does not merely report Who, What, Where, When, Why and How (though we do see these elements in the top paragraph) but rather attempts to provide readers with a better understanding of the broader context and complexities of the news event.

"Sometimes, the Teachers Bully the Students"

The government of Alberta has re-introduced its Education Act, which addresses the issue of student bullying in schools. The bill affirms that students are entitled to learning environments that are welcoming, caring, respectful and safe.

The government is to be commended both for its process in engaging the community, and for the resulting new provisions.

For example, the bill's definition of bullying acknowledges that bullying is intentional and repetitive, and that it can cause harm, fear and distress to victims in the school community. Moreover, the bill wisely addresses not just the situation where a student bullies fellow students, but where a student bullies other individuals in the school community. Such recognition that students can bully adults is important because research suggests that students often bully their teachers.

Yet, the bill fails to acknowledge that the imbalance of power between teachers and students creates an opportunity for bullying of students by adults [...] The bill ought to recognize and address the possibility of bullying behavior by adults who work in schools.

Opinion: While the authors do report on the positions and research findings of others, they are essentially putting forward their own position. Notice that the opinions expressed in this piece are not attributed to others, as in the previous examples. The opinions belong to the authors.

Further Study

Journalistic norms and practices are always evolving. The rise of 24-hour cable news networks and the internet has led many traditional news outlets to differentiate themselves by offering more analysis, contextualization, and interpretation in their reporting. Another factor in this evolution has been a growing disenchantment with older ideals of detached reporting—especially the most rigid interpretation of these ideals, in which objectivity is understood to dictate a narrow focus on the surface details of news phenomena, and in which even identification of verifiable falsehoods in the statements of public officials might be considered a breach of journalistic objectivity.

For more details, see:

Esser, Frank, and Andrea Umbricht. "The Evolution of Objective and Interpretative Journalism in the Western Press." *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly*, vol. 91, no. 2, 2014, pp. 229-249.

Maras, Steven. *Objectivity in Journalism*. Polity Press, 2013.

Seyb, Ronald P. "What Walter Saw: Walter Lippmann, the New York World, and Scientific Advocacy as an Alternative to the News-Opinion Dichotomy." *Journalism History*, vol. 41, no. 2, 2015, pp. 58-72.

Types of Interviews

Written by Joe Moxley, 29 September 2017, from *Writing Commons: Types of Interviews*.

Understand common interview types.

The design of your interview is determined by your goal. Below is an overview of common interview formats.

Writers conduct interviews for many reasons. Interviews can play a role in helping you develop all of the projects presented in this book. Researchers employ interviews to achieve multiple purposes:

- Oral histories; interview people who can tell stories about life in the past
- Expert testimonies; interview experts, such as famous inventors, entrepreneurs, political leaders, or trend-setters
- Slice-of-life profiles; interview "man/woman on the street," profiling the life of "ordinary people"
- Memorable quotes; perhaps someone said something in a clever way that supports your work

Some researchers argue that their interviews of individuals can be used to generalize to broader populations. For example, an urban sociologist might interview gang members and then try to generalize to other gangs, other cities. In contrast, some researchers argue that interviews can only generate knowledge about individuals, that researchers who use interviews are simply telling stories.

Participant Construct Interview

A participant construct interview identifies perceptions or ideas that an individual may have about another person, activity, or construct. In other words, he or she could ask a group of employees to identify all of the things that a supervisor should do in the workplace, which would subsequently reveal information about employees' perception of the role of the supervisor. A similar investigation of supervisors may yield a different set of information. These differences, the employee vs. the supervisor, concerning the same role, may identify a source of conflict in the workplace. A well-thought-out survey is a valuable tool in investigating social relationships.

Projective Interviews

Projective techniques sample people's reactions to perilous situations or psychologically charged contexts. For example, the participant is placed in an artificial situation--such as a burning building--by being shown a picture or being engaged in a simulation and then asked to respond. This technique is beneficial for areas such as investigating spousal abuse or violence in the workplace.

Face-to-Face Interviews

It is imperative that you are thoroughly familiar with the interview questions, are relaxed, and present the questions in a nonthreatening manner. You may wish to practice interview techniques in a controlled environment. Video recording the practice session provides an excellent opportunity for both researcher and interviewee to critique and standardize the interviewer's performance.

By audio recording the interview, the interviewer has information that can expand and clarify the handwritten responses. The tape recorder will also capture a more complete response to open-ended questions. It also allows the researcher to replay the information should there be a question as to a particular response. Most importantly, for research data, independent evaluations of the same interview may be made.

Using an audio recorder also raises legal as well as ethical issues. The purpose of the recorder is to support your data collecting. The interviewee should be made aware of the purpose, restrictions, and disposition of the interview recording. Ask the interviewee to sign a consent form. Sample form below. If the interviewee declines to sign the form, don't record the interview.

An interviewer taking notes during an interview is a normal situation and is easily acceptable to most interviewees. The audio recorder may adversely influence the situation by placing additional stress on the interviewee. The interviewer can reduce the stress by creating a relaxed, practiced, and professional interview session.

Telephone Interviews

Telephone interviews are another common means of gathering information. The telephone interview is economical in terms of both time and money. Many people consider their time as a

precious commodity and are more inclined to grant a telephone interview than to schedule an appointment for a face-to-face interview.

The nature of your research can also influence the appropriateness of the telephone interview. Although the vast majority of American homes and businesses have telephone service, it is still not universally true. If your research involves the socially or economically disenfranchised, then there is a high likelihood you will exclude individuals simply because they don't have a telephone.

Computer-Assisted Interviews

Increasingly, people are interviewing others online with computer-assisted interviews. You may find that you can gain access to someone online who otherwise would not have time to meet with you. You can distribute a questionnaire by email, join someone in a chat space, or use an instant messenger service.

Informed Consent for an Interview

Excerpted from Informed Consent, Writing Commons, by Joe Moxley, 11 Jan 2018

Informed Consent | Behavior of a Field Researcher

The ethics of field research are more complicated than library or Internet research. If your primary modes of data collection are observing, interacting, interpreting, and talking to people, you must carefully consider your actions. It is unethical to see people as subjects of research to further only your own interests. If you are conducting research on a college campus with hopes of making your work public, you must review your school's Institutional Review Board (IRB) guidelines.

If you intend to study individuals or groups of people, you must consider the effects the research might have on any of the participants:

- o   Do not put yourself in any danger: It is not a good idea for you lie about your identity.
- o   Be honest with the participants you intend to interview or study. How will the participants in your study feel about your research? Should you protect their identities? Is it possible to protect their identities? Do you think they would be upset if the study became public?
- o   Should you let participants in your study read and/or respond to your study?

These ethical questions are complicated and must be answered individually according to your particular situation. Before you begin researching anyone in any way, you must first consider the ethical aspects of your actions.

Sample Informed Consent Language

The following language could be used when creating an informed consent document:

Date:

Subject: Consent to Publish

I was informed that _____ is conducting a research study. This interview will be used to (state purpose of research).

I give my permission to participate in this research study. The researcher will / will not disclose my identity.

Choose one of the following:

Yes / No   In reports, I understand that the researcher will use a pseudonym to credit any of my work.
Yes / No   In reports, I understand that the researcher may refer to me by name.

I understand that I am not entitled to any royalty or any other compensation.

I further understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and to discontinue participation at any time.

_____

(Signature) (Date)

Informed Consent Resources

Guidelines for the Ethical Treatment of Students and Student Writing in Composition Studies: Written by The CCCC Committee on the Ethical Conduct of Research in Composition Studies, this document provides straightforward discussion of ethical considerations for research involving writers and writing processes.

APA's Code of Ethics for Researchers: Good description of ethical standards for researchers.

Institutional Review Board, Lewis-Clark State College: Our own review board for on-campus projects. For approval for projects, you must enroll in the LCSC IRB Training course on Blackboard. You can self-enroll in the course on the LCSC IRB website.

Types of Interview Questions

Develop effective interview questions.

Ask Open, Closed, Hypothetical, and Mirror Questions

The questions you will ask are determined by the purpose of your research. As a result, be very clear in your own mind about what you hope to discover as a result of conducting the interview. The best way to develop solid questions is to freewrite as many as possible. By refining the purpose of your research and by sharing your questions with other people, you will be able to identify the ones that are most apt to uncover the information you need.

You may also find it useful to categorize the questions that you have written according to the sort of information that the questions are likely to elicit. There are three major types of questions, each of which is suited to a particular part of the interview: open questions, closed questions, and hypothetical questions.

Check out this video *TalentEgg Vlog* Episode. 5: Mock interview questions

When to Ask Open-Ended Questions
At the beginning of the interview, you may wish to establish rapport by asking open-ended questions. Essentially, open questions allow an interviewee to say just about anything, thereby revealing his or her general attitudes and beliefs. For example, if you asked an accomplished business leader "What skills does a college graduate need to succeed in business?" he or she might talk for a half hour about leadership capabilities, writing skills, and a "can-do" attitude.

When to Ask Closed Questions
When you wish to limit an interviewee's range of responses or pin him or her down to one answer, you should ask closed questions. "Do you believe that the university should require all

students to be computer literate?" is an example of a closed question because it forces a "No," "Yes," "I don't know," or perhaps a "Well, yes, under these conditions . . ." sort of answer. Because people don't like to be interrogated, however, limit the frequency of closed questions that you ask during an interview.

When to Ask Hypothetical Questions

Before conducting an interview, you may also wish to consider developing a few hypothetical questions. Although these sorts of questions are more commonly used in employment interviews, they also can be used profitably in a research interview. For example, if you were evaluating the circumstances under which students cheat on a test, you might ask, "If you were sure that you wouldn't get caught and you needed a high score on a final exam to earn a passing grade, would you cheat?"

Strategies for Developing Interview Questions

Here are the strategies for developing useful interviewing questions:

1. Closed questions: What specific information do you need?
2. Open questions: What philosophical issues underlie your research? What two or three major questions do you need to ask to open up your interviewee to really communicate?
3. Hypothetical questions: What creative situations can you devise to determine an interviewee's true feelings and likely responses to various circumstances?

Turn Their Statement into Your Question

You will find it useful to ask questions that essentially restate the interviewee's last statement in question form. Because you want to keep the interviewee talking, these questions can be essential to illustrating your interest and attentiveness to his or her ideas.

Here are a few examples:

Interviewee: So anyway, I think the old boy network is the biggest problem this hospital faces. These administrators are so entrenched that they cover each other's tracks and hire incompetent technicians who won't intimidate or rat on them for cheating on their vacation time.

Interviewer: So you think the biggest problem this hospital faces is the old boy network?

Interviewee: All of my friends cheat on tests, so I don't see why I shouldn't. I've plagiarized at least a half dozen essays this year alone. We've got quite a selection at the fraternity house.

Interviewer: Just a minute, John, I'm not sure I'm following you here. Are you saying that the fraternity house has copies of essays on file that you can use?

Finally, you should try to present your questions in a relaxed, conversational way. You can also show the interviewee that you are carefully listening by responding spontaneously to his or her remarks. Asking spontaneous questions—that is, questions that occur to you on the spot in response to the interviewee's comments—allows you to demonstrate that you are curious about what the interviewee has to say. When you let go a little in your interview and give it the feeling of a discussion, the interviewee will probably be more willing to share.

Create Effective Ambience

Excerpted from [Writing Commons: Create Effective Ambience](#) by Joe Moxley, 29 September 2017

Learn how to manage the interview successfully.

Since the interviewee is kind enough to set some time aside to meet with you, you in turn need to be flexible about where and for how long you meet and whether or not it is acceptable for you to tape-record the session. In general, you should try to conduct the interview away from as many distractions as possible. Establishing a climate of trust and support is difficult when the interviewee is bombarded with the daily distractions of professional life—such as phone calls, piles of messages, and pages of "to do" lists.

The Receptive Interviewer

Recognize that when people are "put on the spot," many tend to freeze up. When they realize that their words are being put down "on the record," even talkative people may tend to tighten up and withhold information. As a result, you need to be calm and relaxed and do more listening than talking. Remember, also, that your body invariably sends clear messages about whether you are bored or frustrated or annoyed by the interviewee's comments. Rather than being quick to judge the interviewee's comments and their usefulness to your report, try to focus your energy on being a receptive listener. Show tact in your responses and interject humor to put the interviewee at ease.

Recording Interviews

If the interviewee doesn't mind having the session recorded, then you can use software that comes with your smart phone or camera. For both Android and iPhone devices you will find your phone comes with the app already installed or you can download many free options.

You would be wise to pretest your device and make sure it is charged. Record a conversation with a friend (with their knowledge!) to make sure you understand how the app works and to avoid fumbling at the interview.

Finally, try to place the device out of the interviewee's eyesight and avoid looking at it, discussing it, or checking to see whether or not it is working, so that it is forgotten as soon as possible. If you notice the interviewee appears distracted by the device, even though he or she has said it's okay, you would be wise to stop using it and take careful notes instead. That being said, you would be wise to take good notes in case of technology problems and you will be more engaged in the interview.

When you begin the interview, it is important to shake the interviewee's hand and greet him or her warmly. Smile and thank the person for his or her time and clarify the focus of the interview:

> "It's a pleasure to meet you, Dr. Wilson. I appreciate your willingness to spend some time with me so that I can learn more about a career in mass communications."

> "Hi, John, it's really good to see you again. Listen, I appreciate your help on this report I'm doing for English. Anyway, as I told you on the phone, I'm writing the report on how to select growth stocks, and since you're an expert in money management, I was hoping that you could give some advice on handling money. Say, do you mind if I tape this session? If it bothers you, we don't need to tape it, but it would help me write the report. In any case, if you like, I don't have to use your name."

The Structure of a News Story

From in *Writing for Strategic Communication Industries*

In general, news stories are organized using the inverted pyramid style, in which information is presented in descending order of importance. This allows the audience to read the most crucial details quickly so they can decide whether to continue or stop reading the story. From an editing perspective, using the inverted pyramid style makes it easier to cut a story from the bottom, if necessary. Invented more than a century ago, the inverted pyramid style remains the basic formula for news writing (Scanlan, 2003).

"Inverted pyramid in comprehensive form" by Christopher Schwartz is licensed under CC BY-SA 3.0

from Scanlan, Chip, 20 June 2003, Birth of the Inverted Pyramid: A Child of Technology, Commerce and History, *Poynter*

"The Lead": The most important info
Who? What? Where? When? Why? How?
Approximately 30 words (1-2 thin paragraphs)
May include a "hook" (provocative quote or question)

"The Body": The crucial info
Argument, Controversy, Story, Issue
Evidence, background, details, logic, etc.
Quotes, photos, video, and audio that support, dispute, expand the topic

"The Tail": extra info
Interesting/Related items
May include extra context
In blogs, columns, and other editorials: the assessment of the journalist

It is important to note that some news stories do not strictly follow the inverted pyramid style, although the lead for a hard news piece always does. Furthermore, not everyone in the journalism field embraces the style; some detractors believe it is an unnatural way to engage in storytelling and present news to the public. Yet, proponents believe it is an efficient way to organize and share information in a fast-paced society (Scanlan, 2003). Therefore, it's important for students to learn the style; one good way to do so is to regularly read hard news stories and pay attention to how the leads are structured. The lead (also known as the summary lead) and the body of the inverted pyramid style are discussed in the next sections.
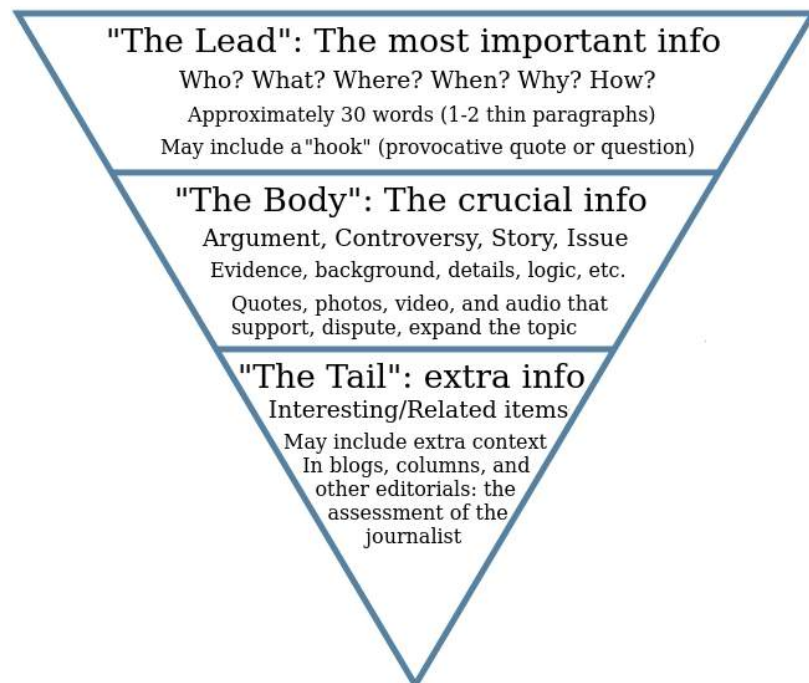
News and Feature Examples

- What's the difference between a news story and a feature? [2019] by Alistair Clay, from *Class: PR*

- [Kid Reporters' Notebook](#) from *Scholastic News Kids Press Corps*
- [Student Reporting Labs](#) from *PBS News Hour*

Writing Project Three:
Process of Writing an Analysis

Overview

Analysis is the process of analyzing what we read, see and sometimes hear. This skill is used both in academic writing and in everyday life. It helps us understand issues in society, the books we read, the videos we watch, and ads that we see in daily life. We can analyze texts and images using various methods of analysis. This chapter will introduce you to rhetorical and stylistic analysis, as well as literary analysis.

The following is excerpted from the website *Silva Rhetoricae,* book collection *Writing Spaces*, and Shane Abrams's book, *EmpoWord: A Student-Centered Anthology and Handbook for College Writers* and reviews key aspects of the genre.

Rhetorical Analysis

What Is Rhetoric?

From *Silva Rhetoricae: The Forest of Rhetoric* by Dr. Gideon Burton of Brigham Young University

Like a forest, rhetoric provides tremendous resources for many purposes. However, one can easily become lost in a large, complex habitat (whether it be one of wood or of wit).

Don't be scared of the intimidating detail suggested by the odd Greek and Latin terms. After all, you can enjoy the simple beauty of a birch tree without knowing it is *Betula alba* and make use of the shade of a weeping willow without knowing it is in fact *Salix babylonica*. The same is possible with rhetoric. The names aid categorization and are more or less conventional, but I encourage you to get past the sesquipedalian labels and observe the examples and the sample criticism (rhetoric in practice). It is beyond the definitions that the power of rhetoric is made apparent.

Rhetorical Analysis

Rhetorical analysis begins with the appropriate choice of a given model, and such a selection would have been made with an eye both to the content and especially to the style of the author (See Content and Form). Here we see that rhetorical analysis is intimately related to larger curricular issues regarding the value of certain works or authors. Much literary criticism in antiquity and the Renaissance was devoted to assessing the merits of given authors as adequate models for imitation. Some ancient speakers or writers have remained central to rhetorical analysis and to imitation, including Demosthenes in Greek and Cicero in Latin.

The analysis of an author can be understood with respect to three discursive disciplines which provided the technical vocabulary for different (but overlapping) modes of linguistic and literary analysis: grammar, logic, and rhetoric. Thus, passages from a given text could be analyzed grammatically, such as when students were taught to parse a text, identifying the various parts of speech and verifying the correspondence of accidence, etc.). Similarly, a passage would be analyzed logically for its arguments or topics of invention (the purview of both rhetoric and of logic, depending on the period). Finally, some analyses would be of a purely rhetorical character, including the identification of tropes and figures, as well as other rhetorical dimensions such as the arrangement of the entire discourse, or matters of rhythm and style.

As a practical aid to rhetorical analysis, students were taught to mark their texts, naming the identified figure or strategy, and also to use copybooks specially divided into "form" and "content" or into subject headings for general topics or commonplaces. By thus recording passages that exemplified noteworthy content or form, they could then quote or imitate these passages within their own speeches or compositions.

Stylistic Analysis

The analysis of discourse in terms of style has a long history, one that stretches back long before the modern-day field of stylistics or contemporary linguistics came into being. Analysis in terms of style has taken two broad paths in the period from antiquity through the Renaissance. The first of these was stylistic analysis in a pedagogical setting, a process continuous with and often identical to grammatical parsing. The second of these, an approach closer to the general literary sense of style in use today, involved identifying general characteristics of the prose involved, for which there was a technical vocabulary. Certainly these two approaches were not all-encompassing with respect to stylistic analysis up to the Renaissance, but they give a fair sense of the breadth of attention to style.

Sample Rhetorical Analysis: STYLE:
> When Julius Caesar said "Veni, vidi, vici" ("I came; I saw; I conquered") he communicated a lot with a little. In fact, the efficiency of this statement about his military conquest seems to mirror the efficiency of his campaign itself. Nothing is wasted in accomplishing the intended task. Through his use of asyndeton (the lack of conjunctions between independent clauses) he demonstrates that he is direct and to the point. We can only assume that this forthright characteristic of speech reflects his leadership as a general. Caesar's short saying also constitutes a perfect tricolon (three parallel clauses of identical length—at least in the Latin!).

Persuasive Appeals

Persuasion, according to Aristotle and the many authorities that would echo him, is brought about through three kinds of proof (pistis) or persuasive appeal:

Logos = The appeal to reason.
Pathos = The appeal to emotion.
Ethos = The persuasive appeal of one's character.

Although they can be analyzed separately, these three appeals work together in combination toward persuasive ends.

Aristotle calls these "artistic" or "intrinsic" proofs—those that could be found by means of the art of rhetoric—in contrast to "nonartistic" or "extrinsic" proofs such as witnesses or contracts that are simply used by the speaker, not found through rhetoric.

Logos

Logos names the appeal to reason. Aristotle wished that all communication could be transacted only through this appeal, but given the weaknesses of humanity, he laments, we must resort to the use of the other two appeals. The Greek term logos is laden with many more meanings than simply "reason," and is in fact the term used for "oration."

Sample Rhetorical Analysis: LOGOS
> When Descartes said, "I think; therefore, I am," his statement reflected in its pure concision and simple logical arrangement the kind of thought and being he believed to be most real. He did not claim, as Pascal would later do, that our being has as much to do with feeling as it does thinking. Descartes here equates pure rationality and pure being, persuading us of the accuracy of this equation by the simplicity of his statement. There is no room for the clouds of emotion in this straightforward formula; it makes a purely logical appeal.

Pathos

Pathos names the appeal to emotion. Cicero encouraged the use of pathos at the conclusion of an oration, but emotional appeals are of course more widely viable. Aristotle's *Rhetoric* contains a great deal of discussion of affecting the emotions, categorizing the kinds of responses of different demographic groups. Thus, we see the close relations between assessment of pathos and of audience. Pathos is also the category by which we can understand the psychological aspects of rhetoric. Criticism of rhetoric tends to focus on the overemphasis of pathos, emotion, at the expense of logos, the message.

Sample Rhetorical Analysis: PATHOS
> Antony, addressing the crowd after Caesar's murder in Shakespeare's play, manages to stir them up to anger against the conspirators by drawing upon their pity. He does this by calling their attention to each of Caesar's dagger wounds, accomplishing this

pathetic appeal through vivid descriptions combined with allusions to the betrayal of friendship made by Brutus, who made "the most unkindest cut of all":

> Look, in this place ran Cassius' dagger through;
> See what a rent the envious Casca made;
> Through this the well-beloved Brutus stabb'd,
> And as he pluck'd his cursed steel away,
> Mark how the blood of Caesar followed it,
> As rushing out of doors to be resolv'd
> If Brutus so unkindly knock'd or no;
> For Brutus, as you know, was Caesar's angel.
> Judge, O you gods, how dearly Caesar lov'd him!
> This was the most unkindest cut of all;
> —Shakespeare, *Julius Caesar* 3.2.174-183

Ethos

Ethos names the persuasive appeal of one's character, especially how this character is established by means of the speech or discourse. Aristotle claimed that one needs to appear both knowledgeable about one's subject and benevolent. Cicero said that in classical oratory the initial portion of a speech (its exordium or introduction) was the place to establish one's credibility with the audience.

Sample Rhetorical Analysis: ETHOS
> In Cicero's speech defending the poet Archias, he begins his speech by referring to his own expertise in oratory, for which he was famous in Rome. While lacking modesty, this tactic still established his ethos because the audience was forced to acknowledge that Cicero's public service gave him a certain right to speak, and his success in oratory gave him special authority to speak about another author. In effect, his entire speech is an attempt to increase the respectability of the ethos of literature, largely accomplished by tying it to Cicero's own, already established, public character.

Audience

All rhetorically oriented discourse is composed in light of those who will hear or read that discourse. Or, in other words, rhetorical analysis always takes into account how an audience shapes the composition of a text or responds to it.

In classical times, the audience had to do with the settings or occasions in which genres of oratory were practiced (See Branches of Oratory). Later theorists have taken into account the multiple audiences to which discourse is presented, intentionally or not (for example, the secondary audiences that the printed version of a speech reaches across place and time, or the multiple audiences present in the theater: those onstage who hear a given character's speech, and those in the public audience observing all of this).

Rhetoric's preoccupation with audience can be seen in direct contrast to philosophical discourse that prefers orienting itself to truth rather than to the doxa or opinion, of the unlearned public. See Plato's *Gorgias*.

Style

Style concerns the artful expression of ideas. If invention addresses what is to be said; style addresses how this will be said. From a rhetorical perspective style is not incidental, superficial, or supplementary: style names how ideas are embodied in language and customized to communicative contexts (see Content / Form).

Because of the centrality of style, rhetoricians have given great attention to every aspect of linguistic form—so much so that rhetoric has at times been equated with (or reduced to) "mere style," as though rhetoric were concerned only with superficial ornamentation.

But ornamentation was not at all superficial in classical and renaissance rhetoric, for to ornament (*ornare* = "to equip, fit out, or supply") meant to equip one's thoughts with verbal expression appropriate for accomplishing one's intentions.

Upon this basic principle of style there has been agreement, but less so respecting how matters of style have been mapped within the rhetorical tradition, especially with respect to categorizing the figures of speech. These are the major groupings of stylistic concerns within the rhetorical tradition:

> Virtues of Style
> Five encompassing concerns of style which relate style to grammar, audience, effective and affective appeals, the guiding principle of decorum, and the importance of ornamenting language through figurative speech. A comparable mapping of seven virtues of style has been laid out by Hermogenes.

Levels of Style

From the Roman tradition three levels of style have been laid out, each suited to one of three distinct rhetorical purposes.

Qualities of Style

A large descriptive terminology has been developed to critique the qualities of style. These are interpretive in nature, and overlap broadly with figures of speech or the virtues and levels of style.

Figures of Speech

Sometimes considered part of "ornateness" (one of the Virtues of Style), and sometimes taken to represent the whole of rhetoric, the rhetorical figures constitute a vast technical vocabulary naming ways that both ideas and language have been configured.

Style is often aligned with *pathos*, since its Figures of Speech are often employed to persuade through emotional appeals (see Figures of *Pathos*). However, style has just as much to do with *ethos*, for one's style often establishes or mitigates one's authority and credibility (see Figures of *Ethos*). But it should not be assumed, either, that style simply adds on a pathetic or ethical appeal to the core, logical content. Style is very much part of the appeal through *logos*, especially considering the fact that schemes of repetition serve to produce coherence and clarity, obvious attributes of the appeal to reason. There are also specific figures of speech that are based upon logical structures such as the syllogism (See Figures of Reasoning).

Style is not an optional aspect of discourse, although those who take issue with rhetorical excesses maintain the fiction that there is a "plain" method of speech. Style is essential to rhetoric in that its guiding assumption is that the form or linguistic means in which something is communicated is as much part of the message as is the content (as MacLuhan has said, "the medium is the message").

To help with understanding the use of the rhetorical appeals and rhetorical situations the article "Murder! (Rhetorically Speaking)" by Janet Boyd uses an interesting approach to the topic.

"Murder! (Rhetorically Speaking)"

by Janet Boyd

From *Writing Spaces*, Volume 2

The college where I first started teaching writing called its freshman composition course "Logic and Rhetoric" after two of the three arts of discourse in the classical tradition (the third being grammar).

While the students could easily explain what logic is, they struggled with the definition of rhetoric; most of their responses were more or less a politer version of this succinct definition offered by one brave student: "bullshit." While I was surprised that he dared say such a word in class, and I am equally surprised that our publishers have so kindly agreed to print it, this offensive word so directly and memorably brings us to the crux of the matter: that choosing how to express your meaning is every bit as important as the message itself, which is really what rhetoric is. Every time you go to write anything (and every time you open your mouth), whether actively conscious of the purpose or not, you are making decisions about which words to use and what tone to establish as you order your thoughts based upon what is appropriate for your intended audience in that context.

Determined as I was to enlighten the class about the more positive and powerful aspects of rhetoric, we used no textbook in the program that could edify us. This turned out to be a good thing, for, out of necessity, I invented a simple, little exercise for them that you will participate in here, now, and dazzle yourself with the rhetorical skills you already possess, skills that are crucial for your development as an academic writer. For purposes of comparison, I have also included responses from other student writers for you to consider—all of whom surprised themselves with their own rhetorical range and ability. First, I will give you five simple facts, nothing but the facts, as I did my students:

> Who: Mark Smith
> What: Murdered
> Where: Parking garage

When: June 6, 2010; 10:37 p.m.
How: Multiple stab wounds

You might read such straightforward facts in a short newspaper article or hear them in a brief news report on the radio; if the person was not famous, the narrative might sound like this: Mark Smith was found stabbed to death at 10:37 p.m. on June 6th, in the local parking garage. Next, imagine that you are the detective called out to investigate the crime scene, which will, of course, demand that you also write and file a report of your findings. (In fact, many people who go into law enforcement are shocked to discover how much writing such a job regularly entails.)

Take a moment to visualize the five facts, and then pick up a pen or turn to your keyboard and write for five or so minutes as if you were that detective. In writing up the case (whoops, I have given you a clue), you may add or invent as many details as you see fit, but you may not alter the given facts. Go ahead. Get started on writing your report of the murder scene. Then come back and read the next section.

Getting in Touch with Your Inner Detective

Welcome back. While it is usually the detective who asks all the questions, we will proceed first with me grilling you not about the murder but about your report:

- How does it begin? Where does it end?
- What types of details did you find yourself adding? Why? What details did you omit? Why?
- What kind of words did you choose?
- What tone did you take? (I will admit, tone can be a tricky thing to describe; it is best done by searching for a specific adjective that describes a feeling or an attitude such as "pretentious," "somber," "buoyant," "melancholic," "didactic," "humorous," etc.).
- How did you order your information?
- And, since I am working under the assumption that no undergraduates have yet had careers in law enforcement, how did you know how to write like a detective would in the first place?

The answer I get to my last question invariably is "from television, of course," nowadays particularly from shows such as the fictitious *CSI: Crime Scene Investigation* and reality-based *The First 48*. From such shows, and from detective movies or fiction, we get a glimpse not only into the work detectives are likely to do but also the language they choose. Gradually, and ever

so subtly, we internalize this detective speak, which is more than just the jargon they use. Jargon is the terminology used by those in a particular profession or group to facilitate clear and precise communication, but this rhetorical tool is not limited just to the professional world. For example, anyone who participates in a sport uses the lingo specific to that sport, which is learned by doing. Doctors use medical jargon and lawyers use legal jargon, and they go to school specifically to learn the terms and abbreviations of their professions; so do detectives. If you use any kind of slang words, you, too, use jargon, but if you studied these words in a book, they are probably not very hip or at least not very au courant. For slang is different in that it maintains a currency in a dual sense: it strives to be current, and it circulates among a select network of users. Jargon does not fall victim to fashion so easily as slang does, but it does have a similar effect in that they both exclude those outside of the community who do not understand the meanings of the words. And so purposefully in the case of slang and not necessarily purposefully in the case of jargon, the initiated constitute an "insiders club" for whom they themselves are their intended and best audience. When you write an academic paper, you are practicing how to use the jargon you have internalized through studying that discipline as you write for professors and students within that field.

Getting back to the detective writing . . . although you probably didn't think much about whom your audience would be, who would read such a report, when you got started you probably had no problem deciding how to begin your narrative: Am I right that it starts with you arriving at the crime scene, and that you wrote in first person? Every piece of writing needs a starting point and a perspective, it is true, and the demands of the genre—in this instance the reports of detectives—shaped the very first words of your response. This is why I say with confidence that you worked your magic with more than just detective jargon. As much as I am aware of my audience here—so much so that I am trying to engage in dialog with you through my casual tone, my informal language, and my addressing you directly by asking you questions and anticipating your responses—ultimately the format dictates that our "conversation" remain one-sided.

As much as I wish I could chat with you about the report you wrote, I cannot. Instead, I offer you here the "detective reports" of students much like you, students taking freshman composition classes who were given just the five facts about the murder, to present some rhetoric in action. "I arrived at the crime scene at roughly 22:45 (10:45) p.m.," writes Jeannette Olsavsky; "headquarters had received a phone call at 10:37 p.m. about a dead body lying stabbed in the parking garage on Franklin Ave." Ilya Imyanitov starts his report with: "My partner and I received a phone call at 11:02 p.m. from dispatch that a body was found in the parking garage on 34th and 5th. We were the first to arrive on the scene." Here's one more example: "On Saturday, June 6th, at 10:37 p.m., the Montclair Police Department received an

anonymous call regarding a body found in the Hawk Parking Garage. Detectives Dan Barry, Randy Johnson, and I, Tamara Morales, were called to the scene. Upon arrival, we noted the cadaver was facing down and had multiple stab wounds."

Did you notice all of the things that these reports do similarly? Mere coincidence? I think not. They obey the conventions of the genre (which is a word we will gradually define). All of these opening sentences note some kind of phone call that gets them to the scene of the crime, all of them establish more specifically the location, all of them note precise times (which could be of significance), all of them are in first person, and two of our detectives work with partners. While the similarities continue to multiply as the three reports unfold, we can discern from these few sentences alone that writers attend to how they order their information and that writers can aspire towards objectivity even when writing in the first person.

Since detectives are trained observers who search for clues to aid in the investigation of a crime, they provide written, first-hand accounts of the tangible evidence they find. They also speculate as to what might have motivated the criminal to perpetrate the crime. In short, detectives have an agenda: in their reports, our three student-detectives try to identify the victim, establish injuries and cause of death, and look for signs of foul play. They also hope to interview witnesses to corroborate their findings, and one lucky detective does. Detective Imyanitov "took down a statement from the [garage] attendant, Michael Portnick." Portnick "states that he was making his rounds as usual," and "he remembers checking his phone" when "he discovered a body that appeared to be stabbed to death." Why such hesitation, Detective Imyanitov? You can tell from the verbs he uses (such as Portnick "states" and "remembers," and the body "appeared") that he is recording a version of the events he has not yet verified, and so he infuses his narrative with words that establish room for doubt. Through his diction, or choice of words, Imyanitov establishes a tone for his report that is formal, objective, inquisitive, and tentative all at the same time. Not surprisingly, Olsavsky's and Morales's reports adopt much the same tone, and all three also end the same way: with the call for a "full investigation" to ensue based on the preliminary findings.

These three detective reports, in fact all the detective reports I've ever collected from students, discuss to some degree the nature of the fatal wounds Mark Smith received. Now shift gears slightly to imagine that you are the coroner who is on duty in the city morgue when Mark's body arrives. The coroner must do a full examination of the corpse and, what else, write up a report (trust me, there are few jobs out there that do not require writing). Visualize yourself in your new occupation, recall the "five facts," and then take five minutes to write up your findings as a coroner might (remember, you may add or invent as many details as you like, but you may not alter the given facts). Really—go, write, and come back.

Cultivating Your Inner Coroner

Your first thoughts probably weren't so much about audience this time, either; you were probably thinking hard about jargon, though. You know (from *CSI* or elsewhere) that coroners use very specific terminology that allows for precise and concise description, so to write a plausible report you had to muster up as many factual and pseudo-medical words as possible. In other words, your freedom to select words—to choose your diction—was limited greatly by the jargon of this profession, which means that the tone was also mostly dictated. Because a detective and a coroner have similar agendas in that they report causes, effects, and facts, and because they often present to similar audiences, their reports often assume a similar tone that is informative, authoritative, and forensic.2 But the tone of the coroner's report is ultimately much more technical and is prescribed by the medical community. Every discipline has its own range of acceptable jargon, diction, and tone to be learned and applied.

So how does your report read? If it is like that of my students, you began it much like you did your detective report with the five, simple facts relating to the crime. After that, however, it diverges. It becomes focused on the body alone and for good reason—that's all you've got to look at! Here I'd like to answer some relevant questions I asked but never addressed with regard to your detective report: what details did you include or omit and why? Of course, the coroner cannot and does not include details about the parking garage, but what would stop him/her from recording whether Mark Smith was handsome or not, or whether the tattoo on Smith's calf was cool or comical, or whether here minded the coroner of his/her brother-in-law? You think this a dumb question, I know, because such subjectivity and personal observations do not belong in an official, objective report. Perhaps the question is dumb, but thinking about why it is dumb is not: even though you are not a real coroner (you just play one here) you have an awareness not only of what the genre demands but also what it rejects. You have a sense of what is appropriate in this context, and in many, many other rhetorical contexts, including when you assume the role of a student writing an essay (we are getting closer to a definition of genre).

What surprises me most about all the times I've asked students to write like coroners do is not that they can, even though this is the most difficult exercise in the group, but that they do not include the simplest information—a basic, physical description of Mark Smith. They tend to jump right into gory descriptions of what got him to the morgue but not anything like "The subject is a Caucasian male, is in his early thirties, about five feet, ten inches tall and 175 pounds; he has brown eyes and shoulder-length, dark brown hair. He has a birthmark on his left forearm and a two-inch scar in the vicinity of where his appendix would be." Maybe

students are just too eager to cover the "five facts" I have presented them; or maybe it is that they are not so eager to ponder Mark Smith as a real but dead person with personal features; or both.

After reporting the five facts in the first sentence of his coroner's report, and adding that Mark Smith was found by an off-duty police officer, Brett Magura writes:

> *After post-mortem evaluation, it can be seen that only one of the six stab wounds was fatal. This stab came from behind, through the back and in between the ribs, puncturing the heart and causing internal bleeding. The fatal blow appeared to follow an effort to run away after the first five wounds occurred to the hands and arms. The wounds on the hands and arms are determined to be defensive wounds.*

Magura concludes his report with the contents of Smith's stomach and a blood-alcohol level assessment. Like many students, Magura identifies the locations of the wounds and the exact cause of death, and like many students he admirably gropes for the words that coroners use. Instead of "back" or "behind," he might have substituted "posterior" and thrown in some words like "anterior" or "lateral" or "laceration," I would venture, but his report is on target even if his and my jargon would benefit from some medical schooling.

Lecille Desampardo is the only student I've known to give the report a case number, "Murder Case #123," which immediately suggests that her report is official and conforms to standards we would also find in Cases 1 through 122. Even better, one could easily keep track of and even reference such a report, which would be important if it should be needed as forensic evidence. Desampardo finds "remnants of some kind of black grease" in the stab wounds, and upon the miracles of further lab testing links it to the "Nissan Pathfinder owned by the victim." Coupled with the "irregular shape" of the stab wounds, the murder weapon was a "monkey wrench" she concludes. What kind of weapon did you deduce killed Mark Smith? Was it a hunting knife or a butcher's knife or scissors or something else? Does your report work to support that assumption? Chances are you found yourself knowing exactly what content to include but were frustrated at not having the exact words you desired at your disposal. In this rhetorical instance, you even know what it is you don't know (which, unfortunately, can also be the case when you are first learning academic writing).

On the other hand, perhaps these words came easy for Kristin Flynn who writes,

> *Mark Smith was an amazing father, husband and good friend. His unfortunate murder and untimely demise come as a shock to all who knew him. Mark and I go way back [. . .]. His*

> *memory will be forever treasured, and it is truly a shame to have to say goodbye to him today.*

Wait a minute? What happened to the knife, the parking garage, and the stab wounds? One would hope that such graphic details wouldn't make their way into a eulogy.

Yes, the next exercise I want you to write is a short eulogy for Mark Smith, which is a speech of remembrance delivered at a funeral. This exercise is perhaps one of the easier ones to write, but that is only if you liked Mark Smith and can write in honesty; imagine how difficult it would be if you didn't like him? So return now to the "five facts," invent the details that you need, and work for five minutes or so to fulfill the rhetorical demands of the genre of the eulogy (which I hope you'll never get much practice in).

Learning How to Say Goodbye

Many students get flustered with this exercise because they feel compelled to include all "five facts" while they intuitively know that an actual eulogy would not; the instructions I give require no such thing. I write "intuitively" here because, again, I cannot imagine that many of you are trained to write eulogies, and so you proceeded based on the knowledge you have internalized from your religion or culture. The example of the eulogy highlights very well the decisions all writers must make about what to include and what to omit based upon the expectations of the audience for whom they write (including an academic audience). You were probably rather surprised to read just on the heels of the coroners' reports an excerpt of the eulogy Flynn penned because you were expecting more blood and guts. It is a good time to admit that I did this on purpose, and that in my classes I aim for this element of surprise as well; my students don't know that they have been assigned different writing tasks relating to the facts of Mark Smith's murder, and when they read them aloud without identifying the piece the contrasts stand sharp. After only a few sentences, though, the students recognize what genre it is they hear because of the various rhetorical cues they so quickly discern.

So what did you include in your eulogy? Of the five facts, you probably mentioned Mark Smith by his whole name at first, and thereafter by his first name to foster a sense of familiarity, and then did your best to avoid the other four facts entirely, facts the detectives must write about so extensively. Flynn mentions the "unfortunate murder" in her eulogy, which could be considered daring, but she does so to commiserate with others in their sense of "shock." Notice, though, that she doesn't say that Mark Smith "died" or "croaked" or was "offed"; okay, clearly "croaked" and "offed" are too indelicate, but why not "died," which seems innocuous enough? She writes of Mark's "untimely demise," which is a euphemism. When people replace

a word that can be considered offensive, discomforting, or controversial with another term to make it seem less so, they have chosen a euphemism. Death provides an excellent example of something that makes us uncomfortable, and so we have many euphemistic synonyms for dying such as "to pass on," "to leave this world," "to be with God," "to breathe one's last," and "to go to a better place." Interestingly enough, we have many irreverent synonyms for dying in addition to "croak," such as "to kick the bucket," "to bite the big one," "to push up the daisies," or "to buy the farm," which are colloquial and try to bring humor to this bothersome subject. Colloquial refers to language that is informal and usually spoken but not written (such as "ain't" and "gonna"). These particular death colloquialisms can also be considered dysphemisms in that they exaggerate rather than soften what could be offensive. While colloquialisms and dysphemisms usually do not belong in academic writing, euphemism can serve its purpose depending on your tone.

But enough talk about talk. Let's get back to the writing. Adi Baruch wrote her eulogy in the form of letter (also known as an epistle) to Mark Smith, which is a bit of a departure from the genre in its strictest sense, but she nevertheless avoids mentioning anything about the murder while still conveying that he has, well, left us: "Whoever knew quite how cruel life could be? Surely, neither you nor I. We've known each other for the past ten years, always growing closer. Unfortunately enough, for me and many others, your life has come to an end. We can no longer continue to make great memories together. . . .Your memory will live on with every life you've ever touched." Does your eulogy sound like this? Is it written in first-person, is it evasive of specifics but generally positive, is the diction a bit stilted and the tone sentimental, wistful, and poignant? Does yours, like hers, eventually end with saying good-bye to the deceased (aka the dead person)?

Or does your eulogy sound more like this one from Micheal Lynch:

> For those of you who knew Mark Smith as I did, I am sure you are not the least bit surprised to hear that he was murdered and quite violently with multiple stab wounds. Mark was our friend and our benefactor, but of course we all know he was a low-life criminal. With the number of enemies Mark made, I'm sure that the only surprise is that it took them until 10:37 p.m. on Saturday, June 6th to catch up with his sorry butt. It is ironic, you must agree, that he "bought it" in a parking garage since the only thing he ever did in a parking garage is rip off the things that everybody who parked there had brought! Yes, we'll miss you Mark and those little surprises he used to bring to each of us. Rest in peace, buddy!

When we read this one aloud in class, much laughter broke out. Why is it funny? Because it runs contrary to our established expectations, and incongruity is often a source of humor. The

students recognized that while Lynch conforms to the rhetorical conventions of eulogy—he writes in first-person, remembers the deceased fondly, and says goodbye—he also works against the conventions of the genre in terms of content, diction, and tone. In short, this incongruity makes the piece ironic, which Lynch might be trying to flag when he points to the situational irony of the location of the murder.

I imagine that Lynch, like many students, assumed he had to work in all "five-facts" and saw his way to a very creative solution; knowing that such facts don't belong in a eulogy and wanting to respond to the assignment as he interpreted it, Lynch turned the genre on its head. He showed savvy in writing it and his classmates in laughing at it, for they all recognized how much one can push or play with a given genre and still maintain its identifiable qualities. The content is graphic, the diction is crass, and the tone is irreverent. Nonetheless, it remains a eulogy, one that would likely get recited among friends (but not family) with shots of whiskey in hand. Herein we might find our definition of genre, which by necessity remains perpetually loose: when the traits or attributes considered normal to or typical of a particular kind of creative piece, such as in literature, film, or music, make it that kind and not another. For example, we know horror films when we see them and we recognize classical music when we hear it because we can classify these things according to the conventions of their genres. And we can identify the genre of the piece I am writing for you as an expository essay with its thesis, its body paragraphs of support and detail, and, as you will see, its conclusion, even if my tone is playful.

Whether or not Mark Smith was a low-life, petty thief as Lynch makes him out to be, the person who murdered him is most definitely a criminal, which brings us to our last rhetorical scenario. Your final task is to write a closing argument as if you were the prosecutor addressing the jury who will find the accused murderer guilty or not. Go ahead. Put on a suit and become a lawyer (in this profession, if you are not off researching you are usually writing), and then come back to see how your closing argument compares with the others.

Learning to Love Your Inner Lawyer

Notice how I kindly provided a big clue to get you started, since you've had so much to think about already. When you wrote the eulogy, I did not call attention to the fact that your audience was friends and family, for whom you wrote nonetheless, but here I do remind you that you were to address the jury. This is your signal not to soften the blow off the loss of Mark Smith for your audience, as you did in the eulogy, but to write it big, to write it bold . . . perhaps to the point where you could be accused of exaggeration (in writing aka hyperbole). You must

play upon your audience's heartstrings here, too, of course, but you must balance it with cold, hard, irrefutable facts as per the genre's demands. How did you begin?

Despite my clue, only some of your peers start their closing arguments as Christopher Traina and Ricardo Ataide did with the requisite and respectful "ladies and gentlemen of the jury" (Traina did admit that both of his parents are attorneys, but it is unlikely he attends any of the closing arguments they might make!). What effect does this address have? It alerts the members of the jury that what follows is directed specifically to them, reminds them of their important role, and helps to establish a rapport between them and the attorney. The closing argument is a good example of how the different rhetorical tools available carry different weight given the rhetorical situation. Although awareness of audience is always hugely important when one goes to write anything, a direct address is not, which we see with the lack thereof in the detective's and coroner's reports. They write for an implied audience (as you do in your academic writing), which is more often than not comprised of attorneys and, funnily enough, eventually of judges and juries (which is why their work is ultimately forensic). Furthermore, when it comes time to communicate to the jury how Mark Smith was murdered, the attorney would do best to translate the medical jargon of the coroner's report into layperson's terms, or language for people who are not experts; plain, simple diction would prevail over sophisticated jargon in this context. And while the detective's and the coroner's reports should be devoid of emotion, just as the eulogy should be saturated with it, the attorney aims to persuade the jury with both objective facts, what Aristotle calls logos, and simmering emotion, what he calls pathos; and lastly, depending on the lawyer, the jury will also likely be persuaded by his/her ethos, or credible character.

Appealing to his jury in first person, Traina states for "what reasons" the "accused" committed the "heinous murder . . . you and I will never know. But I do ask you to do what is right. That is when you go to deliberate, you remember the grieving family. Remember the horrendous photos. Remember the lack of emotion on the accused's face. You must remember all of these facts, find the defendant guilty, and put him in jail where he will not be a danger to society. I thank you for your time and hope for your diligence in [reaching] your verdict." Traina charges the jury with the moral duty to do what is right based on the evidence provided while he also beseeches them—in short sentences of parallel form that one can imagine him articulating very slowly and deliberately—to dwell not only on the family's agony but on the defendant's lack of remorse. This appeal to emotion (aka pathos) doesn't alter the facts per se, but it provides a less than neutral lens, a bias, through which the attorney hopes the jury will view them (although in academic writing one is often encouraged to avoid such bias). The tone Traina establishes is one full of urgency and gravity for the case and also of reverence for the jury, whom he thanks at the end and so maintains the rapport he initially established.

You might find that your closing argument reads so much like Traina's that they can be considered "generic" closing arguments. Or maybe you went the route that Ataide did, which is to highlight the significant points of the investigation as you constructed a summary—a conclusion. Ataide looked a bit at the criminal mind of the defendant who "harbored feelings of despair and hatred for quite some time" before murdering his former professor, all of which are documented "in his emails and Twitter updates." Ataide concludes his argument by directly reminding the jury that while the professor "will never again teach a class, you have the opportunity to teach the accused, Lucas Brown, a lesson here today. A conviction should be your only choice." This clever twist on teaching a lesson provides eloquent closure to his argument.

Or perhaps you, like Chelsea Vick, felt mounting drama to be the most persuasive approach. She tells the jury that "the defendant has not only physically stabbed my client Mark Smith; he has stabbed the judicial system. Every entrance wound on my victim's body is another blow to the system our government runs on." She, like Traina, conjures up fear with the prospect of returning such a person to the streets, and she, too, "leaves you [the jury] to deliberate whether to send a murderer to jail or to another parking garage." By making reference to the "system our government runs on," Vick plays with the sometimes subtle line between the connotation and denotation of words. What a word denotes is its literal definition or what you would find should you look it up in the dictionary, but words have connotations, too, which are the emotional associations, positive or negative, we bring to them. While an apple pie denotes a dessert made of sliced apples and sugar baked in a single or double flour crust, in the United States it can also conjure up positive emotions about home and/or patriotism about country. We imagine apple pies to be lovingly-baked by apron-clad moms who raise citizens who are, well, as the saying goes, "as American as apple pie." Vick's comment that the defendant has metaphorically "stabbed the judicial system" in addition to Mark Smith is meant to produce negative connotations beyond the actual murder; she conjures up the looming threat that our entire way of life would be at stake should the jury do anything other than convict the defendant.

If we envision in our minds the passionate delivery of these closing arguments, we might imagine that we have finally come close to the first definition of "rhetoric" that the American Heritage Dictionary online offers us, which is "the art or study of using language effectively and persuasively," rather than that one-word definition my brave student once proffered. Yes, our attorneys all did perform admirably in their endeavors to persuade the jury with their words, but we find examples of effective rhetoric in all of the writing scenarios we have considered.

Here I offer my definition: rhetoric is what allows you to write (and speak) appropriately for a given situation, one that is determined by the expectations of your audience, implied or acknowledged, whether you are texting, writing a love letter, or bleeding a term paper. When you go to write, you might not always be actively aware of your audience as an audience. You may not even consciously realize that you are enacting certain rhetorical strategies while rejecting others. But each time you write you will find yourself in a rhetorical situation, in other words within a context or genre, that nudges you to choose the right diction or even jargon and to strike the right tone. In this essay, I put you in three rhetorical situations for which you have no formal training—writing hypothetically as if you were a detective, a coroner, and a lawyer—and you knew what to do, as you did with the eulogy.

This shows the extent to which we absorb and internalize our rhetorical tools by watching media, reading books, and participating in our culture. More importantly, you can now see that when I told you at the beginning that you are already in possession of the rhetorical skills necessary for mastering the genre of academic writing and that you need only apply them, I wasn't just feeding you a bunch of bull.

Discussion

- Which of the exercises did you find easiest to write? Why?
- Which of the exercises did you find hardest to write? Why?
- What does the rhetorical situation of academic writing demand? Who is the audience? What tone is appropriate? What jargon might be needed? What information might be included and/or rejected in an academic paper?

Notes

1. Oddly enough, my moment of inspiration came when I got on a bus to commute to New York City and found myself sitting next to the famous author and columnist Anna Quindlen. Thanks, Anna!
2. While coroners are forensic scientists, the terms are not exactly synonymous, for forensic actually means "legal," and a forensic scientist can be anyone in the discipline who gathers evidence of interest in legal matters. 3. And I would add, unfortunately for Mark, too! Work Cited "Rhetoric." *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, Fourth Edition. 2003. Houghton Mifflin Company, n.d. Web. 24 July 2009.
3. And I would add, unfortunately for Mark, too!

Work Cited

"Rhetoric." *The American Heritage Dictionary of the English Language*, Fourth Edition. 2003. Houghton Mifflin Company, n.d. Web. 24 July 2009.

Carroll's article, "Backpacks vs. Briefcases" helps develop the concept of a rhetorical analysis further as she considers how rhetoric is used every day to analysis the world around us.

Backpacks vs. Briefcases:
Steps toward Rhetorical Analysis

by Laura Bolin Carroll
From Writing Spaces, Volume 1

First Impressions

Imagine the first day of class in first year composition at your university. The moment your professor walked in the room, you likely began analyzing her and making assumptions about what kind of teacher she will be. You might have noticed what kind of bag she is carrying—a tattered leather satchel? a hot pink polka-dotted backpack? a burgundy brief case? You probably also noticed what she is wearing—trendy slacks and an untucked striped shirt? a skirted suit? jeans and a tee shirt?

It is likely that the above observations were only a few of the observations you made as your professor walked in the room. You might have also noticed her shoes, her jewelry, whether she wears a wedding ring, how her hair is styled, whether she stands tall or slumps, how quickly she walks, or maybe even if her nails are done. If you don't tend to notice any of these things about your professors, you certainly do about the people around you—your roommate, others in your residence hall, students you are assigned to work with in groups, or a prospective date. For most of us, many of the people we encounter in a given day are subject to this kind of quick analysis.

Now as you performed this kind of analysis, you likely didn't walk through each of these questions one by one, write out the answer, and add up the responses to see what kind of person you are interacting with. Instead, you quickly took in the information and made an informed, and likely somewhat accurate, decision about that person. Over the years, as you have interacted with others, you have built a mental database that you can draw on to make conclusions about what a person's looks tell you about their personality. You have become able to analyze quickly what people are saying about themselves through the way they choose to dress, accessorize, or wear their hair.

We have, of course, heard that you "can't judge a book by its cover," but, in fact, we do it all the time. Daily we find ourselves in situations where we are forced to make snap judgments. Each day we meet different people, encounter unfamiliar situations, and see media that asks us to do, think, buy, and act in all sorts of ways. In fact, our saturation in media and its images is one of the reasons why learning to do rhetorical analysis is so important. The more we know about how to analyze situations and draw informed conclusions, the better we can become about making savvy judgments about the people, situations and media we encounter.

Implications of Rhetorical Analysis

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

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

Or, in another situation, a Facebook group asks you to support health care reform. The rhetoric in this group uses people's stories of their struggles to obtain affordable health care. These stories, which are often heart-wrenching, use emotion to persuade you—also called pathos. You are asked to believe that health care reform is necessary and urgent, and you are asked to act on these beliefs by calling your congresspersons and asking them to support the reforms as well.

Because media rhetoric surrounds us, it is important to understand how rhetoric works. If we refuse to stop and think about how and why it persuades us, we can become mindless consumers who buy into arguments about what makes us value ourselves and what makes us happy. For example, research has shown that only 2% of women consider themselves beautiful

("Campaign"), which has been linked to the way that the fashion industry defines beauty. We are also told by the media that buying more stuff can make us happy, but historical surveys show that US happiness peaked in the 1950s, when people saw as many advertisements in their lifetime as the average American sees in one year (Leonard).

Our worlds are full of these kinds of social influences. As we interact with other people and with media, we are continually creating and interpreting rhetoric. In the same way that you decide how to process, analyze or ignore these messages, you create them. You probably think about what your clothing will communicate as you go to a job interview or get ready for a date. You are also using rhetoric when you try to persuade your parents to send you money or your friends to see the movie that interests you. When you post to your blog or tweet you are using rhetoric. In fact, according to rhetorician Kenneth Burke, rhetoric is everywhere: "wherever there is persuasion, there is rhetoric. And wherever there is 'meaning,' there is 'persuasion.' Food eaten and digested is not rhetoric. But in the meaning of food there is much rhetoric, the meaning being persuasive enough for the idea of food to be used, like the ideas of religion, as a rhetorical device of statesmen" (71–72). In other words, most of our actions are persuasive in nature. What we choose to wear (tennis shoes vs. flip flops), where we shop (Whole Foods Market vs. Wal-Mart), what we eat (organic vs. fast food), or even the way we send information (snail mail vs. text message) can work to persuade others.

Chances are you have grown up learning to interpret and analyze these types of rhetoric. They become so commonplace that we don't realize how often and how quickly we are able to perform this kind of rhetorical analysis. When your teacher walked in on the first day of class, you probably didn't think to yourself, "I think I'll do some rhetorical analysis on her clothing and draw some conclusions about what kind of personality she might have and whether I think I'll like her." And, yet, you probably were able to come up with some conclusions based on the evidence you had.

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

The Rhetorical Situation, Or Discerning Context

One of the first places to start is context. Rhetorical messages always occur in a specific situation or context. The president's speech might respond to a specific global event, like an economic summit; that's part of the context. You choose your clothing depending on where

you are going or what you are doing; that's context. A television commercial comes on during specific programs and at specific points of the day; that's context. A billboard is placed in a specific part of the community; that's context, too.

In an article called "The Rhetorical Situation," Lloyd Bitzer argues that there are three parts to understanding the context of a rhetorical moment: exigence, audience and constraints. Exigence is the circumstance or condition that invites a response; "imperfection marked by urgency; it is a defect, an obstacle, something waiting to be done, a thing which is other than it should be" (Bitzer 304). In other words, rhetorical discourse is usually responding to some kind of problem. You can begin to understand a piece's exigence by asking, "What is this rhetoric responding to?" "What might have happened to make the rhetor (the person who creates the rhetoric) respond in this way?"

The exigence can be extremely complex, like the need for a new Supreme Court justice, or it can be much simpler, like receiving an email that asks you where you and your friends should go for your road trip this weekend. Understanding the exigence is important because it helps you begin to discover the purpose of the rhetoric. It helps you understand what the discourse is trying to accomplish.

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

The last piece of the rhetorical situation is the constraints. The constraints of the rhetorical situation are those things that have the power to "constrain decision and action needed to modify the exigence" (Bitzer 306). Constraints have a lot to do with how the rhetoric is presented. Constraints can be "beliefs, attitudes, documents, facts, traditions, images,

interests, motives" (Bitzer 306). Constraints limit the way the discourse is delivered or communicated. Constraints may be something as simple as your instructor limiting your proposal to one thousand words, or they may be far more complex like the kinds of language you need to use to persuade a certain community.

So how do you apply this to a piece of rhetoric? Let's say you are flipping through a magazine, and you come across an advertisement that has a large headline that reads "Why Some People Say 'D'OH' When You Say 'Homer'" ("Why"). This ad is an Ad Council public service announcement (PSA) to promote arts education and is sponsored by Americans for the Arts and NAMM, the trade association of the international music products industry.

Since you want to understand more about what this ad means and what it wants you to believe or do, you begin to think about the rhetorical situation. You first might ask, "what is the ad responding to? What problem does it hope to address?" That's the exigence. In this case, the exigence is the cutting of arts funding and children's lack of exposure to the arts. According to the Ad Council's website, "the average kid is provided insufficient time to learn and experience the arts. This PSA campaign was created to increase involvement in championing arts education both in and out of school" ("Arts"). The PSA is responding directly to the fact that kids are not getting enough arts education.

Then you might begin to think about to whom the Ad Council targeted the ad. Unless you're a parent, you are probably not the primary audience. If you continued reading the text of the ad, you'd notice that there is information to persuade parents that the arts are helpful to their children and to let them know how to help their children become more involved with the arts. The ad tells parents that "the experience will for sure do more than entertain them. It'll build their capacity to learn more. In fact, the more art kids get, the smarter they become in subjects like math and science. And that's reason enough to make a parent say, 'D'oh!,' For Ten Simple Ways to instill art in your kids' lives visit AmericansForTheArts.org" ("Why"). Throughout the text of the ad, parents are told both what to believe about arts education and how to act in response to the belief.

There also might be a secondary audience for this ad—people who are not the main audience of the ad but might also be able to respond to the exigence. For example, philanthropists who could raise money for arts education or legislators who might pass laws for arts funding or to require arts education in public schools could also be intended audiences for this ad.

Finally, you might want to think about the constraints or the limitations on the ad. Sometimes these are harder to get at, but we can guess a few things. One constraint might be the cost of

the ad. Different magazines charge differently for ad space as well as placement within the magazine, so the Ad Council could have been constrained by how much money they wanted to spend to circulate the ad. The ad is also only one page long, so there might have been a limitation on the amount of space for the ad. Finally, on the Ad Council's webpage, they list the requirements for organizations seeking the funding and support of the Ad Council. There are twelve criteria, but here are a few:

1. The sponsor organization must be a private non-profit 501(c)3 organization, private foundation, government agency or coalition of such groups.

2. The issue must address the Ad Council's focus on Health & Safety, Education, or Community. Applications which benefit children are viewed with favor—as part of the Ad Council's Commitment to Children.

3. The issue must offer a solution through an individual action.

4. The effort must be national in scope, so that the message has relevance to media audiences in communities throughout the nation. ("Become")

Each of these criteria helps to understand the limitations on both who can participate as rhetor and what can be said.

The exigence, audience and constraints are only one way to understand the context of a piece of rhetoric, and, of course, there are other ways to get at context. Some rhetoricians look at subject, purpose, audience and occasion. Others might look at the "rhetorical triangle" of writer, reader, and purpose.

An analysis using the rhetorical triangle would ask similar questions about audience as one using the rhetorical situation, but it would also ask questions about the writer and the purpose of the document. Asking questions about the writer helps the reader determine whether she or he is credible and knowledgeable. For example, the Ad Council has been creating public service announcements since 1942 ("Loose Lips Sink Ships," anyone?) and is a non-profit agency. They also document their credibility by showing the impact of their campaigns in several ways: "Destruction of our forests by wildfires has been reduced from 22 million acres to less than 8.4 million acres per year, since our Forest Fire Prevention campaign began" and "6,000 Children were paired with a mentor in just the first 18 months of our mentoring campaign" ("About"). Based on this information, we can assume that the Ad Council is a credible rhetor, and whether or not we agree with the rhetoric they produce, we can probably assume it contains reliable information. Asking questions about the next part of the rhetorical triangle, the purpose of a piece of rhetoric, helps you understand what the rhetor is trying to achieve through the discourse. We can discern the purpose by asking questions like "what does the rhetor want me to believe after seeing this message?" or "what does the rhetor want me to do?" In some ways,

the purpose takes the exigence to the next step. If the exigence frames the problem, the purpose frames the response to that problem.

The rhetorical situation and rhetorical triangle are two ways to begin to understand how the rhetoric functions within the context you find it. The key idea is to understand that no rhetorical performance takes place in a vacuum. One of the first steps to understanding a piece of rhetoric is to look at the context in which it takes place. Whatever terminology you (or your instructor) choose, it is a good idea to start by locating your analysis within a rhetorical situation.

The Heart of the Matter—The Argument

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

Logos is commonly defined as argument from reason, and it usually appeals to an audience's intellectual side. As audiences we want to know the "facts of the matter," and logos helps present these—statistics, data, and logical statements. For example, on our Homer ad for the arts, the text tells parents that the arts will "build their capacity to learn more. In fact, the more art kids get, the smarter they become in subjects like math and science" ("Why"). You might notice that there aren't numbers or charts here, but giving this information appeals to the audience's intellectual side.

That audience can see a continuation of the argument on the Ad Council's webpage, and again much of the argument appeals to logos and draws on extensive research that shows that the arts do these things:

- Allow kids to express themselves creatively and bolster their self-confidence.
- Teach kids to be more tolerant and open.
- Improve kids' overall academic performance.
- Show that kids actively engaged in arts education are likely to have higher SAT scores than those with little to no arts involvement.
- Develop skills needed by the 21st century workforce: critical thinking, creative problem solving, effective communication, teamwork and more.

- Keep students engaged in school and less likely to drop out. ("Arts")

Each bullet above is meant to intellectually persuade parents that they need to be more intentional in providing arts education for their children.

Few of us are persuaded only with our mind, though. Even if we intellectually agree with something, it is difficult to get us to act unless we are also persuaded in our heart. This kind of appeal to emotion is called pathos. Pathetic appeals (as rhetoric that draws on pathos is called) used alone without logos and ethos can come across as emotionally manipulative or overly sentimental, but are very powerful when used in conjunction with the other two appeals.

Emotional appeals can come in many forms—an anecdote or narrative, an image such as a photograph, or even humor. For example, on their web campaign, People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals (PETA) uses an image of a baby chick and of Ronald McDonald wielding a knife to draw attention to their Chicken McCruely UnHappy Meal. These images are meant to evoke an emotional response in the viewer and, along with a logos appeal with the statistics about how cruelly chickens are treated, persuade the viewer to boycott McDonalds.

Pathos can also be a very effective appeal if the rhetor has to persuade the audience in a very short amount of time, which is why it is used heavily in print advertisements, billboards, or television commercials. An investment company will fill a 30-second commercial with images of families and couples enjoying each other, seeming happy, and surrounded by wealth to persuade you to do business with them. The 30-second time spot does not allow them to give the 15-year growth of each of their funds, and pathetic appeals will often hold our interest much longer than intellectual appeals.

The ad promoting the importance of art uses humor to appeal to the audience's emotional side. By comparing the epic poet Homer to Homer Simpson and his classic "d'oh!" the ad uses humor to draw people into their argument about the arts. The humor continues as they ask parents if their kids know the difference between the Homers, "The only Homer some kids know is the one who can't write his own last name" ("Why"). The ad also appeals to emotion through its language use (diction), describing Homer as "one very ancient dude," and describing The Odyssey as "the sequel" to The Iliad. In this case, the humor of the ad, which occurs in the first few lines, is meant to draw the reader in and help them become interested in the argument before the ad gets to the logos, which is in the last few lines of the ad.

The humor also makes the organization seem real and approachable, contributing to the ethos. The humor might lead you to think that Americans for the Arts is not a stuffy bunch of

suits, but an organization you can relate to or one that has a realistic understanding of the world. Ethos refers to the credibility of the rhetor—which can be a person or an organization. A rhetor can develop credibility in many ways. The tone of the writing and whether that tone is appropriate for the context helps build a writer's ethos, as does the accuracy of the information or the visual presentation of the rhetoric.

In the Homer ad, the ethos is built in several ways. The simple, humorous and engaging language, such as "Greek Gods. Achilles Heel. Trojan Horse. All of these icons are brought to us by one very ancient dude—Homer. In The Iliad and its sequel, The Odyssey, he presented Greek mythology in everyday language" ("Why") draws the audience in and helps the tone of the ad seem very approachable. Also, the knowledge of Greek mythology and the information about how the arts help children—which also contribute to the logos appeal—make the ad seem credible and authoritative. However, the fact that the ad does not use too many statistics or overly technical language also contributes to the ethos of the ad because often sounding too intellectual can come across as pompous or stuffy.

Aristotle's artistic appeals are not the only way to understand the argument of rhetoric. You might choose to look at the claim or the unstated assumptions of a piece; someone else might consider the visual appeal of the rhetoric, like the font, page layout, types of paper, or images; another person might focus on the language use and the specific word choice and sentence structure of a piece. Logos, pathos, and ethos can provide a nice framework for analysis, but there are numerous ways to understand how a piece of rhetoric persuades (or fails to persuade).

Looking at the context and components of a piece of rhetoric often isn't enough, though, because it is important to draw conclusions about the rhetoric—does it successfully respond to the exigence? Is it an ethical approach? Is it persuasive? These kinds of questions let you begin to create your own claims, your own rhetoric, as you take a stand on what other people say, do, or write.

Beginning to Analyze

Once you have established the context for the rhetoric you are analyzing, you can begin to think about how well it fits into that context. You've probably been in a situation where you arrived way underdressed for an occasion. You thought that the dinner was just a casual get together with friends; it turned out to be a far more formal affair, and you felt very out of place. There are also times when discourse fails to respond to the situation well—it doesn't fit. On the other hand, successful discourses often respond very well to the context. They address the

problem, consider the audience's needs, provide accurate information, and have a compelling claim. One of the reasons you work to determine the rhetorical situation for a piece of discourse is to consider whether it works within that context. You can begin this process by asking questions like:

- Does the rhetoric address the problem it claims to address?
- Is the rhetoric targeted at an audience who has the power to make change?
- Are the appeals appropriate to the audience?
- Does the rhetor give enough information to make an informed decision?
- Does the rhetoric attempt to manipulate in any way (by giving incomplete/inaccurate information or abusing the audience's emotions)?
- What other sub-claims do you have to accept to understand the rhetor's main claim? (For example, in order to accept the Ad Council's claim that the arts boost math and science scores, you first have to value the boosting of those scores.)
- What possible negative effects might come from this rhetoric?

Rhetorical analysis asks how discourse functions in the setting in which it is found. In the same way that a commercial for denture cream seems very out of place when aired during a reality television show aimed at teenagers, rhetoric that does not respond well to its context often fails to persuade. In order to perform analysis, you must understand the context and then you must carefully study the ways that the discourse does and does not respond appropriately to that context.

The bottom line is that the same basic principles apply when you look at any piece of rhetoric (your instructor's clothing, an advertisement, the president's speech): you need to consider the context and the argument. As you begin to analyze rhetoric, there are lots of different types of rhetoric you might encounter in a college classroom, such as

- Political cartoon
- Wikipedia entry
- Scholarly article
- Bar graph
- Op-ed piece in the newspaper
- Speech
- YouTube video
- Book chapter
- Photograph
- PowerPoint presentation

All of the above types of discourse try to persuade you. They may ask you to accept a certain kind of knowledge as valid, they may ask you to believe a certain way, or they may ask you to act. It is important to understand what a piece of rhetoric is asking of you, how it tries to persuade you, and whether that persuasion fits within the context you encounter it in. Rhetorical analysis helps you answer those questions.

Implications of Rhetorical Analysis, Or Why Do This Stuff Anyway?

So you might be wondering if you know how to do this analysis already—you can tell what kind of person someone is by their clothing, or what a commercial wants you to buy without carefully listening to it—why do you need to know how to do more formal analysis? How does this matter outside a college classroom?

Well, first of all, much of the reading and learning in college requires some level of rhetorical analysis: as you read a textbook chapter to prepare for a quiz, it is helpful to be able to distill the main points quickly; when you read a journal article for a research paper, it is necessary to understand the scholar's thesis; when you watch a video in class, it is useful to be able to understand how the creator is trying to persuade you. But college is not the only place where an understanding of how rhetoric works is important. You will find yourself in many situations—from boardrooms to your children's classrooms or churches to city council meetings where you need to understand the heart of the arguments being presented.

One final example: in November 2000, Campbell's Soup Company launched a campaign to show that many of their soups were low in calories and showed pre-pubescent girls refusing to eat because they were "watching their weight." A very small organization called Dads and Daughters, a group that fights advertising that targets girls with negative body images, contacted Campbell's explaining the problems they saw in an ad that encouraged young girls to be self-conscious about their weight, and asked Campbell's to pull the ad. A few days later, Campbell's Vice President for Marketing and Corporate Communications called. One of the dads says, "the Vice President acknowledged he had received their letter, reviewed the ad again, saw their point, and was pulling the ad," responding to a "couple of guys writing a letter" ("Media"). Individuals who understand rhetorical analysis and act to make change can have a tremendous influence on their world.

Discussion

1. What are examples of rhetoric that you see or hear on a daily basis?

2. What are some ways that you create rhetoric? What kinds of messages are you trying to communicate?

3. What is an example of a rhetorical situation that you have found yourself in? Discuss exigence, audience, and constraints.

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Professional Examples of Rhetorical Analysis

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Text Wrestling Analysis

Vocabulary

critical/active reading—also referred to in this text as "engaged reading," a set of strategies and concepts to interrupt projection and focus on a text. See Appendix B: Engaged Reading Strategies.

interpretation—the process of consuming rhetoric to create meaning. "An interpretation" refers to a specific meaning we build as we encounter a text, focusing on certain ideas, language, or patterns.

text—any artifact through which a message is communicated. Can be written or spoken; digital, printed, or undocumented; video, image, or language. Every text is rhetorical in nature. See rhetoric.

text wrestling—a rhetorical mode in which an author analyzes a text using close reading, then presents an interpretation supported by evidence from the text.

Along the way to this point of your educational career, you've probably encountered the term **critical reading** or **active reading** more than a few times. Teachers tell students of all ages that using active reading skills is important for reading comprehension, critical thinking, and even effective writing. But what exactly does it mean to read critically or actively?

Perhaps it would serve us to step back and first consider what is being read. Most often, we think of a text as a written piece—an essay, a poem, a newspaper article, a novel. While this is often the case, a **text** can be anything: it is an articulation of rhetoric, bearing in mind that we are constantly surrounded by rhetoric. An advertisement is a text; a series of tweets is a text; a TV show is a text; an improvised dance number is a text.

Every text, in turn, is subject to **interpretation**. Interpretation refers to the process of consuming rhetoric to create meaning. A text by itself does not actually *mean* anything; rather, we *build* meaning as we engage with a text. This is an important distinction to make because

As a reader, your interpretation is unique, informed by your lived experiences, your education, your mood(s), your purpose, and your

posture. To an extent, no two readers will interpret a text exactly the same way.

As an author, you must be cognizant that your writing only impacts your audience when they encounter it from their unique interpretive position. You may carefully construct a piece of writing to capture meaning, but that meaning only exists when a reader engages with what you've written.

Because texts can come in such diverse and complex forms, the strategies entailed in "critical" and "active reading" are only the first step: they are tools in our toolkits that lay the groundwork for interpretation. In other words, *engaged reading strategies* (like those in the so-titled Appendix A) prepare us for **text wrestling**.

Text wrestling refers to an analytical encounter with a text during which you, the reader, make observations and informed arguments about the text as a method of creating meaning and cultivating unique insight. Most often, this encounter will eventually lead to an essay that shares your analysis with your classmates, your teacher, or a broader audience.

The following section explores the cognitive and rhetorical techniques that support text wrestling. While your teacher may ask you to focus on a particular medium or genre of text for a text wrestling essay, this section will explore analytical processes that can be applied to many different kinds of texts. First, we will review the ideas and skills for thinking analytically. After that, we will turn to ideas and skills for writing about that analytical thinking, including summary, note-taking, and synthesis.

Interpretation, Analysis, and Close Reading

Interpretation

When *Mad Max: Fury Road* came out in 2015, it was lauded as a powerful feminist film. No longer was this franchise about men enacting post-apocalyptic violence; now, there was an important place in that universe for women. A similar phenomenon surrounded *Wonder Woman* in 2017: after dozens of male-fronted superhero movies, one would finally focus on a female hero exclusively.

Some people, though, were resistant to this reading of feminism in film. I found myself in regular debates after each of these releases about what it meant to promote gender equality in film: does substituting a violent woman for a violent man constitute feminism? Is the leading

woman in a film a feminist just by virtue of being in a female-fronted film? Or do her political beliefs take priority?

For example: Of particular note are claims that Gal Gadot of *Wonder Woman* has supported Israeli imperialism, and therefore her claims to feminism are contradicted by different social justice imperatives: [The wonder of imperial feminism by Susan Abulhawa](#) (14 Jun 2017 *Al Jazeera*).

Does the presence of women on the screen preclude the fact that those women are still highly sexualized?

These questions, debates, and discussions gesture toward the **interpretive process**. Indeed, most arguments (verbal or written) rely on the fact that we each process texts and information from different positions with different purposes, lenses, and preoccupations. Why is it that some people leave the theater after *Mad Max* or *Wonder Woman* feeling empowered, and others leave deeply troubled?

Interpretation is a complex process that is unique to every reader. It is a process of meaning-making that relies on your particular position as a reader. Your interpretive position is informed by several factors.

> Your **purpose** – In the same way you have a rhetorical purpose in writing, you often have a purpose in reading, either consciously or subconsciously. What are you trying to accomplish in this encounter with a text?

> Your **background** – Your lived experiences have trained you to perceive texts with certain assumptions. This background is a blend of cultural, educational, geographical, familial, ideological, and personal influences, among many others.

> Your **posture** – The stance you assume relative to a text will contribute to what meaning you make as you read, think about, and write about that text. This relative position might be emotional (what mood you're in while reading) or contextual (what situation you're reading in), and may also be impacted by your background and purpose.

> Your **lens** – Related to your purpose, lens refers to the way you focus your attention on particular ideas, images, and language to construct meaning. Toward what elements are you directing your attention?

It would be simpler, perhaps, to acknowledge that we will never all agree on an interpretation of a text because of these differences. But the stakes are higher here than simply, "Is *Mad Max* feminist?" Interpretation gets down to the very way we encounter the world; it is about all our biases and flaws; it is about truth; it is about building new knowledges and dismantling institutional oppression. In other words, analytical interpretation is not so esoteric as slotting texts into labels like "feminist" or "not feminist." It is a practice of thinking critically, examining our sense of community and communication, and pursuing social justice.

Analysis

On a basic level, **analysis** refers to the conceptual strategy of "part-to-whole." Because I grew up playing with LEGOs® (or, more often, the cheap knock-offs), I like to use this analogy: Imagine a castle built of 1000 LEGO bricks. I can look at the entire structure and say, "Oh, that's a castle"—this is a reasonable interpretation. But to understand how that castle has actually come together, I pull a few of the LEGO bricks from various parts of the structure. I look at those bricks individually, closely examining each side (even the sides that I couldn't see when they were part of the castle).

When I say, "This is a castle," I am not analyzing. But next, perhaps I ask myself, "What is each of these blocks *doing* to create what I can clearly interpret as a castle?" This is the process of analysis.

Which bricks to choose, though? As we discussed previously, attention is always selective: we automate most of our daily experience for the sake of efficiency and survival, so we often overlook the trees when we see the forest—or each LEGO brick when we see the castle.

Analysis, then, is a practice of radical noticing (like description): it invites you to attend to the details that add up to a complex reality. But analysis also involves conscientious focus of your attention, or a **lens**. Just like reading glasses can bring these words into focus, an analytical lens brings specific ideas, words, or patterns into sharper focus, making them easier to process and interpret.

Sometimes, especially in English classrooms, analysis of a text is referred to as **close reading**. Importantly, close reading as a technique is not a magical key to meaning, not a super-secret decoder ring for a deeply encrypted code. Rather, it is a means to unpack a text and construct a unique, focused interpretation. Close reading is an **iterative** process: by repeatedly encountering, unpacking, and discussing a text, you can develop an analytical insight through guided and focused interpretation of its meaning.

In an analytical situation, your readerly purpose might determine your focus: for example, if you're trying to convince a friend that *Wonder Woman* is a feminist film, you would keep your eyes peeled for images, words, and other markers that align with such an interpretation, like situations featuring independent powerful women or an equitable ratio of dialogue spoken by female characters vs. male characters. It is important to note, though, that good analysis embraces curiosity and allows you to notice elements that might contradict, complicate, or nuance your original purpose: in addition to finding evidence in support of your interpretation, you should also be aware of characteristics that push back against your expectations.

Vocabulary

authorial intent - the inferred or speculated intention of a writer. Must be overlooked in the process of text wrestling analysis.

analysis - the cognitive process and/or rhetorical mode of studying constituent parts to demonstrate an interpretation of a larger whole.

connotation - the associated meanings of a word, phrase, or idea beyond its 'dictionary' definition; the complex, subjective, and dynamic meanings of a word, phrase, or idea the shift based on interpretive position. Contrast with denotation.

close reading - a technique of reading that focuses attention on features of the text to construct an interpretation. (This is in contrast to interpretive methods that rely on research, historical context, biography, or speculation.)

denotation - the dictionary definition of a word, phrase, or idea; the standard and objective meaning of a word, phrase, or idea which, theoretically, does not vary based on interpretive position. Contrast with connotation.

> **Author's note**: Although this term originated in the New Critical literary movement, it has permeated most other schools of critical theory and cultural studies. In most settings, it is generalized to refer to the attentive reading practices and philosophies discussed in this chapter; however, it does have additional connotations in New Criticism.

interpretation - the process of consuming rhetoric to create meaning. "An interpretation" refers to a specific meaning we build as we encounter a text, focusing on certain ideas, language, or patterns.

interpretive position - the unique position from which each of us interprets a text—necessarily different for all people at any given time, and often different for the same person at different times in their life.

iterative - literally, a repetition within a process. Analysis is iterative because it requires repeated critical encounters with a text.

lens - a metaphor for the conceptual framework a reader applies to an analysis. A "lens" brings certain elements into focus, allowing the reader to attend to specific parts of a text to develop an interpretation.

motif - a recurring image or phrase that helps convey a theme. Similar to a symbol, but the relationship between symbol and symbolized is more one-to-one than between motif and theme.

pattern - a notable sequence; structure or shape; recurring image, word, or phrase found in a piece of rhetoric.

reference - a connection a text makes to another text. Can be explicit or implicit; might include allusion, allegory, quotation, or parody. Referencing text adopts some characteristics of the referenced text.

symbol - an artifact (usually something concrete) that stands in for (represents) something else (often something abstract).

Techniques

Authorial Intent

In a groundbreaking 1967 essay, Roland Barthes declared that "the birth of the reader must be at the cost of the death of the Author." (Barthes 148; 147.
Barthes, Roland. *Image, Music, Text*, translated by Stephen Heath, Hill and Wang, 1977.)

In the fifty years since its publication, "The Death of the Author" has greatly influenced the way students, teachers, and academics conduct analysis. Most critics have come to acknowledge that the personal and historical context of the author is not entirely irrelevant, as Barthes might seem to suggest; rather, most people value Barthes' notion that we must free ourselves from the trap of **authorial intent**. This is to say, what we have to work with is the text itself, so it doesn't matter what the author *wanted* to say, but instead what they *did* say. Therefore, we should work from the assumption that every choice the author made was *deliberate*.

This choice to avoid speculation about the author's intent or personality is consistent with the theories of text wrestling analysis explored in this chapter's introduction. Because meaning is always and only constructed through interpretation, we should let go of the idea that the author (or the "secret meanings" the author wrote into a text) is hidden somewhere beneath the surface. There is nothing "hidden" behind the text or in between the lines: there is only the text and those who interpret it.

This idea might seem to contradict one of the central frameworks of this textbook: that unpacking the rhetorical situation is crucial to critically consuming and producing rhetoric. Overlooking authorial intent does not mean that the author's rhetorical situation is no longer important. Instead, we should simply avoid unproductive speculation: we can consider the author's occasion, but we shouldn't try to guess about their motives. For instance, we can say that Malcolm X's writing was influenced by racial oppression in the 1950s and 1960s in the U.S., but not by his preference for peas over carrots. It's a fine line, but an important one.

> "Once the Author is gone, the claim to 'decipher' a text becomes quite useless."
> - Roland Barthes,
> "The Death of the Author"

Moreover, the choice to focus on what the author actually wrote, assuming that each word is on purpose, is *part* of the rhetorical situation of analysis. Your audience might also be curious about the author's intent, but your rhetorical purpose in this situation is to demonstrate an interpretation of the *text*—not the author.

Radical Noticing: Seeing What's On the Page

When we were early readers, we were trained to encounter texts in a specific way: find the main idea, focus on large-scale comprehension, and ignore errors, digressions, or irrelevant information. As Jane Gallop discusses in her essay, "The Ethics of Reading: Close Encounters," this is a useful skill but a problematic one. Because we engage a text from a specific interpretive position (and because we're not always aware of that position), we often project what we anticipate rather than actually reading. Instead of reading what *is* on the page, we read what we think *should be*.

Projection is efficient—one e-mail from Mom is probably like all the others, and one episode of *The Simpsons* will probably follow the same trajectory as every episode from the last twenty-odd years. But projection is also problematic and inhibits analysis. As Gallop puts it,

> *When the reader concentrates on the familiar, she is reassured that what she already knows is sufficient in relation to this new book. Focusing on the surprising, on the other hand, would mean giving up the comfort of the familiar, of the already known for the sake of learning, of encountering something new, something she didn't already know.*
> *In fact, this all has to do with learning. Learning is very difficult; it takes a lot of effort. It is of course much easier if once we learn something we can apply what we have learned again and again. It is much more difficult if every time we confront something new, we have to learn something new.*
> *Reading what one expects to find means finding what one already knows. Learning, on the other hand, means coming to know something one did not know before. Projecting is the opposite of learning. As long as we project onto a text, we cannot learn from it, we can only find what we already know. Close reading is thus a technique to make us learn, to make us see what we don't already know, rather than transforming the new into the old.*

(Gallop 11.from Gallop, Jane. "The Ethics of Reading: Close Encounters." Journal of Curriculum and Theorizing, Vol. 16., No. 3, 2000, pp. 7-17.)

Analysis as "learning," as Gallop explains, is a tool to help interrupt projection: by focusing on and trying to understand *parts*, we can redirect our attention to what the author *is saying* rather than what we *think they should have said*. In turn, we can develop a more complex, ethical, and informed understanding of a *whole*.

Perhaps the most important part of analysis is this attention to detail. If we assume that every word the author published is intentional (in order to avoid speculation about authorial intent), then we can question the meaning and impact of each word, each combination of words, each formal feature of the text. In turn, you should pay special attention to words or forms that surprise you or confuse you: the eye-catching and the ambiguous.

Symbols, Patterns, and References

This framework was inspired by Thomas C. Foster's in *How to Read Literature Like a Professor*, Harper, 2003.

There is no definitive "how-to" guide on text wrestling, but I often ask my students to direct their attention to three particular elements of a text during their interpretive processes. When you draw connections through the following categories, you are actively building meaning from the words on the page.

Symbol: A symbol, as you may already know, is an artifact (usually something concrete) that stands in for (represents) something else (often something abstract). Here are a few examples in different media:

- o Barack Obama's 2008 campaign logo: the O, of course, stands in for the candidate's last name; the red lines seem to suggest a road (implying progress), or maybe waving American flag; the blue curve represents a clear, blue sky (implying safety or wellbeing); the colors themselves are perhaps symbolic of bipartisan cooperation, or at the very least, the American color palette of red, white, and blue.
- o In Edgar Allan Poe's "The Black Cat," the titular black cat symbolizes the narrator's descent into madness, alcoholism, and violence, and later his guilt for that descent.
- o The teaspoon used to hypnotize people in the film *Get Out* (2017) symbolizes wealth, power, and privilege (a "silver spoon"), suggesting that those structures are tools for control and domination.
- o In *Beowulf*, the Old English epic poem, the monster Grendel symbolizes a fear of the unknown and the intractability of nature.
- o In *The Great Gatsby*, the green light at the end of the Buchanan's dock symbolizes nostalgia and hope.

  * A **motif** is closely related to a symbol, but it is different. A motif is a recurring image, word, or phrase that helps to carry a theme or other abstract idea. For example, William Faulkner's short story "A Rose for Emily" includes frequent use of the word "dust." While the dust is not directly symbolic of anything, it certainly brings to mind a variety of **connotations**: reading "dust" makes you think of time passing, stagnancy, decay, and so on. Therefore, the motif of "dust" helps contribute to bigger characteristics, like tone and themes.

Pattern: Patterns are created by a number of rhetorical moves, often in form. Repetition of phrases or images, the visual appearance of text on a page, and character archetypes might contribute to patterns. While patterns themselves are interesting and important, you might also notice that *breaking* a pattern is a significant and deliberate move.

- The episode of the TV series *Master of None* titled "Parents" (Season 1, Episode 2) tells the respective stories of two immigrant families. By tracing the previous generation of each immigrant families through a series of flashbacks, the episode establishes a pattern in chronology: although the families have unique stories, the pattern highlights the similarities of these two families' experiences. In turn, this pattern demonstrates the parallel but distinct challenges and opportunities faced by the immigrants and first-generation American citizens the episode profiles.

- In Wilfred Owen's poem "Dulce Et Decorum Est," each line of the first stanza contains ten syllables. However, the following stanzas contain occasional deviations—more or fewer syllables—creating a sense of disorder and also drawing emphasis to the pattern-breaking lines.

- Tyehimba Jess, author of *Olio* and *Leadbelly*, painstakingly crafts patterns in his poetry. For instance, his series of sonnets on Millie and Christine McKoy follows not only the conventions of traditional sonnets, but are also interlocking, exemplifying the distinct but overlapping voices of conjoined twins.

Reference: A reference is a connection a text makes to another text. By making a reference (whether obvious or hidden), the referencing text adopts some characteristics of the referenced text. References might include allusion, allegory, quotation, or parody.

- C.S. Lewis' classic young adult series, *The Chronicles of Narnia*, is a Christian allegory. The imagery used to describe the main hero, Aslan the lion, as well as a number of the other stories and details, parallel the New Testament. In turn, Aslan is imbued with the savior connotation of Jesus Christ.

- The TV show *Bob's Burgers* makes frequent references to pop culture. For instance, the fictional boy band featured in the show, Boyz 4 Now, closely resembles One Direction, *NSYNC, and Backstreet Boys—and their name is clearly a reference to Boyz II Men.

- "Woman Hollering Creek," a short story by Sandra Cisneros, deals with the dangers of interpersonal violence. The protagonist refers frequently to *telenovelas*, soap operas that set unrealistic and problematic assumptions for healthy relationships. These references suggest to us that interpersonal violence is pervasive in media and social norms.

Sociocultural Lenses

Keep in mind that each of these critical lenses has a broad school of theory behind it. Your teacher might encourage you to do a bit of background research on a certain perspective before applying it.

In addition to looking for symbols, patterns, and references, you might also focus your analytical reading by using a sociocultural critical **lens**. Because your attention is necessarily selective, a limited resource, these lenses give you a suggestion for where you might direct that attention. While it is beyond the scope of this book to give in-depth history and reading practices for different schools of literary criticism or cultural studies, the following are common lenses applied during textual analysis. (The Purdue OWL provides some free resources [their website](#) to introduce students to some of these schools of criticism.)

As you engage with a text, you should look for touchstones, tropes, or symbols that relate to one or more of the following critical perspectives.

Gender and sexuality
  How does the text portray the creation and performance of gender? How many people of different genders are included in the story? Do the characters in the text express gender according to traditional standards? How do characters resist the confines of gender? How much attention, agency, and voice are allowed to women, men, and non-binary or genderqueer characters?

  What sorts of relationships—familial, friendly, romantic, sexual, etc.—are portrayed in the text? How do these relationships compare to the relationships of the dominant culture? How much attention, agency, and voice are allowed to LGBTQIA2S+ people?

Disability

How does the text represent people with disabilities? Does the text reveal damaging stereotypes or misconceptions about people with disabilities or their life experiences? Does the text illuminate the social/environmental construction of disabilities? How does the text construct or assume the normative body?

Race, ethnicity, and nationality

How does the text represent people of color, of minority status, and/or of different nationalities? What does it suggest about institutionalized racism and discrimination? How does the text examine or portray cultural and individual identities? How do the characters resist racism, xenophobia, and oppression? How do they reproduce, practice, or contribute to racism, xenophobia, or oppression?

Social class and economy

How does the text represent differences in wealth, access, and resources? Do people cross the divisions between socioeconomic statuses? Are characters of greater status afforded more power, agency, or freedom—in the plot events or in the text more generally? How do exploited people resist or reproduce exploitation?

Ecologies and the environment

Does the setting of the text represent a 'natural' world? How does the text represent nature, ecosystems, non-human animals and other living organisms? Does the text, its narrative, or its characters advocate for environmental protection? Does the text speak to the human impact on global ecological health?

(Post)colonialism

What is the relationship of the characters and the setting, historically and culturally? Does the text take place in a currently or formerly colonized nation? Which of the characters are from that place? How have the effects of colonialism and imperialism influenced the place and its indigenous people? How have subjected, enslaved, or exploited people preserved culture or resisted colonialism? How does the text represent patterns of migration—forced or voluntary?

Some texts will lend themselves to a certain lens (or combination of lenses) based on content or the rhetorical situation of the author or reader. Bring to mind a recent movie you watched, book you read, or other text you've encountered; by asking the italicized questions above, determine whether that text seems to be asking for a certain sociocultural perspective.

Analysis Activities

Personal Photo Analysis

For this activity, find a *photograph* (digital or printed) that has some sort of emotional gravity for you: it could be a picture of a loved one, a treasured memory, a favorite place, anything that makes *you* feel something.

On a clean sheet of paper, free-write about the photo in response to the following prompts for three minutes each:

1. Describe the photograph as a whole. What's happening? Who is in it? Use vivid description to capture the photo in writing as best you can.
2. Zoom in on one element of the photo—one color, shape, object, person, etc. How does this part relate to the greater whole*?*
3. Zoom out and describe what's <u>not</u> shown in the photo. What's happening just out of frame? What's happening just before, just after? What are the emotions you associate with this moment?

Now, trade photos with a friend or classmate who's also working on this activity. Repeat the same free-write prompts and compare your responses. What do the differences indicate about the interpretive process*?* About context? About the position of the reader and the limitations on the author (photographer)?

Unpacking Advertisements: Analyzing Visual Rhetoric

One of the most common forms of visual rhetoric we encounter on a daily basis are advertisements; indeed, advertisements are more and more prominent with the growth of technology, and increasingly tailored to the target audience. The ads we encounter often blend language, images, sound, and video to achieved their intended purpose—to convince you to buy something.

To practice analysis, you can close read an advertisement or advertising campaign.
Choose a brand, product, or corporation that you find interesting. One that I've found especially engaging is Levi's 2009 "Go Forth" advertising campaign. Read more about this campaign and its rhetorical strategies via the *New York Times*: "Levi's Courts the Young With a Hopeful Call" by Stewart Elliott, 29 June 2009.

Try to identify the <u>subject</u>, <u>occasion</u>, <u>audience</u>, and <u>purpose</u> of the advertisement. Often, there is an obvious or declared answer for each of these (the subject of the Levi's campaign is "Levi's jeans" and the purpose is "to make you buy Levi's jeans"), but there are also more subtle answers (the subject is also "American millennial empowerment" and the purpose is also "create a youthful, labor-oriented brand").
Identify what parts of the advertisement contribute to the whole: what colors, shapes, words, images, associations, etc., does the ad play on in order to achieve its purpose?

Do you notice symbols, patterns, or references?

Interpret the observations you collected in number three. How do the parts contribute to the whole? What might you overlook if you weren't paying close enough attention?

Radical Noticing Promenade

This exercise encourages you to focus on details, rather than the big picture, as a way to better understand the big picture. You will need a notebook and a camera. (If you have a cell phone with a camera, it will do the trick.)

Take about twenty minutes to wander around an area that you often spend time in: your house, your neighborhood, the halls of your school, etc. Walk slowly and aimlessly; this exercise works best when you don't have a destination in mind.

As you wander, look around you and focus on small details—a piece of garbage on the sidewalk, the color of that guy's shoes, the sound of a leaf blower in the distance. Record (using your camera, notebook, or both) these small details. When you return to your desk, choose three of these details to meditate on. Using descriptive writing (see Chapter One), spend a few minutes exploring these details in writing. Then, consider what they might reflect about the place where you promenaded—the piece of garbage might indicate that neighborhood is well-maintained but not pristine; the leaf blower might reflect a suburban American commitment to both manicured lawns and convenience.

Poem Explication
For more on poetry explication, consult the [Poetry Explication Handout](#) from UNC Writing Center.

Practice analyzing a text using your choice of one of the following poems. First, read a poem through once silently and once aloud. Then read the poem again, this time annotating words and phrases that strike you. Look for patterns (and breaks in patterns) in language, rhyme, meter, and form. Look for potential symbolism, concrete objects that seem to suggest something more abstract. Look for references, connections to other texts you know. You can also consider whether the poem speaks to any analytical lenses and how it compares to your experiences.

Next, develop several questions that the poem raises. What is ambiguous about the content or language? What might it suggest about our lives, our society?

Finally, synthesize your observations and questions into a brief essay driven by a thesis statement. Use specific parts of the text to support your insight.

Drag the River

On our way to the river
the gist of American storytelling
dragged along like a dog
leashed to the back of the car.

I had to pull over.
You said, "I hope

We switched seats.

> *Parked at milepost 6, the grease fire night*
pulled the river toward the delta.
The water ran low;
the trees performed their shakes.

We removed our hats then went down to the banks.

Ryan Mills, orig. published in 1001, issue 2, by IPRC. Reproduced with permission from the author.

Richard Cory

Whenever Richard Cory went down town,
We people on the pavement looked at him:
He was a gentleman from sole to crown,
Clean favored, and imperially slim.

And he was always quietly arrayed,
And he was always human when he talked;
But still he fluttered pulses when he said,
"Good-morning," and he glittered when he walked.

And he was rich—yes, richer than a king—
And admirably schooled in every grace:
In fine, we thought that he was everything
To make us wish that we were in his place.

So on we worked, and waited for the light,
And went without the meat, and cursed the bread;
And Richard Cory, one calm summer night,
Went home and put a bullet through his head.

Model Texts by Student Authors

Annotation of "A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" by John Donne (1633)

definition – the act of saying farewell

"A Valediction: Forbidding Mourning" → *Why would a goodbye, especially to someone who has died, forbid mourning?*

As virtuous men pass mildly away,	A
And whisper to their souls to go,	B
Whilst some of their sad friends do say	A
The breath goes now, and some say, No:	B

Reminds me of Dylan Thomas, "D. Not Go Gentle Into that Good Night"

So let us melt, and make no noise,	C
No tear-floods, nor sigh-tempests move;	D
'Twere profanation of our joys	C
To tell the laity our love.	D

– no crying/no mourning
WEATHER IMAGERY

↳ *definition – 'lay-person' – i.e., it's blasphemous to tell the normalcy of our love*

Moving of th' earth brings harms and fears,	E
Men reckon what it did, and meant;	F
But trepidation of the spheres,	E
Though greater far, is innocent.	F

PLANET IMAGERY

→ *definition – fear, hesitation; or trembling, shaking*

Dull sublunary lovers' love	G
(Whose soul is sense) cannot admit	H
Absence, because it doth remove	G
Those things which elemented it.	H

→ *definition: below moon/from Earth*

Normal/earthly lovers can't deal w/ less attached to sense/logic because they would not see

But we by a love so much refined,	I
That our selves know not what it is,	J
Inter-assured of the mind,	I
Care less, eyes, lips, and hands to miss.	J

Our love is bigger than it is

Our two souls therefore, which are one,	K
Though I must go, endure not yet	L
A breach, but an expansion,	K
Like gold to airy thinness beat.	L

2 is 1 it speaks to the still

Syntax inversion, i.e., "Like gold hammered into airy thinness"

SIMILE
↳ *We won't be separated, but the connection will be spread thin.*

If they be two, they are two so	A
As stiff twin compasses are two;	M
Thy soul, the fixed foot, makes no show	A
To move, but doth, if the other do.	M

Compass, like the tool used to draw circles

CONCEIT

And though it in the center sit,	N
Yet when the other far doth roam,	(A/slant)
It leans and hearkens after it,	N
And grows erect, as that comes home.	(A/slant)

Such wilt thou be to me, who must,	O
Like th' other foot, obliquely run;	P
Thy firmness makes my circle just,	O
And makes me end where I begun.	P

↳ *reliance on one another*

– attached but separate

– orbit, like planet imagery above

Video: Text Wrestling/Close Reading Roundtable

This video features Kamiko Jiminez, Annie Wold, Maximilian West, and Christopher Gaylord. It was produced and is included here with their consent. Special thanks to Laura Wilson and Kale Brewer for their support in producing this video.

Summary and Response

from *EmpoWord: A Student-Centered Anthology and Handbook for College Writers* by Shane Abrams, 2019

As you sharpen your analytical skills, you might realize that you should use evidence from the text to back up the points you make. You might use direct quotes as support, but you can also consider using summary.

A **summary** is a condensed version of a text, put into your own words. Summarizing is a useful part of the analytical process because it requires you to read the text, interpret and process it, and reproduce the important points using your own language. By doing so, you are (consciously or unconsciously) making choices about what matters, what words and phrases mean, and how to articulate their meaning.

Often (but not always), **response** refers to a description of a reader's experience and reactions as they encounter a text. Response papers track how you feel and what you think as you move through a text. More importantly, responses also challenge you to evaluate exactly *how* a text acts upon you—to make you feel or think a certain way—using language or images. While a response is not an analysis, it will help you generate ideas for the analytical process.

Vocabulary

direct quote—the verbatim use of another author's words. Can be used as evidence to support your claim, or as language to analyze/close-read to demonstrate an interpretation or insight.
paraphrase—author reiterates a main idea, argument, or detail of a text in their own words without drastically altering the length of the passage(s) they paraphrase. Contrast with summary.
response—a mode of writing that values the reader's experience of and reactions to a text.
summary—a rhetorical mode in which an author reiterates the main ideas, arguments, and details of a text in their own words, condensing a longer text into a smaller version. Contrast with paraphrase.

Techniques

Identifying Main Points, Concerns, and Images

If you ever watch TV shows with a serial plot, you might be familiar with the phrase "Previously, on _____." The snippets at the beginning of an episode are designed to

remind the viewer of the important parts of previous episodes—but how do makers of the show determine what a viewer needs to be refreshed on? And why am I watching full episodes if they'll just tell me what I need to know in the first minute of the next episode?

Typically, the makers of the show choose short, punchy bits that will be relevant in the new episode's narrative arc. For instance, a "Previously, on *The Walking Dead*" might have a clip from ten episodes ago showing zombies invading Hershel's farm if the new episode focuses on Hershel and his family. Therefore, these "previously ons" hook the viewer by showcasing only exciting parts and prime the viewer for a new story by planting specific details in their mind. Summaries like this are driven by purpose, and consequently have a specific job to do in choosing main points.

You, too, should consider your rhetorical purpose when you begin writing summary. Whether you are writing a summary essay or using summary as a tool for analysis, your choices about what to summarize and how to summarize it should be determined by what you're trying to accomplish with your writing.

As you engage with a text you plan to summarize, you should begin by identifying main points, recurring images, or concerns and preoccupations of the text. (You may find the Engaged Reading Strategies appendix of this book useful.) After reading and rereading, what ideas stick with you? What does the author seem distracted by? What keeps cropping up?

Tracking Your Reactions

As you read and reread a text, you should take regular breaks to check in with yourself to track your reactions. Are you feeling sympathetic toward the speaker, narrator, or author? To the other characters? What other events, ideas, or contexts are you reminded of as you read? Do you understand and agree with the speaker, narrator, or author? What is your emotional state? At what points do you feel confused or uncertain, and why?

Try out the double-column note-taking method. As illustrated below, divide a piece of paper into two columns; on the left, make a heading for "Notes and Quotes," and on the right, "Questions and Reactions." As you move through a text, jot down important ideas and words from the text on the left, and record your intellectual and emotional reactions on the right. Be sure to ask prodding questions of the text along the way, too.

Notes and Quotes	_Questions and Reactions_

Writing Your Summary

Once you have read and re-read your text at least once, taking notes and reflecting along the way, you are ready to start writing a summary. Before starting, consider your rhetorical situation: What are you trying to accomplish (purpose) with your summary? What details and ideas (subject) are important for your reader (audience) to know? Should you assume that they have also read the text you're summarizing? I'm thinking back here to the "Previously on…" idea: TV series don't include <u>everything</u> from a prior episode; they focus instead on moments that set up the events of their next episode. You too should choose your content in accordance with your rhetorical situation.

I encourage you to start off by articulating the "key" idea or ideas from the text in one or two sentences. Focus on clarity of language: start with simple word choice, a single idea, and a straightforward perspective so that you establish a solid foundation.

> _The authors support feminist theories and practices that are critical of racism and other oppressions._

Then, before that sentence, write one or two more sentences that introduce the title of the text, its authors, and its main concerns or interventions. Revise your key idea sentence as necessary.

Summarizing requires you to make choices about what matters, what words and phrases mean, and how to articulate their meaning.

> _In "Why Our Feminism Must Be Intersectional (And 3 Ways to Practice It)," Jarune Uwuajaren and Jamie Utt critique what is known as 'white feminism.' They explain that sexism is wrapped up in racism, Islamophobia, heterosexism, transphobia, and other systems of oppression. The authors support feminist theories and practices that recognize intersectionality._

Your next steps will depend largely on the reasons you are summarizing. Has your teacher asked you to summarize objectively, reproducing the ideas of the text without adding your own ideas or reactions? Have they asked you to critique the article, by both showing understanding and then pushing back against the text? Follow the parameters of your assignment; they are an important element of your rhetorical situation.

In most summary assignments, though, you will be expected to draw directly from the article itself by using direct quotes or paraphrases in addition to your own summary.

Paraphrase, Summary, and Direct Quotes

Whether you're writing a summary or broaching your analysis, using support from the text will help you clarify ideas, demonstrate your understanding, or further your argument, among other things. Three distinct methods, which Bruce Ballenger in his text, *The Curious Researcher* (9th ed, Pearson, 2018, pp. 88-91), refers to as "The Notetaker's Triad," will allow you to process and reuse information from your focus text.

A **direct quote** might be most familiar to you: using quotation marks (" ") to indicate the moments that you're borrowing, you reproduce an author's words verbatim in your own writing. Use a direct quote if someone else wrote or said something in a distinctive or particular way and you want to capture their words exactly.

Direct quotes are good for establishing *ethos* and providing evidence. In a text wrestling essay, you will be expected to use multiple direct quotes: in order to attend to specific language, you will need to reproduce segments of that language in your analysis.

Paraphrasing is similar to the process of summary. When we paraphrase, we process information or ideas from another person's text and put it in our own words. The main difference between paraphrase and summary is scope: if summarizing means rewording and condensing, then paraphrasing means rewording without drastically altering length. However, paraphrasing is also generally more faithful to the spirit of the original; whereas a summary requires you to process and invites your own perspective, a paraphrase ought to mirror back the original idea using your own language.

Paraphrasing is helpful for establishing background knowledge or general consensus, simplifying a complicated idea, or reminding your reader of a certain part of another text. It is also valuable when relaying statistics or historical information, both of which are usually more fluidly woven into your writing when spoken with your own voice.

Whether you are quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing, you must *always* include an appropriate citation.

For support on citations, visit your Writing Center, access the Purdue OWL, or ask your teacher and classmates for support.

Summary, as discussed earlier in this chapter, is useful for "broadstrokes" or quick overviews, brief references, and providing plot or character background. When you summarize, you reword and condense another author's writing. Be aware, though, that summary also requires individual thought: when you reword, it should be a result of you processing the idea yourself, and when you condense, you must think critically about which parts of the text are most important. As you can see in the example below, one summary shows understanding and puts the original into the author's own words; the other summary is a result of a passive rewording, where the author only substituted synonyms for the original.

For example here is a quote from Frederic Filloux's article "[Facebook's Walled Wonderland Is Inherently Incompatible with News.](#)" in Monday Note, Medium, 4 December 2016

"On Facebook, what you click on, what you share with your 'friends' shapes your profile, preferences, affinities, political opinions and your vision of the world. The last thing Facebook wants is to contradict you in any way" (Filloux).

Original Quote

On Facebook, the things you click on and share forms your profile, likings, sympathies, governmental ideas and your image of society. Facebook doesn't want to contradict you at all (Filloux).

❌

When you interact with Facebook, you teach the algorithms about yourself. Those algorithms want to mirror back your beliefs (Filloux).

✔️

Each of these three tactics should support your summary or analysis: you should integrate quotes, paraphrases, and summary with your own writing. Below, you can see three examples of these tools. Consider how the direct quote, the paraphrase, and the summary each could be used to achieve different purposes.

Below is another example from the article Baotic, Anton, Florian Sicks and Angela S. Stoeger. "[Nocturnal 'Humming' Vocalizations: Adding a Piece of the Puzzle of Giraffe Vocal Communication](#)." BioMed Central Research Notes vol. 8, no. 425, 2015. US National Library of Medicine, doi 10.1186/s13104-015-1394-3.

Original Passage

It has been suggested (again rather anecdotally) that giraffes do communicate using infrasonic vocalizations (the signals are verbally described to be similar—in structure and function—to the low-frequency, infrasonic "rumbles" of elephants). It was further speculated that the extensive frontal sinus of giraffes acts as a resonance chamber for infrasound production. Moreover, particular neck movements (e.g. the neck stretch) are suggested to be associated with the production of infrasonic vocalizations.

Quote	Paraphrase	Summary
Some zoological experts have pointed out that the evidence for giraffe hums has been "rather anecdotally" reported (Baotic et al. 3). However, some scientists have "speculated that the extensive frontal sinus of giraffes acts as a resonance chamber for infrasound production" (Ibid. 3).	*Giraffes emit a low-pitch noise; some scientists believe that this hum can be used for communication with other members of the social group, but others are skeptical because of the dearth of research on giraffe noises. According to Baotic et al., the anatomy of the animal suggests that they may be making deliberate and specific noises (3).*	*Baotic et al. conducted a study on giraffe hums in response to speculation that these noises are used deliberately for communication.*

The examples above also demonstrate additional citation conventions worth noting:
A parenthetical in-text citation is used for all three forms. (In MLA format, this citation includes the author's last name and page number.) The purpose of an in-text citation is to identify key information that guides your reader to your Works Cited page (or Bibliography or References, depending on your format).

If you use the author's name in the sentence, you do not need to include their name in the parenthetical citation.

If your material doesn't come from a specific page or page range, but rather from the entire text, you do not need to include a page number in the parenthetical citation.

If there are many authors (generally more than three), you can use "et al." to mean "and others."

If you cite the same source consecutively in the same paragraph (without citing any other sources in between), you can use "Ibid." to mean "same as the last one."

Summary Activities

Summary and Response: TV Show or Movie

Practice summary and response using a movie or an episode of a television show. (Although it can be more difficult with a show or movie you already know and like, you can apply these skills to both familiar and unfamiliar texts.)

Watch it once all the way through, taking notes using the double-column structure above.

Watch it once more, pausing and rewinding as necessary, adding additional notes.
Write one or two paragraphs summarizing the episode or movie as objectively as possible. Try to include the major plot points, characters, and conflicts.

Write a paragraph that transitions from summary to response: what were your reactions to the episode or movie? What do you think produced those reactions? What seems troubling or problematic? What elements of form and language were striking? How does the episode or movie relate to your lived experiences?

Everyone's a Critic: Food Review

Food critics often employ summary and response with the purpose of reviewing restaurants for potential customers. You can give it a shot by visiting a restaurant, your dining hall, a fast-food joint, or a food cart. Before you get started, consider reading some food and restaurant reviews from your local newspaper. (Yelp often isn't quite thorough enough.)

Bring a notepad to your chosen location and take detailed notes on your experience as a patron. Use descriptive writing techniques (see Chapter One), to try to capture the experience. What happens as you walk in? Are you greeted? What does it smell like? What are your immediate reactions?

Describe the atmosphere. Is there music? What's the lighting like? Is it slow, or busy?

Track the service. How long before you receive the attention you need? Is that attention appropriate to the kind of food-service place you're in?
Record as many details about the food you order as possible.

After your dining experience, write a brief review of the restaurant, dining hall, fast-food restaurant, or food cart. What was it like, specifically? Did it meet your expectations? Why or why not? What would you suggest for improvement? Would you recommend it to other diners like you?

Digital Media Summary and Mini-Analysis

For this exercise, you will study a social media feed of your choice. You can use your own or someone else's Facebook feed, Twitter feed, or Instagram feed. Because these feeds are tailored to their respective user's interests, they are all unique and represent something about the user.

After closely reviewing at least ten posts, respond to the following questions in a brief essay:

- What is the primary medium used on this platform (e.g., images, text, video, etc.)?
- What recurring ideas, themes, topics, or preoccupations do you see in this collection? Provide examples.
- Do you see posts that deviate from these common themes?
- What do the recurring topics in the feed indicate about its user? Why?

Bonus: What ads do you see popping up? How do you think these have been geared toward the user?

Sample Analysis Essays by Student Authors

Maggie as the Focal Point

Shanna Greene Benjamin attempts to resolve Toni Morrison's emphasis on Maggie in her short story "Recitatif". While many previous scholars focus on racial codes, and "the black-and-white" story that establishes the racial binary, Benjamin goes ten steps further to show "the

brilliance of Morrison's experiment" (Benjamin 90). Benjamin argues that Maggie's story which is described through Twyla's and Roberta's memories is the focal point of "Recitatif" where the two protagonists have a chance to rewrite "their conflicting versions of history" (Benjamin 91). More so, Maggie is the interstitial space where blacks and whites can engage, confront America's racialized past, rewrite history, and move forward.

Benjamin highlights that Maggie's story is first introduced by Twyla, labeling her recollections as the "master narrative" (Benjamin 94). Although Maggie's story is rebutted with Roberta's memories, Twyla's version "represent[s] the residual, racialized perspectives" stemming from America's past (Benjamin 89). Since Maggie is a person with a disability her story inevitably becomes marginalized, and utilized by both Twyla and Roberta for their own self-fulfilling needs, "instead of mining a path toward the truth" (Benjamin 97). Maggie is the interstitial narrative, which Benjamin describes as a space where Twyla and Roberta, "who represent opposite ends of a racial binary", can come together to heal (Benjamin 101). Benjamin also points out how Twyla remembers Maggie's legs looking "like parentheses" and relates the shape of parentheses, ( ), to self-reflection (Morrison 141). Parentheses represent that inward gaze into oneself, and a space that needs to be filled with self-reflection in order for one to heal and grow. Twyla and Roberta create new narratives of Maggie throughout the story in order to make themselves feel better about their troubled past. According to Benjamin, Maggie's "parenthetical body" is symbolically the interstitial space that "prompts self-reflection required to ignite healing" (Benjamin 102). Benjamin concludes that Morrison tries to get the readers to engage in America's past by eliminating and taking up the space between the racial binary that Maggie represents.

Not only do I agree with Benjamin's stance on "Recitatif", but I also disapprove of my own critical analysis of "Recitatif." I made the same mistakes that other scholars have made regarding Morrison's story; we focused on racial codes and the racial binary, while completely missing the interstitial space which Maggie represents. Although I did realize Maggie was of some importance, I was unsure why so I decided to not focus on Maggie at all. Therefore, I missed the most crucial message from "Recitatif" that Benjamin hones in on.

Maggie is brought up in every encounter between Twyla and Roberta, so of course it makes sense that Maggie is the focal point in "Recitatif". Twyla and Roberta project themselves onto Maggie, which is why the two women have a hard time figuring out "'What the hell

happened to Maggie'" (Morrison 155). Maggie also has the effect of bringing the two women closer together, yet at times causing them to be become more distant. For example, when Twyla and Roberta encounter one another at the grocery store, Twyla brings up the time Maggie fell and the "gar girls laughed at her", while Roberta reminds her that Maggie was in fact pushed down (Morrison 148). Twyla has created a new, "self-serving narrative[ ]" as to what happened to Maggie instead of accepting what has actually happened, which impedes Twyla's ability to self-reflect and heal (Benjamin 102). If the two women would have taken up the space between them to confront the truths of their past, Twyla and Roberta could have created a "cooperative narrative" in order to mend.

Maggie represents the interstitial space that lies between white and black Americans. I believe this is an ideal space where the two races can come together to discuss America's racialized past, learn from one another, and in turn, understand why America is divided as such. If white and black America jumped into the space that Maggie defines, maybe we could move forward as a country and help one another succeed. When I say "succeed", I am not referring to the "American dream" because that is a false dream created by white America. "Recitatif" is not merely what characteristics define which race, it is much more than. Plus, who cares about race! I want America to be able to benefit and give comfort to every citizen whatever their "race" may be. This is time where we need black and white America to come together and fight the greater evil, which is the corruption within America's government.

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Essay by Beth Kreinheder, Portland State University, 2018. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

Teacher Takeaways

Pronouns & Bathrooms

The article "Pronouns and Bathrooms: Supporting Transgender Students," featured on Edutopia, was written to give educators a few key points when enacting the role of a truly (gender) inclusive educator. It is written specifically to high-school level educators, but I feel that almost all of the rules that should apply to a person who is transgender or gender-expansive at any age or grade level. The information is compiled by several interviews done with past and present high school students who identify with a trans-identity. The key points of advice stated are supported by personal statements made by past or present students that identify with a trans-identity.

The first point of advice is to use the student's preferred name and/or pronoun. These are fundamental to the formation of identity and demand respect. The personal interview used in correlation with the advice details how the person ended up dropping out of high school after transferring twice due to teachers refusing to use their preferred name and pronoun. This is an all-too-common occurrence. The trans community recommend that schools and administrators acquire updated gender-inclusive documentation and update documentation at the request of the student to avoid misrepresentation and mislabeling. When you use the student's preferred name and pronoun in and out of the classroom you are showing the student you sincerely care for their well-being and the respect of their identity.

The second and other most common recommendation is to make "trans-safe" (single-use, unisex or trans-inclusive) bathrooms widely available to students. Often these facilities either do not exist at all or are few-and-far-between, usually inconveniently located, and may not even meet ADA standards. This is crucial to insuring safety for trans-identified students.

Other recommendations are that schools engage in continual professional development training to insure that teachers are the best advocates for their students. Defend and protect students from physical and verbal abuse. Create a visibly welcoming and supportive environment

for trans-identified students by creating support groups, curriculum and being vocal about your ally status.

The last piece of the article tells us a person who is trans simply wants to be viewed as human—a fully actualized human. I agree whole-heartedly. I believe that everyone has this desire. I agree with the recommendations of the participants that these exhibitions of advocacy are indeed intrinsic to the role of gender-expansive ally-ship.

While they may not be the most salient of actions of advocacy, they are the most foundational parts. These actions are the tip of the iceberg, but they must be respected. Being a true ally to the gender-expansive and transgender communities means continually expanding your awareness of trans issues. I am thankful these conversations are being had and am excited for the future of humanity.

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Essay by an anonymous student author, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

Teacher Takeaways

 "The author maintains focus on key arguments and their own understanding of the text's claims. By the end of the summary, I have a clear sense of the recommendations the authors make for supporting transgender students. However, this piece could use more context at the beginning of each paragraph: the student could clarify the logical progression that builds from one paragraph to the next. (The current structure reads more like a list.) Similarly, context is missing in the form of citations, and no author is ever mentioned. Overall this author relies a bit too much on summary and would benefit from using a couple direct quotations to give the reader a sense of the author's language and key ideas. In revision, this author should blend summaries, paraphrases, and quotes to develop this missing context."

– Professor Dannemiller

Education Methods: Banking vs. Problem-Posing

Almost every student has had an unpleasant experience with an educator. Many times this happens due to the irrelevant problems posed by educators and arbitrary assignments required of the student. In his chapter from *Pedagogy of the Oppressed*, Paulo Freire centers his argument on

the oppressive and unsuccessful banking education method in order to show the necessity of a problem-posing method of education.

Freire begins his argument by intervening into the conversation regarding teaching methods and styles of education, specifically responding in opposition to the banking education method, a method that "mirrors the oppressive society as a whole" (73). He describes the banking method as a system of narration and depositing of information into students like "containers" or "receptacles" (72). He constructs his argument by citing examples of domination and mechanical instruction as aspects that create an assumption of dichotomy, stating that "a person is merely in the world, not with the world or with others" (75). Freire draws on the reader's experiences with this method by providing a list of banking attitudes and practices including "the teacher chooses and enforces his choices, and the students comply" (73), thus allowing the reader to connect the subject with their lived experiences.

In response to the banking method, Freire then advocates for a problem-posing method of education comprised of an educator constantly reforming her reflections in the reflection of the students. He theorizes that education involves a constant unveiling of reality, noting that "they come to see the world not as a static reality but as a reality in process, in transformation" (83). Thus, the problem-posing method draws on discussion and collaborative communication between students and educator. As they work together, they are able to learn from one another and impact the world by looking at applicable problems and assignments, which is in direct opposition of the banking method.

While it appears that Freire's problem-posing method is more beneficial to both the student and educator, he fails to take into account the varying learning styles of the students, as well as the teaching abilities of the educators. He states that through the banking method, "the student records, memorizes, and repeats these phrases without perceiving what four times four really means, or realizing the true significance" (71). While this may be true for many students, some have an easier time absorbing information when it is given to them in a more mechanical fashion. The same theory applies to educators as well. Some educators may have a more difficult time communicating through the problem-posing method. Other educators may not be as willing to be a part of a more collaborative education method.

I find it difficult to agree with a universal method of education, due to the fact that a broad method doesn't take into consideration the varying learning and communication styles of

both educator and student. However, I do agree with Freire on the basis that learning and education should be a continuous process that involves the dedication of both student and educator. Students are their own champions and it takes a real effort to be an active participant in one's own life and education. It's too easy to sit back and do the bare minimum, or be an "automaton" (74). To constantly be open to learning and new ideas, to be a part of your own education, is harder, but extremely valuable.

As a student pursuing higher education, I find this text extremely reassuring. The current state of the world and education can seem grim at times, but after reading this I feel more confident that there are still people who feel that the current systems set in place are not creating students who can critically think and contribute to the world. Despite being written forty years ago, Freire's radical approach to education seems to be a more humanistic style, one where students are thinking authentically, for "authentic thinking is concerned with reality" (77). Problem-posing education is one that is concerned with liberation, opposed to oppression. The banking method doesn't allow for liberation, for "liberation is a praxis: the action and reflection of men and women upon their world in order to transform it" (79). Educational methods should prepare students to be liberators and transformers of the world, not containers to receive and store information.

<div align="center">Works Cited</div>

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  30th Anniversary Edition, Continuum, 2009, pp. 71-86.

Essay by an anonymous student author, 2016. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

Teacher Takeaways
 "I love that this student combines multiple forms of information (paraphrases, quotes, and summaries) with their own reactions to the text. By using a combined form of summary, paraphrase, and quote, the student weaves ideas from the text together to give the reader a larger sense of the author's ideas and claims. The student uses citations and signal phrases to remind us of the source. The student also does a good job of keeping paragraphs focused, setting up topic sentences and transitions, and introducing ideas that become important parts of their thesis. On the other hand, the reader could benefit from more explanation of some complex concepts from the text being analyzed, especially if the author assumes that the reader isn't familiar with Freire. For example, the banking method of education is never quite

clearly explained and the reader is left to derive its meaning from the context clues the student provides. A brief summary or paraphrase of this concept towards the beginning of the essay would give us a better understanding of the contexts the student is working in."

– Professor Dannemiller

You Snooze, You Peruse

This article was an interesting read about finding a solution to the problem that 62% of high school students are facing — chronic sleep deprivation (less than 8 hours on school nights). While some schools have implemented later start times, this article argues for a more unique approach. Several high schools in Las Cruces, New Mexico have installed sleeping pods for students to use when needed. They "include a reclined chair with a domed sensory-reduction bubble that closes around one's head and torso" and "feature a one-touch start button that activates a relaxing sequence of music and soothing lights" (Conklin). Students rest for 20 minutes and then go back to class. Some of the teachers were concerned about the amount of valuable class time students would miss while napping, while other teachers argued that if the students are that tired, they won't be able to focus in class anyway. Students who used the napping pods reported they were effective in restoring energy levels and reducing stress. While that is great, there was concern from Melissa Moore, a pediatric sleep specialist, that napping during the day would cause students to sleep less during that "all-important nighttime sleep."

Sleep deprivation is a serious issue in high school students. I know there are a lot of high school students that are very involved in extra-curricular activities like I was. I was on student council and played sports year-round, which meant most nights I got home late, had hours of homework, and almost never got enough sleep. I was exhausted all the time, especially during junior and senior year. I definitely agree that there is no point in students sitting in class if they're so tired they can barely stay awake. However, I don't know if sleeping pods are the best solution. Sure, after a 20-minute nap students feel a little more energetic, but I don't think this is solving the chronic issue of sleep deprivation. A 20-minute nap isn't solving the problem that most students aren't getting 8 hours of sleep, which means they aren't getting enough deep sleep (which usually occurs between hours 6-8). Everyone needs these critical hours of sleep, especially those that are still growing and whose brains are still developing. I think it would be much more effective to implement later start times. High school students aren't going to go to bed earlier, that's just the way it is. But having later start times gives them the opportunity to get up to an extra hour of sleep, which can make a huge difference in the overall well-being of students, as well as their level of concentration and focus in the classroom.

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Essay by Kayti Bell, Portland State University, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

Teacher Takeaways
"I appreciate that this author has a clear understanding of the article which they summarize, and in turn are able to take a clear stance of qualification ('Yes, but...'). However, I would encourage this student to revisit the structure of their summary. They've applied a form that many students fall back on instinctively: the first half is 'What They Say' and the second half is 'What I Say.' Although this can be effective, I would rather that the student make this move on the sentence level so that paragraphs are organized around ideas, not the sources of those ideas."

– Professor Wilhjelm

Analysis and Synthesis

What does it mean to *know* something? How would you explain the process of thinking? In the 1950s, educational theorist Benjamin Bloom, in the book *Taxonomy of Educational Objectives: The Classification of Educational Goals* (D. McKay Co., 1969) proposed that human cognition, thinking and knowing, could be classified by six categories.

Hierarchically arranged in order of complexity, these steps were (from most complex to least complex) :

judgment	most complex
synthesis	
analysis	↕
application	
comprehension	
knowledge	least complex
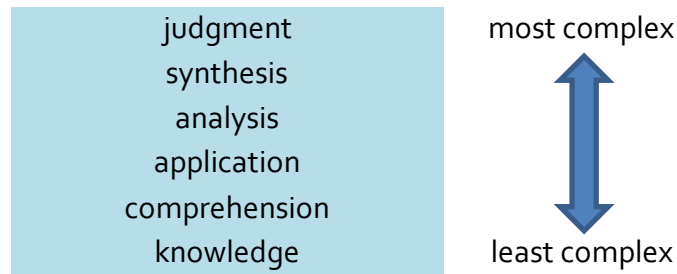
Since his original model, the taxonomy has been revised, as illustrated in the diagram below (again from most to least complex):

Bloom's Original Design		One Revised Version
judgment	most complex	creating
synthesis		evaluating
analysis	↕	analyzing
application		applying
comprehension		understanding
knowledge	least complex	remembering
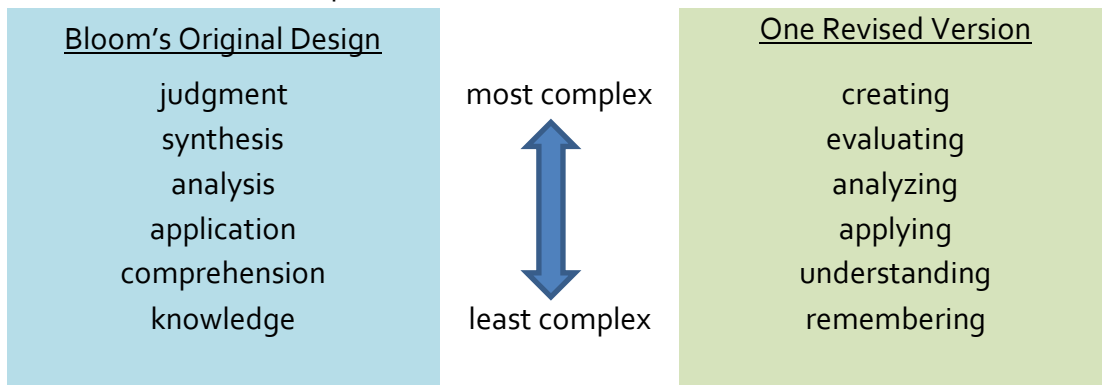
Comparing the original and the revised terms, notice:
- Each word is an action verb instead of a noun (e.g., "applying" instead of "application");
- Some words have been changed for different synonyms;
- One version holds "creating" above "evaluating;"
- And, most importantly, other versions are reshaped into a circle, as pictured below.

BLOOM'S TAXONOMY - LEARNING IN ACTION

Also of note are recent emphases to use Bloom's work as a conceptual model, not a hard-and-fast, infallible rule for cognition. Importantly, we rarely engage only one kind of thinking, and models like this should not be used to make momentous decisions; rather, they should contribute to a broader, nuanced understanding of human cognition and development.

What do you think the significance of these changes is?

I introduce this model of cognition to contextualize analysis as a cognitive tool which can work in tandem with other cognitive tasks and behaviors. Analysis is most commonly used alongside **synthesis.** To proceed with the LEGO® example from the section "Interpretation, Analysis, and Close Reading," consider my taking apart the castle as an act of analysis. I study each face of each block intently, even those parts that I can't see when the castle is fully constructed. In
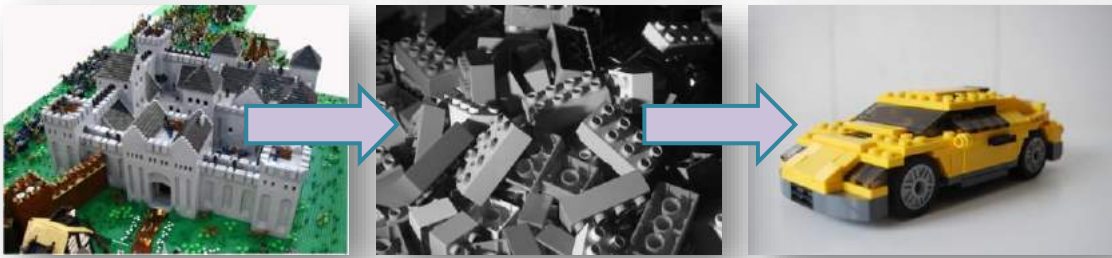
the process of synthesis, I bring together certain blocks from the castle to instead build something else—let's say, a racecar. By unpacking and interpreting each *part*, I'm able to build a new *whole*.

In consideration of revised versions Bloom's Taxonomy and the previous note, it can be mentioned that this process necessarily involves judgment/evaluation; using the process of interpretation, my analysis and synthesis require my intellectual discretion.

In a text wrestling essay, you're engaging in a process very similar to my castle-to-racecar adventure. You'll encounter a text and unpack it attentively, looking closely at each piece of language, its arrangement, its signification, and then use it to build an insightful, critical insight about the original text. I might not use every original block, but by exploring the relationship of part-to-whole, I better understand how the castle *is* a castle. In turn, I am better positioned to act as a sort of tour guide for the castle or
a mechanic for the racecar, able to show my readers what about the castle or racecar is important and to explain how it works.

In this section, you'll learn about crafting a thesis for a text wrestling essay and using **evidence** to support that **thesis**. As you will discover, an analytical essay involves every tier of Bloom's Taxonomy, arguably even including "judgement" because your thesis will present an interpretation that is evidence-based and arguable.

Vocabulary

analysis—the cognitive process and/or rhetorical mode of studying constituent parts to demonstrate an interpretation of a larger whole.

evidence—a part or combination of parts that lends support or proof to an arguable topic, idea, or interpretation.

synthesis—a cognitive and rhetorical process by which an author brings together parts of a larger whole to create a unique new product. Examples of synthesis might include an analytical essay, found poetry, or a mashup/remix.

thesis (statement)—a 1-3 sentence statement outlining the main insight(s), argument(s), or concern(s) of an essay; not necessary in every rhetorical situation; typically found at the beginning of an essay, though sometimes embedded later in the paper. Also referred to as a "So what?" statement.

Analysis Techniques

So What? Turning Observations into a Thesis

It's likely that you've heard the term "thesis statement" multiple times in your writing career. Even though you may have some idea what a thesis entails already, it is worth reviewing and unpacking the expectations surrounding a thesis, specifically in a text wrestling essay.

A **thesis statement** is a central, unifying insight that drives your analysis or argument. In a typical college essay, this insight should be articulated in one to three sentences, placed within the introductory paragraph or section. As we'll see below, this is not *always* the case, but it is what many of your audiences will expect. To put it simply, a thesis is the "So what?" of an analytical or persuasive essay. It answers your audience when they ask, Why does your writing matter? What bigger insights does it yield about the subject of analysis? About our world?

> Thesis statements in most rhetorical situations advocate for a certain vision of a text, phenomenon, reality, or policy. Good thesis statements support such a vision using evidence and thinking that confirms, clarifies, demonstrates, nuances, or otherwise relates to that vision. In other words, a thesis is "a proposition that you *can* prove with evidence…, yet it's one you *have* to prove, that isn't obviously true or merely factual" (Mays 1258).

quote from Mays, Kelly J. "The Literature Essay." *The Norton Introduction to Literature*, Portable 12th edition, Norton, 2017, pp. 1255-1278.

In a text wrestling analysis, a thesis pushes beyond basic summary and observation. In other words, it's the difference between:

Observation	Thesis
What does the text say?	What do I have to say about the text?
I noticed _____	*I noticed _____ and it means _____* *I noticed _____ and it matters because _____.*
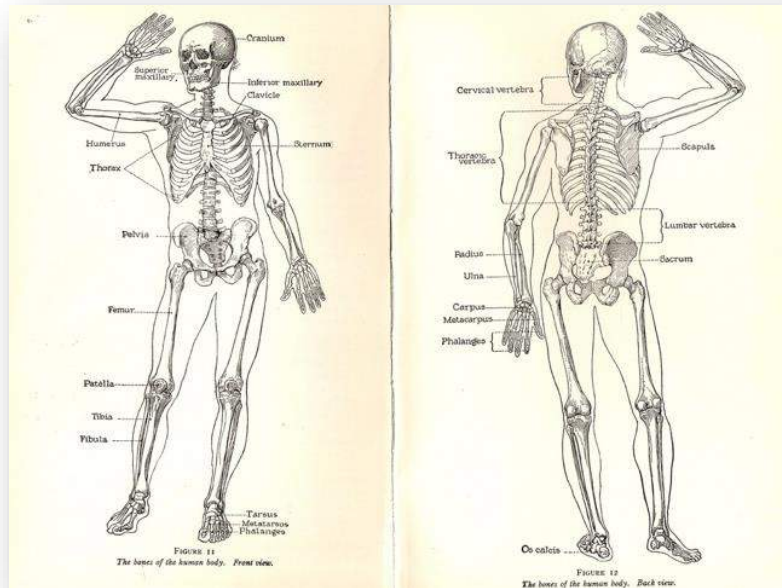
If you think of your essay as the human body, the thesis is the spine. Yes, the body can still exist without a spine, but its functioning will be severely limited. Furthermore, everything comes back to and radiates out from the spine: trace back from your fingertips to your backbone and consider how they relate. In turn, each paragraph should tie back to your thesis, offering support and clear connections so your reader can see the entire "body" of your essay. In this way, a thesis statement serves two purposes: it is not only about the *ideas* of your paper, but also the *structure*.

In addition to capturing the central, unifying insight of your essay, your thesis also acts as a "road map." It anticipates both content and structure.

The Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL) article, "Developing a Thesis," suggests this specific process for developing your thesis statement:

> Once you've read the story or novel closely, look back over your notes for patterns of questions or ideas that interest you. Have most of your questions been about the characters, how they develop or change?
>
> > **For example:**
> > If you are reading Conrad's *The Secret Agent*, do you seem to be most interested in what the author has to say about society? Choose a pattern of ideas and express it in the form of a question and an answer such as the following:
> > **Question:** What does Conrad seem to be suggesting about early twentieth-century London society in his novel *The Secret Agent*?
> > **Answer:** Conrad suggests that all classes of society are corrupt.
> > **Pitfalls:**
> > Choosing too many ideas.
> > Choosing an idea without any support.
>
> Once you have some general points to focus on, write your possible ideas and answer the questions that they suggest.
>
> > **For example:**
> > **Question:** How does Conrad develop the idea that all classes of society are corrupt?
> > **Answer:** He uses images of beasts and cannibalism whether he's describing socialites, policemen or secret agents.
>
> To write your thesis statement, all you have to do is turn the question and answer around. You've already given the answer, now just put it in a sentence (or a couple of sentences) so that the thesis of your paper is clear.
>
> > **For example:**
> > In his novel, *The Secret Agent*, Conrad uses beast and cannibal imagery to describe the characters and their relationships to each other. This pattern of images suggests that Conrad saw corruption in every level of early twentieth-century London society.

Now that you're familiar with the story or novel and have developed a thesis statement, you're ready to choose the evidence you'll use to support your thesis. There are a lot of good ways to do this, but all of them depend on a strong thesis for their direction.

For example:

Here's a student's thesis about Joseph Conrad's *The Secret Agent*.

> *In his novel, The Secret Agent, Conrad uses beast and cannibal imagery to describe the characters and their relationships to each other. This pattern of images suggests that Conrad saw corruption in every level of early twentieth-century London society.*

This thesis focuses on the idea of social corruption and the device of imagery. To support this thesis, you would need to find images of beasts and cannibalism within the text.

There are many ways to write a thesis, and your construction of a thesis statement will become more intuitive and nuanced as you become a more confident and competent writer. However, there are a few tried-and-true strategies that I'll share with you over the next few pages.

The T3 Strategy

T3 is a formula to create a thesis statement. The T (for Thesis) should be the point you're trying to make—the "So what?" In a text wrestling analysis, you are expected to advocate for a certain interpretation of a text: this is your "So what?" Examples might include:

> *In "A Wind from the North," Bill Capossere conveys the loneliness of isolated life.*

> or

> *Kate Chopin's "The Story of an Hour" suggests that marriage can be oppressive to women.*

But wait—there's more! In a text wrestling analysis, your interpretation must be based on evidence from that text. Therefore, your thesis should identify both a focused statement of the interpretation (the whole) and also the particular subjects of your observation (the parts of the text you will focus on support that interpretation). A complete T3 thesis statement for a text wrestling analysis might look more like this:

> *In "A Wind from the North," Bill Capossere conveys the loneliness of an isolated lifestyle using the motif of snow, the repeated phrase "five or six days" (104), and the symbol of his uncle's car.*

> or

> *"The Story of an Hour" suggests that marriage can be oppressive to women. To demonstrate this theme, Kate Chopin integrates irony, foreshadowing, and symbols of freedom in the story.*

Your thesis statement can and should evolve as you continue writing your paper.
Often, I prefer to think of a thesis instead as a (hypo)thesis—an informed estimation of how you *think* your analysis will come together.

Notice the way the T3 allows for the part-to-whole thinking that underlies analysis:

Whole **(T)**	Parts **(3)**
	the motif of snow

Bill Capossere conveys the loneliness of an isolated lifestyle	the repeated phrase "five or six days" (104)
	the symbol of his uncle's car.
"The Story of an Hour" suggests that marriage can be oppressive to women	irony
	foreshadowing
	symbols of freedom

This is also a useful strategy because it can provide structure for your paper: each justifying support for your thesis should be one section of your paper.

I.   Introduction
    a. Thesis: In "A Wind from the North," Bill Capossere conveys the loneliness of an isolated lifestyle using the motif of snow, the repeated phrase "five or six days" (104), and the symbol of his uncle's car.
II.   Section on 'the motif of snow.'
    Topic sentence: The recurring imagery of snow creates a tone of frostiness and demonstrates the passage of time.
III.   Section on 'the repeated phrase "five or six days" (104).
    Topic sentence: When Capossere repeats "five or six days" (104), he reveals the ambiguity of death in a life not lived.
IV.   Section on 'the symbol of his uncle's car.'
    Topic sentence: Finally, Capossere's uncle's car is symbolic of his lifestyle.
V.   Conclusion

Once you've developed a T3 statement, you can revise it to make it feel less formulaic. For example:

In "A Wind from the North," Bill Capossere conveys the loneliness of an isolated lifestyle by symbolizing his uncle with a "untouchable" car. Additionally, he repeats images and phrases in the essay to reinforce his uncle's isolation.

or

"The Story of an Hour," a short story by Kate Chopin, uses a plot twist to imply that marriage can be oppressive to women. The symbols of freedom in the story create a feeling of joy, but the attentive reader will recognize the imminent irony.

You may note that these three thesis strategies can be combined to create nuanced and attention-grabbing thesis statements.

The O/P Strategy

An occasion/position thesis statement is rhetorically convincing because it explains the relevance of your argument and concisely articulates that argument. Although you should already have your position in mind, your rhetorical occasion will lead this statement off: what sociohistorical conditions make your writing timely, relevant, applicable? Continuing with the previous examples:

> *As our society moves from individualism to isolationism, Bill Capossere's "A Wind from the North" is a salient example of a life lived alone.*

> or

> *Although Chopin's story was written over 100 years ago, it still provides insight to gender dynamics in American marriages.*

Following your occasion, state your position—again, this is your "So What?" It is wise to include at least some preview of the parts you will be examining.

> *As our society moves from individualism to isolationism, Bill Capossere's "A Wind from the North" is a salient example of a life lived alone. Using recurring images and phrases, Capossere conveys the loneliness of his uncle leading up to his death.*

> or

> *Although Chopin's story was written over 100 years ago, it still provides insight to gender dynamics in American marriages. "The Story of an Hour" reminds us that marriage has historically meant a surrender of freedom for women.*

Research Question and Embedded Thesis

There's one more common style of thesis construction that's worth noting, and that's the inquiry-based thesis. For this thesis, you'll develop an incisive and focused question which you'll explore throughout the course of the essay. By the end of the essay, you will be able to offer an answer (perhaps a complicated or incomplete answer, but still some kind of answer) to the question. This form is also referred to as the "embedded thesis" or "delayed thesis" organization.

Although this model of thesis *can* be effectively applied in a text wrestling essay, it is often more effective when combined with one of the other methods above.

Consider the following examples:

> *Bill Capossere's essay "A Wind from the North" suggests that isolation results in sorrow and loneliness; is this always the case? How does Capossere create such a vision of his uncle's life?*

> or

> *Many people would believe that Kate Chopin's story reflects an outdated perception of marriage—but can "The Story of an Hour" reveal power imbalances in modern relationships, too?*

Synthesis: Using Evidence to Explore Your Thesis

Now that you've considered what your analytical insight might be (articulated in the form of a thesis), it's time to bring evidence in to support your analysis—this is the **synthesis** part of Bloom's Taxonomy earlier in this chapter. Synthesis refers to the creation of a new whole (an interpretation) using smaller parts (evidence from the text you've analyzed).

There are essentially two ways to go about collecting and culling relevant support from the text with which you're wrestling. In my experience, students are split about evenly on which option is better for them:

>Option #1: **Before writing your thesis**, while you're reading and rereading your text, annotate the page and take notes. Copy down quotes, images, formal features, and themes that are striking, exciting, or relatable. Then, try to group your collection of evidence according to common traits. Once you've done so, choose one or two groups on which to base your thesis.

>or

>Option #2: **After writing your thesis**, revisit the text looking for quotes, images, and themes that support, elaborate, or explain your interpretation. Record these quotes, and then return to the drafting process.

Once you've gathered evidence from your focus text, you should weave quotes, paraphrases, and summaries into your own writing. A common misconception is that you should write "around" your evidence, i.e. choosing the direct quote you want to use and building a paragraph around it. Instead, you should *foreground* your interpretation and analysis, using evidence in the *background* to explore and support that interpretation. Lead with your idea, then demonstrate it with evidence; then, explain how your evidence demonstrates your idea.

The appropriate ratio of evidence (their writing) to exposition (your writing) will vary depending on your rhetorical situation, but I advise my students to spend at least as many words unpacking a quote as that quote contains. (I'm referring here to Step #4 in the table to the right.) For example, if you use a direct quote of 25 words, you ought to spend at least 25 words explaining how that quote supports or nuances your interpretation.

There are infinite ways to bring evidence into your discussion, but for now, let's take a look at a formula that many students find productive as they find their footing in analytical writing.

One particularly useful additional resource is the text "Annoying Ways People Use Sources" by Kyle D. Sted, found in *Writing Spaces*.

Frontload
- 1-2 sentences
- Set your reader up for the quote using a signpost / signal phrase.
- Don't drop quotes in abruptly: by front-loading, you can guide your reader's interpretation.

Quote, paraphrase, or summarize
- Use whichever technique is relevant to your rhetorical purpose at that exact point.

Cite
- Use an in-text citation appropriate to your discipline. It doesn't matter if you quote, paraphrase, or summarize—all three require a citation.

Explain, elaborate, analyze
- 2-3 sentences
- Perhaps most importantly, you need to make the value of this evidence clear to the reader. What does it mean? How does it further your thesis?

What might this look like in practice?

The recurring imagery of snow creates a tone of frostiness and demonstrates the passage of time. Snow brings to mind connotations of wintery cold, quiet, and death as a "sky of utter clarity and simplicity" lingers over his uncle's home and "it [begins] once more to snow" (Capossere 104). Throughout his essay, Capossere returns frequently to weather imagery, but snow especially, to play on associations the reader has. In this line, snow sets the tone by wrapping itself in with "clarity," a state of mind. Even though the narrator still seems ambivalent about his uncle, this clarity suggests that he is reflecting with a new and somber understanding.

Front-load
> *Snow brings to mind connotations of wintery cold, quiet, and death*

Quote
> *as a "sky of utter clarity and simplicity" lingers over his uncle's home and "it [begins] once more to snow"*

Cite
> *" (Capossere 104).*

Explain/elaborate/analyze
> *Throughout his essay, Capossere returns frequently to weather imagery, but snow especially, to play on associations the reader has. In this line, snow sets the tone by wrapping itself in with "clarity," a state of mind. Even though the narrator still seems ambivalent about his uncle, this clarity suggests that he is reflecting with a new and somber understanding.*

This might feel formulaic and forced at first, but following these steps will ensure that you give each piece of evidence thorough attention. Some teachers call this method a "quote sandwich" because you put your evidence between two slices of your own language and interpretation.
For more on front-loading (readerly signposts or signal phrases), see the subsection titled "Readerly Signposts" in the in the Argumentation section of this text.

Activities

Idea Generation: Close Reading Graphic Organizer

The first time you read a text, you most likely will not magically stumble upon a unique, inspiring insight to pursue as a thesis. As discussed earlier in this section, close reading is an iterative process, which means that you must repeatedly encounter a text (reread, re-watch, re-listen, etc.) trying to challenge it, interrogate it, and gradually develop a working thesis.

Very often, the best way to practice analysis is collaboratively, through discussion. Because other people will necessarily provide different perspectives through their unique interpretive positions, reading groups can help you grow your analysis. By discussing a text, you open yourself up to more nuanced and unanticipated interpretations influenced by your peers. Your teacher might ask you to work in small groups to complete the following graphic organizer in response to a certain text. (You can also complete this exercise independently, but it might not yield the same results.)

On the next four pages, print or download the graphic organizer to help your group organize your analysis.

Group Members' Names:

Cite the text in APA or MLA format:

1. Start by "wading" back through the text. Remind yourself of the general idea and annotate important words, phrases, and passages.

2. As a group, discuss and explain: What could the meaning or message of this text be? What ideas does the text communicate? (Keep in mind, there are an infinite number of "right" answers here.)

3. What patterns do you see in the text (e.g., repetition of words, phrases, sentences, or images; ways that the text is structured)? What breaks in the patterns do you see? What is the effect of these patterns and breaks of pattern?

4. What symbols and motifs do you see in the text? What might they represent? What is the effect of these symbols? What themes do they cultivate or gesture to?

5. What references do you see in the text? Does the author allude to, quote, imitate, or parody another text, film, song, etc.? Does the author play on connotations? What is the effect of these references?

6. What about this text surprises you? What do you get hung up on? Consider Jane Gallop's brief list from "The Ethics of Reading: Close Encounters" –
   a. unusual vocabulary, words that surprise either because they are unfamiliar or because they seem to belong to a different context; (2) words that seem unnecessarily repeated, as if the word keeps insisting on being written; (3) images or metaphors, especially ones that are used repeatedly and are somewhat surprising given the context; (4) what is in italics or parentheses; and (5) footnotes that seem too long (Gallop 7).
   b. but also anything else that strikes you as a reader.

7. Analytical lenses: Do you see any of the following threads represented in the work? What evidence of these ideas do you see? How do these parts contribute to a whole?

Race, Ethnicity, and Nationality	Gender and Sexuality
Disability	Social Class and Economy
Ecologies and the Environment	(Post)colonialism

Thesis Builder

Your thesis statement can and should evolve as you continue writing your paper: teachers will often refer to a thesis as a "working thesis" because the revision process should include tweaking, pivoting, focusing, expanding, and/or rewording your thesis. The exercise on the next two pages, though, should help you develop a working thesis to begin your project. Following the examples, identify the components of your analysis that might contribute to a thesis statement.

Your approach to building a thesis will depend on your rhetorical mode; for instance, an analytical thesis (like this one), might not be most appropriate for a persuasive, expository, or research essay.

Topic (Name your focus text and its author)	*Ex.:* "A Wind from the North" by Bill Capossere
Analytical focus (Identify at least one *part* of the *whole* you're studying)	*Ex.: Repeated phrase "five or six days" (104)* *Symbol – uncle's car* *Motif – snow*
Analytical insight (Explain the function of that *part* in relationship to the *whole*)	*Ex.: They imply that living in isolation makes you lonely* **(continued on next page)**

Stakes (So what? Why does it matter?)	*Ex.: Sheds light on the fragility of life and the relationships we build throughout it.*

Consider adding...

A concession statement ("Although," "even though," etc.)

> *Ex.: Although there's nothing wrong with preferring time alone, ...*

A question that you might pursue

> *Ex.: Can Capossere's uncle represent other isolated people?*

THESIS:

Ex.: Although there's nothing wrong with preferring time alone, "A Wind from the North" by Bill Capossere sheds light on the fragility of life and the relationships we build throughout it. The text conveys the loneliness of an isolated lifestyle by symbolizing Capossere's uncle with a "untouchable" car. Additionally, the narrator repeats images and phrases in the essay to reinforce his uncle's isolation.
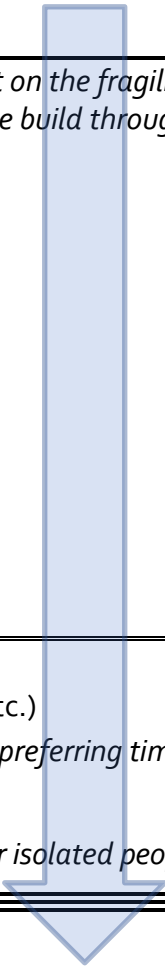
Example Analysis Essays by Student Authors

Songs

(A text wrestling analysis of "Proofs" by Richard Rodriguez)

Songs are culturally important. In the short story "Proofs" by Richard Rodriguez, a young Mexican American man comes to terms with his bi-cultural life. This young man's father came to America from a small and poverty-stricken Mexican village. The young man flashes from his story to his father's story in order to explore his Mexican heritage and American life. Midway through the story Richard Rodriguez utilizes the analogies of songs to represent the cultures and how they differ. Throughout the story there is a clash of cultures. Because culture can be experienced through the arts and teachings of a community, Rodriguez uses the songs of the two cultures to represent the protagonist's bi-cultural experience.

According to Rodriguez, the songs that come from Mexico express an emotional and loving culture and community: "But my mama says there are no songs like the love songs of Mexico" (50). The songs from that culture can be beautiful. It is amazing the love and beauty that come from social capital and community involvement. The language Richard Rodriguez uses to explain these songs is beautiful as well. "—it is the raw edge of sentiment" (51). The author explains how it is the men who keep the songs. No matter how stoic the men are, they have an outlet to express their love and pain as well as every emotion in between. "The cry of a Jackal under the moon, the whistle of a phallus, the maniacal song of the skull" (51). This is an outlet for men to express themselves that is not prevalent in American culture. It expresses a level of love and intimacy between people that is not a part of American culture. The songs from the American culture are different. In America the songs get lost. There is assimilation of cultures. The songs of Mexico are important to the protagonist of the story. There is a clash between the old culture in Mexico and the subject's new American life represented in these songs.

A few paragraphs later in the story, on page 52, the author tells us the difference in the American song. America sings a different tune. America is the land of opportunity. It represents upward mobility and the ability to "make it or break it." But it seems there is a cost for all this material gain and all this opportunity. There seems to be a lack of love and emotion, a lack of the ability to express pain and all other feelings, the type of emotion which is expressed in the songs

of Mexico. The song of America says, "You can be anything you want to be" (52). The song represents the American Dream. The cost seems to be the loss of compassion, love and emotion that is expressed through the songs of Mexico. There is no outlet quite the same for the stoic men of America. Rodriguez explains how the Mexican migrant workers have all that pain and desire, all that emotion penned up inside until it explodes in violent outbursts. "Or they would come into town on Monday nights for the wrestling matches or on Tuesdays for boxing. They worked over in Yolo County. They were men without women. They were Mexicans without Mexico" (49).

Rodriguez uses the language in the story almost like a song in order to portray the culture of the American dream. The phrase "I will send for you or I will come home rich," is repeated twice throughout the story. The gain for all this loss of love and compassion is the dream of financial gain. "You have come into the country on your knees with your head down. You are a man" (48). That is the allure of the American Dream.

The protagonist of the story was born in America. Throughout the story he is looking at this illusion of the American Dream through a different frame. He is also trying to come to terms with his own manhood in relation to his American life and Mexican heritage. The subject has the ability to see the two songs in a different light. "The city will win. The city will give the children all the village could not-VCR's, hairstyles, drumbeat. The city sings mean songs, dirty songs" (52). Part of the subject's reconciliation process with himself is seeing that all the material stuff that is dangled as part of the American Dream is not worth the love and emotion that is held in the old Mexican villages and expressed in their songs.

Rodriguez represents this conflict of culture on page 53. The protagonist of the story is taking pictures during the arrest of illegal border-crossers. "I stare at the faces. They stare at me. To them I am not bearing witness; I am part of the process of being arrested"(53). The subject is torn between the two cultures in a hazy middle ground. He is not one of the migrants and he is not one of the police. He is there taking pictures of the incident with a connection to both of the groups and both of the groups see him connected with the other.

The old Mexican villages are characterized by a lack of: "Mexico is poor" (50). However, this is not the reason for the love and emotion that is held. The thought that people have more love and emotion because they are poor is a misconception. There are both rich people and poor people who have multitudes of love and compassion. The defining elements in creating love and emotion for each other comes from the level of community interaction and trust—the ability to

sing these love songs and express emotion towards one another. People who become caught up in the American Dream tend to be obsessed with their own personal gain. This diminishes the social interaction and trust between fellow humans. There is no outlet in the culture of America quite the same as singing love songs towards each other. It does not matter if they are rich or poor, lack of community, trust, and social interaction; lack of songs can lead to lack of love and emotion that is seen in the old songs of Mexico.

The image of the American Dream is bright and shiny. To a young boy in a poor village the thought of power and wealth can dominate over a life of poverty with love and emotion. However, there is poverty in America today as well as in Mexico. The poverty here looks a little different but many migrants and young men find the American Dream to be an illusion. "Most immigrants to America came from villages.

The America that Mexicans find today, at the decline of the century, is a closed-circuit city of ramps and dark towers, a city without God. The city is evil. Turn. Turn" (50). The song of America sings an inviting tune for young men from poor villages. When they arrive though it is not what they dreamed about. The subject of the story can see this. He is trying to come of age in his own way, acknowledging America and the Mexico of old. He is able to look back and forth in relation to the America his father came to for power and wealth and the America that he grew up in. All the while, he watches this migration of poor villages, filled with love and emotion, to a big heartless city, while referring back to his father's memory of why he came to America and his own memories of growing up in America. "Like wandering Jews. They carried their home with them, back and forth: they had no true home but the tabernacle of memory" (51). The subject of the story is experiencing all of this conflict of culture and trying to compose his own song.

Works Cited

Rodriguez, Richard. "Proofs." *In Short: A Collection of Brief Creative Nonfiction*, edited by
    Judith Kitchen and Mary Paumier Jones, Norton, 1996, pp. 48-54.

Teacher Takeaways

Normal Person: An Analysis of the Standards of Normativity in "A Plague of Tics"

David Sedaris' essay "A Plague of Tics" describes Sedaris' psychological struggles he encountered in his youth, expressed through obsessive-compulsive tics. These abnormal behaviors heavily inhibited his functionings, but more importantly, isolated and embarrassed him during his childhood, adolescence, and young adult years. Authority figures in his life would mock him openly, and he constantly struggled to perform routine simple tasks in a timely manner, solely due to the amount of time that needed to be set aside for carrying out these compulsive tics. He lacked the necessary social support an adolescent requires because of his apparent abnormality. But when we look at the behaviors of his parents, as well as the socially acceptable tics of our society more generally, we see how Sedaris' tics are in fact not too different, if not less harmful than those of the society around him. By exploring Sedaris' isolation, we can discover that socially constructed standards of normativity are at best arbitrary, and at worst violent.

As a young boy, Sedaris is initially completely unaware that his tics are not socially acceptable in the outside world. He is puzzled when his teacher, Miss Chestnut, correctly guesses that he is "going to hit [himself] over the head with [his] shoe" (361), despite the obvious removal of his shoe during their private meeting. Miss Chestnut continues by embarrassingly making fun out of the fact that Sedaris' cannot help but "bathe her light switch with [his] germ-ridden tongue" (361) repeatedly throughout the school day. She targets Sedaris with mocking questions, putting him on the spot in front of his class; this behavior is not ethical due to Sedaris'

age. It violates the trust that students should have in their teachers and other caregivers. Miss Chestnut criticizes him excessively for his ambiguous, child-like answers. For example, she drills him on whether it is "healthy to hit ourselves over the head with our shoes" (361) and he "guess[es] that it was not," (361) as a child might phrase it. She ridicules his use of the term "guess," using obvious examples of instances when guessing would not be appropriate, such as "[running] into traffic with a paper sack over [her] head" (361). Her mockery is not only rude, but ableist and unethical. Any teacher—at least nowadays—should recognize that Sedaris needs compassion and support, not emotional abuse.

These kinds of negative responses to Sedaris' behavior continue upon his return home, in which the role of the insensitive authority figure is taken on by his mother. In a time when maternal support is crucial for a secure and confident upbringing, Sedaris' mother was never understanding of his behavior, and left little room for open, honest discussion regarding ways to cope with his compulsiveness. She reacted harshly to the letter sent home by Miss Chestnut, nailing Sedaris, exclaiming that his "goddamned math teacher" (363) noticed his strange behaviors, as if it should have been obvious to young, egocentric Sedaris. When teachers like Miss Chestnut meet with her to discuss young David's problems, she makes fun of him, imitating his compulsions; Sedaris is struck by "a sharp, stinging sense of recognition" upon viewing this mockery (365). Sedaris' mother, too, is an authority figure who maintains ableist standards of normativity by taunting her own son. Meeting with teachers should be an opportunity to truly help David, not tease him.

On the day that Miss Chestnut makes her appearance in the Sedaris household to discuss his behaviors with his mother, Sedaris watches them from the staircase, helplessly embarrassed. We can infer from this scene that Sedaris has actually become aware of that fact that his tics are not considered to be socially acceptable, and that he must be "the weird kid" among his peers— and even to his parents and teachers. His mother's cavalier derision demonstrates her apparent disinterest in the well-being of he son, as she blatantly brushes off his strange behaviors except in the instance during which she can put them on display for the purpose of entertaining a crowd. What all of these pieces of his mother's flawed personality show us is that she has issues too— drinking and smoking, in addition to her poor mothering—but yet Sedaris is the one being chastised while she lives a normal life. Later in the essay, Sedaris describes how "a blow to the nose can be positively narcotic" (366), drawing a parallel to his mother's drinking and smoking.

From this comparison, we can begin to see flawed standards of "normal behavior": although many people drink and smoke (especially at the time the story takes place), these habits are much more harmful than what Sedaris does in private.

Sedaris' father has an equally harmful personality, but it manifests differently. Sedaris describes him as a hoarder, one who has, "saved it all: every last Green Stamp and coupon, every outgrown bathing suit and scrap of linoleum" (365). Sedaris' father attempts to "cure [Sedaris] with a series of threats" (366). In one scene, he even enacts violence upon David by slamming on the brakes of the car while David has his nose pressed against a windshield. Sedaris reminds us that his behavior might have been unusual, but it wasn't violent: "So what if I wanted to touch my nose to the windshield? Who was I hurting?" (366). In fact, it is in that very scene that Sedaris draws the aforementioned parallel to his mother's drinking: when Sedaris discovers that "a blow to the nose can be positively narcotic," it is while his father is driving around "with a lapful of rejected, out-of-state coupons" (366). Not only is Sedaris' father violating the trust David places in him as a caregiver; his hoarding is an arguably unhealthy habit that simply happens to be more socially acceptable than licking a concrete toadstool. Comparing Sedaris's tics to his father's issues, it is apparent that his father's are much more harmful than his own. None of the adults in Sedaris' life are innocent—"mother smokes and Miss Chestnut massaged her waist twenty, thirty times a day—and here I couldn't press my nose against the windshield of a car" (366)—but nevertheless, Sedaris's problems are ridiculed or ignored by the 'normal' people in his life, again bringing into question what it means to be a normal person.

In high school, Sedaris' begins to take certain measures to actively control and hide his socially unacceptable behaviors. "For a time," he says, "I thought that if I accompanied my habits with an outlandish wardrobe, I might be viewed as eccentric rather than just plain retarded" (369). Upon this notion, Sedaris starts to hang numerous medallions around his neck, reflecting that he "might as well have worn a cowbell" (369) due to the obvious noises they made when he would jerk his head violently, drawing more attention to his behaviors (the opposite of the desired effect). He also wore large glasses, which he now realizes made it easier to observe his habit of rolling his eyes into his head, and "clunky platform shoes [that] left lumps when used to discreetly tap [his] forehead" (369). Clearly Sedaris was trying to appear more normal, in a sense, but was failing terribly. After high school, Sedaris faces the new wrinkle of sharing a college dorm room. He conjures up elaborate excuses to hide specific tics, ensuring his

roommate that "there's a good chance the brain tumor will shrink" (369) if he shakes his head around hard enough and that specialists have ordered him to perform "eye exercises to strengthen what they call he 'corneal fibers'" (369). He eventually comes to a point of such paranoid hypervigilance that he memorizes his roommate's class schedule to find moments to carry out his tics in privacy. Sedaris worries himself sick attempting to approximate 'normal': "I got exactly fourteen minutes of sleep during my entire first year of college" (369). When people are pressured to perform an identity inconsistent with their own—pressured by socially constructed standards of normativity—they harm themselves in the process. Furthermore, even though the responsibility does not necessarily fall on Sedaris' peers to offer support, we can assume that their condemnation of his behavior reinforces the standards that oppress him.

Sedaris' compulsive habits peak and begin their slow decline when he picks up the new habit of smoking cigarettes, which is of course much more socially acceptable while just as compulsive in nature once addiction has the chance to take over. He reflects, from the standpoint of an adult, on the reason for the acquired habit, speculating that "maybe it was coincidental, or perhaps … much more socially acceptable than crying out in tiny voices" (371). He is calmed by smoking, saying that "everything's fine as long I know there's a cigarette in my immediate future" (372). (Remarkably, he also reveals that he has not truly been cured, as he revisits his former tics and will "dare to press [his] nose against the doorknob or roll his eyes to achieve that once-satisfying ache" [372.]) Sedaris has officially achieved the tiresome goal of appearing 'normal', as his compulsive tics seemed to "[fade] out by the time [he] took up with cigarettes" (371). It is important to realize, however, that Sedaris might have found a socially acceptable way to mask his tics, but not a healthy one. The fact that the only activity that could take place of his compulsive tendencies was the dangerous use of a highly addictive substance, one that has proven to be dangerously harmful with frequent and prolonged use, shows that he is conforming to the standards of society which do not correspond with healthy behaviors.

In a society full of dangerous, inconvenient, or downright strange habits that are nevertheless considered socially acceptable, David Sedaris suffered through the psychic and physical violence and negligence of those who should have cared for him. With what we can clearly recognize as a socially constructed disability, Sedaris
was continually denied support and mocked by authority figures. He struggled to socialize and perform academically while still carrying out each task he was innately compelled to do, and

faced consistent social hardship because of his outlandish appearance and behaviors that are viewed in our society as "weird." Because of ableist, socially constructed standards of normativity, Sedaris had to face a long string of turmoil and worry that most of society may never come to completely understand. We can only hope that as a greater society, we continue sharing and studying stories like Sedaris' so that we critique the flawed guidelines we force upon different bodies and minds, and attempt to be more accepting and welcoming of the idiosyncrasies we might deem to be unfavorable.

Works Cited

Sedaris, David. "A Plague of Tics." *50 Essays: A Portable Anthology*, 4th edition, edited by
        Samuel Cohen, Bedford, 2013, pp. 359-372.

Teacher Takeaways

 "I like how this student follows their thesis through the text, highlighting specific instances from Sedaris's essay that support their analysis. Each instance of this evidence is synthesized with the student's observations and connected back to their thesis statement, allowing for the essay to capitalize on the case being built in their conclusion. At the ends of some earlier paragraphs, some of this 'spine-building' is interrupted with suggestions of how characters in the essay should behave, which doesn't always clearly link to the thesis's goals. Similarly, some information isn't given a context to help us understand its relevance, such as what violating the student-teacher trust has to do with normativity being a social construct, or how Sedaris's description of 'a blow to the nose' being a narcotic creates a parallel to his mother's drinking and smoking. Without further analysis and synthesis of this information the reader is left to guess how these ideas connect."

– Professor Dannemiller

Analyzing "Richard Cory"

In the poem "Richard Cory" by Edward Arlington Robinson, a narrative is told about the character Richard Cory by those who admired him. In the last stanza, the narrator, who uses the pronoun "we," tells us that Richard Cory commits suicide. Throughout most of the poem, though, Cory had been described as a wealthy gentleman. The "people on the pavement" (2), the speakers of the poem, admired him because he presented himself well, was educated, and was wealthy. The poem presents the idea that, even though Cory seemed to have everything going for him, being wealthy does not guarantee happiness or health.

Throughout the first three stanzas Cory is described in a positive light, which makes it seem like he has everything that he could ever need. Specifically, the speaker compares Cory directly and indirectly to royalty because of his wealth and his physical appearance: "He was a gentleman from sole to crown, / Clean favored and imperially slim" (Robinson 3-4). In line 3, the speaker is punning on "soul" and "crown." At the same time, Cory is both a gentleman from foot (sole) to head (crown) and also soul to crown. The use of the word "crown" instead of head is a clever way to show that Richard was thought of as a king to the community. The phrase "imperially slim" can also be associated with royalty because imperial comes from "empire." The descriptions used gave clear insight that he was admired for his appearance and manners, like a king or emperor.

In other parts of the poem, we see that Cory is 'above' the speakers. The first lines, "When Richard Cory went down town, / We people on the pavement looked at him" (1-2), show that Cory is not from the same place as the speakers. The words "down" and "pavement" also suggest a difference in status between Cory and the people. The phrase "We people on the pavement" used in the first stanza (Robinson 2), tells us that the narrator and those that they are including in their "we" may be homeless and sleeping on the pavement; at the least, this phrase shows that "we" are below Cory.

In addition to being 'above,' Cory is also isolated from the speakers. In the second stanza, we can see that there was little interaction between Cory and the people on the pavement: "And he was always human when he talked; / But still fluttered pulses when he said, / 'Good-morning'" (Robinson 6-8). Because people are "still fluttered" by so little, we can speculate that it was special for them to talk to Cory. But these interactions gave those on the pavement no insight into Richard's real feelings or personality. Directly after the descriptions of the impersonal interactions, the narrator mentions that "he was rich—yes, richer than a king" (Robinson 9). At the same time that Cory is again compared to royalty, this line reveals that people were focused on his wealth and outward appearance, not his personal life or wellbeing.

The use of the first-person plural narration to describe Cory gives the reader the impression that everyone in Cory's presence longed to have the life that he did. Using "we," the narrator speaks for many people at once. From the end of the third stanza to the end of the poem, the writing turns from admirable description of Richard to a noticeably more melancholy, dreary

description of what those who admired Richard had to do because they did not have all that Richard did. These people had nothing, but they

> thought that he was everything
>
> To make us wish that we were in his place.
>
> So on we worked, and waited for the light,
>
> And went without the meat, and cursed the bread…. (Robinson 9-12)

They sacrificed their personal lives and food to try to rise up to Cory's level. They longed to not be required to struggle. A heavy focus on money and materialistic things blocked their ability to see what Richard Cory was actually feeling or going through. I suggest that "we" also includes the reader of the poem. If we read the poem this way, "Richard Cory" critiques the way we glorify wealthy people's lives to the point that we hurt ourselves. Our society values financial success over mental health and believes in a false narrative about social mobility.

Though the piece was written more than a century ago, the perceived message has not been lost. Money and materialistic things do not create happiness, only admiration and alienation from those around you. Therefore, we should not sacrifice our own happiness and leisure for a lifestyle that might not make us happy. The poem's message speaks to our modern society, too, because it shows a stigma surrounding mental health: if people have "everything / To make us wish that we were in [their] place" (11-12), we often assume that they don't deal with the same mental health struggles as everyone. "Richard Cory" reminds us that we should take care of each other, not assume that people are okay because they put up a good front.

Works Cited

Robinson, Edward Arlington. "Richard Cory." *The Norton Introduction to Literature*, Shorter 12th edition, edited by Kelly J. Mays, Norton, 2017, p. 482.

Teacher Takeaways

"*I enjoy how this author uses evidence: they use a signal phrase (front-load) before each direct quote and take plenty of time to unpack the quote afterward. This author also has a clear and direct thesis statement which anticipates the content of their analysis. I would advise them, though, to revise that thesis by 'previewing' the elements of the text they plan to analyze. This could help them clarify their organization, since a thesis should be a road-map.*"

– *Professor Wilhjelm*

Assignment: Text Wrestling Analysis

To practice critical, analytical thinking through the medium of writing, you will perform a text wrestling analysis and synthesize your findings in an essay driven by a central, unifying insight presented as a thesis and supported by evidence.

Guidelines

First, you will determine which text it is that you'd like to analyze. Your teacher might provide a specific text or set of texts to choose from, or they may allow you to choose your own.

1) **If your teacher assigns a specific text**, follow the steps in the next section.
2) **If your teacher assigns a set of texts to choose from**, read each of them once. Then, narrow it down by asking yourself,
   a. Which texts were most striking or curious? Which raised the most questions for you as a reader?
   b. How do the texts differ from one another in content, form, voice, and genre?
   c. Which seem like the "best written"? Why?
   d. Which can you relate to personally?

   Try to narrow down to two or three texts that you particularly appreciate. Then try to determine which of these will help you write the best close reading essay possible. Follow the steps from #1 once you've determined your focus text.
3) **If your teacher allows you to choose any text you want**, they probably did so because they want you to choose a text that means a lot to you personally.
   a. Consider first what medium (e.g., prose, film, music, etc.) or genre (e.g., essay, documentary, Screamo) would be most appropriate and exciting, keeping in mind any restrictions your teacher might have set.
   b. Then, brainstorm what topics seem relevant and interesting to you.
   c. Finally, try to encounter at least three or four different texts so you can test the waters.

Now that you've chosen a focus text, you should read it several times using the active reading strategies contained in this section and the appendix. Consider what *parts* are contributing to the *whole* text, and develop an analytical perspective about that relationship. Try to articulate this analytical perspective as a working thesis—a statement of your interpretation which you will likely revise in some way or another. (You might also consider whether a specific critical lens seems relevant or interesting to your analysis.)

Next, you will write a 250-word proposal indicating which text you've chosen, what your working thesis is, and why you chose that text and analytical perspective. (This will help keep your teacher in the loop on your process and encourage you to think through your approach before writing.)

Finally, draft a text wrestling essay that analytically explores some part of your text using the strategies detailed in this section. Your essay will advance an interpretation that will
   a) help your audience understand the text differently (beyond basic plot/comprehension); and/or
   b) help your audience understand our world differently, using the text as a tool to illuminate the human experience.

Keep in mind, you will have to re-read your text several times to analyze it well and compile evidence. Consider forming a close reading discussion group to unpack your text collaboratively before you begin writing independently.

Your essay should be thesis-driven and will include quotes, paraphrases, and summary from the original text as evidence to support your points. Be sure to revise at least once before submitting your final draft.

Although you may realize as you evaluate your rhetorical situation, this kind of essay often values Standardized Edited American English, a dialect of the English language. Among other things, this entails a polished, "academic" tone. Although you need not use a thesaurus to find all the fanciest words, your voice should be less colloquial than in a descriptive personal narrative.

Before you begin, consider your rhetorical situation:

Subject:	Occasion:

How will this influence the way you write?	How will this influence the way you write?
Audience: How will this influence the way you write?	**Purpose:** How will this influence the way you write?

Assignment: Text-Wrestling Analysis

Each student will write an essay which **analyzes** a text and presents a unique, central, unifying insight as a **thesis**. The essay will incorporate ideas and techniques explored in Section 2, including the use of **evidence** as to support, elaborate, or nuance the student's thesis. The essay will demonstrate thoughtful pre-writing, drafting, and revision based on feedback from the instructor, classmates, and/or the Writing Center.

Criteria	Instructor Comments	Score
Ideas, Focus, and Content *Has the author organized their analysis around a central, unifying insight? Is the scope of this thesis appropriate to the rhetorical situation?*		/___
Structure *Does the analysis unfold logically and fluidly? Does each paragraph relate back to the analytical thesis clearly?*		/___
Style and Language *Does the author use an academic voice appropriate to the rhetorical situation? Does the author effectively integrate evidence by front-loading, punctuating, and explaining?*		/___
Depth, Support, and Analysis *Has the author provided a convincing amount of evidence to support their analytical insight? Does the author foreground their analytical perspective, using the text in the background to support, elaborate, or nuance their thesis?*		/___
Mechanics *Does the essay read smoothly with minimal spelling/grammar/mechanical issues? Does it use proper format?*		/___
		/_____ pts. possible

Guidelines for Peer Workshop

Before beginning the Peer Workshop and revision process, I recommend consulting the Revision Concepts and Strategies section. In your peer workshop group (or based on your teacher's directions), establish a process for workshopping that will work for you. You may find the flowchart titled "Establishing Your Peer Workshop" useful.

Establishing Your Peer Workshop

To set the tone and expectations for your unique workshop group, talk through the following prompts. Record your answers on the companion sheet. Part One asks you to establish a climate or culture for your group; Part Two will help you talk through logistics.

(1) Culture of your Workshop

(a.) Choose the 3-5 descriptors of good feedback that are most important to the members of your group.

(b.) Discuss for 3-5 minutes: What do each of you need for this Peer Workshop to be effective?

FROM EACH OTHER?   FROM THE INSTRUCTOR?   FROM YOURSELVES?   FROM YOUR ENVIRONMENT?

Record responses on a separate sheet of paper.

(2) Procedures for your Workshop

One Example of a Peer Workshop Process

Establishing Peer Workshop Process:
Do you prefer written notes, or open discussion? Would you like to read all the drafts first, then discuss, or go one at a time? Should the author respond to feedback or just listen? What anxieties do you each have about sharing your writing? How will you provide feedback that is both critical and kind? How will you demonstrate respect for your peers?

Before the workshop, each author should spend several minutes generating requests for support (#1 below). Identify specific elements you need help on. Here are a few examples:

> *I need help honing my thesis statement.*
> *Do you think my analysis flows logically?*
> *I'm not very experienced with in-text citations; can you make sure they're accurate?*
> *Do you think my evidence is convincing enough?*

During the workshop, follow this sequence:

1. Student A introduces their draft, distributes copies, and makes requests for feedback. *What do you want help with, specifically?*

Student A reads their draft aloud while students B and C annotate/take notes.
What do you notice as the draft is read aloud?
Whole group discusses the draft; student A takes notes. Use these prompts as a reference to generate and frame your feedback. Try to identify specific places in your classmates' essays where the writer is successful and where the writer needs support.

Consider <u>constructive</u>, <u>specific</u>, and <u>actionable</u> feedback.
What is the author doing well? What could they do better?
- What requests does the author have for support? What feedback do you have on this issue, specifically?
- Identify one "golden line" from the essay under consideration—a phrase, sentence, or paragraph that resonates with you. What about this line is so striking?
- Consult either the rubric included above or an alternate rubric, if your instructor has provided one. Is the author on track to meet the expectations of the assignment? What does the author do well in each of the categories? What could they do better?
  - Ideas, Content, and Focus
  - Structure
  - Style and Language
  - Depth, Support, and Reflection
  - Mechanics
- What resonances do you see between this draft and others from your group? Between this draft and the exemplars you've read?

Repeat with students B and C.

After the workshop, try implementing some of the feedback your group provided while they're still nearby! For example, if Student B said your introduction needed more imagery, draft some new language and see if Student B likes the direction you're moving in. As you are comfortable, exchange contact information with your group so you can to continue the discussion outside of class.

Sample Analysis Essays by Student Authors

To Suffer or Surrender? An Analysis of Dylan Thomas's "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night"

Death is a part of life that everyone must face at one point or another. The poem "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night" depicts the grief and panic one feels when a loved is approaching the end of their life, while presenting a question; is it right to surrender to death, or should it be resisted? In this poem Dylan Thomas opposes the idea of a peaceful passing, and uses various literary devices such as repetition, metaphor, and imagery to argue that death should be resisted at all costs.

The first thing that one may notice while reading Thomas's piece is that there are key phrases repeated throughout the poem. As a result of the poem's villanelle structure, both lines "Do not go gentle into that good night" and "Rage, rage against the dying of the light" (Thomas) are repeated often. This repetition gives the reader a sense of panic and desperation as the speaker pleads with their father to stay. The first line showcases a bit of alliteration of n sounds at the beginning of "not" and "night," as well as alliteration of hard g sounds in the words "go" and "good." These lines are vital to the poem as they reiterate its central meaning, making it far from subtle and extremely hard to miss. These lines add even more significance due to their placement in the poem. "Dying of the light" and "good night" are direct metaphors for death, and with the exception of the first line of the poem, they only appear at the end of a stanza. This structural choice is a result of the villanelle form, but we can interpret it to highlight the predictability of life itself, and signifies the undeniable and unavoidable fact that everyone must face death at the end of one's life. The line "my father, there on the sad height" (Thomas 16) confirms that this poem is directed to the speaker's father, the idea presented in these lines is what Thomas wants his father to recognize above all else.

This poem also has many contradictions. In the fifth stanza, Thomas describes men near death "who see with blinding sight" (Thomas 13). "Blinding sight" is an oxymoron, which implies that although with age most men lose their sight, they are wiser and enlightened, and have a greater understanding of the world. In this poem "night" is synonymous with "death"; thus, the phrase "good night" can also be considered an oxymoron if one does not consider death good. Presumably the speaker does not, given their desperation for their father to avoid it. The

use of the word "good" initially seems odd, however, although it may seem like the speaker rejects the idea of death itself, this is not entirely the case. Thomas presents yet another oxymoron by saying "Curse, bless, me now with your fierce tears" (Thomas 17). By referring to passionate tears as a blessing and a curse, which insinuates that the speaker does not necessarily believe death itself is inherently wrong, but to remain complicit in the face of death would be. These tears would be a curse because it is difficult to watch a loved one cry, but a blessing because the tears are a sign that the father is unwilling to surrender to death. This line is especially significant as it distinguishes the author's beliefs about death versus dying, which are vastly different. "Good night" is an acknowledgement of the bittersweet relief of the struggles and hardships of life that come with death, while "fierce tears" and the repeated line "Rage, rage against the dying of the light" show that the speaker sees the act of dying as a much more passionate, sad, and angering experience. The presence of these oxymorons creates a sense of conflict in the reader, a feeling that is often felt by those who are struggling to say goodbye to a loved one.

At the beginning of the middle four stanzas they each begin with a description of a man, "Wise men… Good men…Wild men… Grave men…" (Thomas 4; 7; 10; 13). Each of these men have one characteristic that is shared, which is that they all fought against death for as long as they could. These examples are perhaps used in an attempt to inspire the father. Although the speaker begs their father to "rage" against death, this is not to say that they believe death is avoidable. Thomas reveals this in the 2nd stanza that "wise men at their end know dark is right" (Thomas 4), meaning that wise men know that death is inevitable, which in return means that the speaker is conscious of this fact as well. It also refers to the dark as "right", which may seem contradicting to the notion presented that death should not be surrendered to; however, this is yet another example of the contrast between the author's beliefs about death itself, and the act of dying. The last perspective that Thomas shows is "Grave men". Of course, the wordplay of "grave" alludes to death. Moreover, similarly to the second stanza that referred to "wise men", this characterization of "grave men" alludes to the speaker's knowledge of impending doom, despite the constant pleads for their father to resist it.

Another common theme that occurs in the stanzas about these men is regret. A large reason the speaker is so insistent that his father does not surrender to the "dying of the light" is because the speaker does not want their father to die with regrets, and believes that any

honorable man should do everything they can in their power to make a positive impact in the world. Thomas makes it clear that it is cowardly to surrender when one can still do good, no matter how small or seemingly insignificant.

All of these examples of men are positively associated with the "rage" that Thomas so often refers to, further supporting the idea that rage, passion, and madness are qualities of honorable men. Throughout stanza 2, 3, 4 and 5, the author paints pictures of these men dancing, singing in the sun, and blazing like meteors. Despite the dark and dismal tone of the piece, the imagery used depicts life as joyous and lively. However, a juxtaposition still exists between men who are truly living, and men who are simply avoiding death. Words like burn, rave, sad, and rage are used when referencing those who are facing death, while words such as blaze, gay, bright, and night are used when referencing the prime of one's life. None of these words are give the feeling of peace; however those alluding to life are far more cheerful. Although the author rarely uses the words "life" and "death", the text symbolizes them through light and night. The contrast between the authors interpretation of life versus death is drastically different. Thomas wants the reader to see that no matter how old they become, there is always something to strive for and fight for, and to accept death would be to deprive the world of what you have to offer.

In this poem Dylan Thomas juggles the complicated concept of mortality. Thomas perfectly portrays the fight against time as we age, as well as the fear and desperation that many often feel when facing the loss of a loved one. Although the fight against death cannot be won, in "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night" Dylan Thomas emphasizes how despite this indisputable fact, one should still fight against death with all their might. Through the use of literary devices such as oxymorons and repetition, Thomas inspires readers to persevere, even in the most dire circumstances.

Works Cited

Thomas, Dylan. "Do Not Go Gentle into That Good Night." *The Norton Introduction to Literature*, edited by Kelly J. Mays, portable 12th ed., W. W. Norton & Company, 2015, pp. 659.

Teacher Takeaways

"One of my favorite things about this essay is that the student doesn't only consider <u>what</u> the poem means, but <u>how</u> it means: they explore the way that the language both carries and creates the message. I notice this especially when the student is talking about the villanelle form, alliteration, and oxymorons. That said, I think that the student's analysis would be more coherent if they foregrounded the main insight—that death and dying are different—in their thesis, then tracked that insight throughout the analysis. In other words, the essay has chosen evidence (parts) well but does not synthesize that evidence into a clear interpretation (whole)."

– Professor Dawson

<div align="center">Christ Like</div>

In Raymond Carver's "Cathedral", the character Robert plays a Christ-like role. To mirror that, the narrator plays the role of Saul, a man who despised and attacked Christ and his followers until he became converted. Throughout the story there are multiple instances where Robert does things similar to miracles performed in biblical stories, and the narrator continues to doubt and judge him. Despite Robert making efforts to converse with the narrator, he refuses to look past the oddity of his blindness. The author also pays close attention to eyes and blindness. To quote the Bible, "Having eyes, see ye not?" (*King James Bible*, Mark, 8.18). The characters who have sight don't see as much as Robert, and he is able to open their eyes and hearts.

When Robert is first brought up, it is as a story. The narrator has heard of him and how wonderful he is, but has strong doubts about the legitimacy of it all. He shares a specific instance in which Robert asked to touch his wife's face. He says, "She told me he touched his fingers to every part of her face, her nose—even her neck!", and goes on to talk about how she tried to write a poem about it (Carver 34). The experience mentioned resembled the story of Jesus healing a blind man by putting his hands on his eyes and how, afterward, the man was restored (Mark 8.21-26). While sharing the story, however, the only thing the narrator cares about is that the blind man touched his wife's neck. At this point in the story the narrator still only cares about what's right in front of him, so hearing retellings means nothing to him.

When Saul is introduced in the Bible, it is as a man who spent his time persecuting the followers of Christ and "made havoc of the church" (Acts 8.3-5). From the very beginning of the story, the narrator makes it known that, "A blind man in my house was not something that I looked forward to" (Carver 34). He can't stand the idea of something he'd only seen in movies

and heard tell of becoming something real. Even when talking about his own wife, he disregards the poem she wrote for him. When he hears the name of Robert's deceased wife, his first response is to point out how strange it sounds (Carver 36). He despises Robert, so he takes out his aggression on the people who don't, and drives them away.

The narrator's wife drives to the train station to pick up Robert while he stays home and waits, blaming Robert for his boredom. When they finally do arrive, the first thing he notices about Robert is his beard. It might be a stretch to call this a biblical parallel since a lot of people have beards, but Carver makes a big deal out of this detail. The next thing the narrator points out, though, is that his wife "had this blind man by his coat sleeve" (Carver 37). This draws the parallel to another biblical story. In this story a woman who has been suffering from a disease sees Jesus and says to herself, "If I may but touch his garment I shall be whole" (Matt. 9.21). Before they had gotten in the house the narrator's wife had Robert by the arm, but even after they were at the front porch, she still wanted to hold onto his sleeve.

The narrator continues to make observations about Robert when he first sees him. One that stood out was when he was talking more about Robert's physicality, saying he had "stooped shoulders, as if he carried a great weight there" (Carver 38). There are many instances in the Bible where Jesus is depicted carrying some type of heavy burden, like a lost sheep, the sins of the world, and even his own cross. He also points out on multiple occasions that Robert has a big and booming voice, which resembles a lot of depictions of a voice "from on high."

After they sit and talk for a while, they have dinner. This dinner resembles the last supper, especially when the narrator says, "We ate like there was no tomorrow" (Carver 39). He also describes how Robert eats and says "he'd tear of a hunk of buttered bread and eat that. He'd follow this up with a big drink of milk" (Carver 39). Those aren't the only things he ate, but the order in which he ate the bread and took a drink is the same order as the sacrament, a ritual created at the last supper. The author writing it in that order, despite it being irrelevant to the story, is another parallel that seems oddly specific in an otherwise normal sequence of events. What happens after the dinner follows the progression of the Bible as well.

After they've eaten a meal like it was their last the narrator's wife falls asleep like Jesus' apostles outside the garden of Gethsemane. In the Bible, the garden of Gethsemane is where Jesus goes after creating the sacrament and takes on the sins of all the world. He tells his apostles to keep watch outside the garden, but they fall asleep and leave him to be captured by the non-

believers (Matt. 26.36-40). In "Cathedral," Robert is left high and alone with the narrator when the woman who holds him in such high regard falls asleep. Instead of being taken prisoner, however, Robert turns the tables and puts all focus on the narrator. His talking to the narrator is like a metaphorical taking on of his sins. On page 46 the narrator tries to explain to him what a cathedral looks like. It turns out to be of no use, since the narrator has never talked to a blind person before, much like a person trying to pray who never has before. Robert decides he needs to place his hands on the narrator like he did to his wife on the first page.

When Saul becomes converted, it is when Jesus speaks to him as a voice "from on high." As soon as the narrator begins drawing with Robert (a man who is high), his eyes open up. When Jesus speaks to Saul, he can no longer see. During the drawing of the cathedral, Robert asks the narrator to close his eyes. Even when Robert tells him he can open his eyes, the narrator decides to keep them closed. He went from thinking Robert coming over was a stupid idea to being a full believer in him. He says, "I put in windows with arches. I drew flying buttresses. I hung great doors. I couldn't stop" (Carver 45). Even with all the harsh things the narrator said about Robert, being touched by him made his heart open up. Carver ends the story after the cathedral has been drawn and has the narrator say, "It's really something" (Carver 46).

Robert acts as a miracle worker, not only to the narrator's wife, but to him as well. Despite the difficult personality, the narrator can't help but be converted. He says how resistant he is to have him over, and tries to avoid any conversation with him. He pokes fun at little details about him, disregards peoples' love for him, but still can't help being converted by him. Robert's booming voice carries power over the narrator, but his soft touch is what finally makes him see.

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Teacher Takeaways

The Space Between the Racial Binary

Toni Morrison in "Recitatif" confronts race as a social construction, where race is not biological but created from human interactions. Morrison does not disclose the race of the two main characters, Twyla and Roberta, although she does provide that one character is black and the other character is white. Morrison emphasizes intersectionality by confounding stereotypes about race through narration, setting, and allusion. We have been trained to 'read' race through a variety of signifers, but "Recitatif" puts those signifers at odds.

Twyla is the narrator throughout "Recitatif" where she describes the events from her own point of view. Since the story is from Twyla's perspective, it allows the readers to characterize her and Roberta solely based on what she mentions. At the beginning of the story Twyla states that "[her] mother danced all night", which is the main reason why Twyla is "taken to St. Bonny's" (Morrison 139). Twyla soon finds that she will be "stuck… with a girl from a whole other race" who "never washed [her] hair and [she] smelled funny" (Morrison 139). From Twyla's description of Roberta's hair and scent, one could assume that Roberta is black due to the stereotype that revolves around a black individual's hair. Later on in the story Twyla runs into Roberta at her work and describes Roberta's hair as "so big and wild" that "[she] could hardly see her face", which is another indicator that Roberta has Afro-textured hair (Morrison 144). Yet, when Twyla encounters Roberta at a grocery store "her huge hair was sleek" and "smooth" resembling a white woman's hair style (Morrison 146). Roberta's hairstyles are stereotypes that conflict with one another; one attributing to a black woman, the other to a white woman. The differences in hair texture, and style, are a result of phenotypes, not race. Phenotypes are observable traits that "result from interactions between your genes and the

environment" ("What are Phenotypes?"). There is not a specific gene in the human genome that can be used to determine a person's race. Therefore, the racial categories in society are not constructed on the genetic level, but the social. Dr. J Craig Venter states, "We all evolved in the last 100,000 years from the same small number of tribes that migrated out of Africa and colonized the world", so it does not make sense to claim that race has evolved a specific gene and certain people inherit those specific genes (Angier). From Twyla's narration of Roberta, Roberta can be classified into one of two racial groups based on the stereotypes ascribed to her.

Intersectionality states that people are at a disadvantage by multiple sources of oppressions, such their race and class. "Recitatif" seems to be written during the Civil Rights Era where protests against racial integration took place. This is made evident when Twyla says, "strife came to us that fall…Strife. Racial strife" (Morrison 150). According to NPR, the Supreme Court ordered school busing in 1969 and went into effect in 1973 to allow for desegregation ("Legacy"). Twyla "thought it was a good thing until she heard it was a bad thing", while Roberta picketed outside "the school they were trying to integrate" (Morrison 150). Twyla and Roberta both become irritated with one another's reaction to the school busing order, but what woman is on which side? Roberta seems to be a white woman against integrating black students into her children's school, and Twyla suggests that she is a black mother who simply wants best for her son Joseph even if that does mean going to a school that is "far-out-of-the-way" (Morrison 150). At this point in the story Roberta lives in "Annandale" which is "a neighborhood full of doctors and IBM executives" (Morrison 147), and at the same time, Twyla is "Mrs. Benson" living in "Newburgh" where " half the population… is on welfare…" (Morrison 145). Twyla implies that Newburgh is being gentrified by these "smart IBM people", which inevitably results in an increase in rent and property values, as well as changes the area's culture. In America, minorities are usually the individuals who are displaced and taken over by wealthier, middle-class white individuals. From Twyla's tone, and the setting, it seems that Twyla is a black individual that is angry towards "the rich IBM crowd" (Morrison 146). When Twyla and Roberta are bickering over school busing, Roberta claims that America "is a free country" and she is not "doing anything" to Twyla (Morrison 150). From Roberta's statements, it suggests that she is a affluent, and ignorant white person that is oblivious to the hardships that African Americans had to overcome, and still face today. Rhonda Soto contends that "Discussing race without including class analysis is like watching a bird fly without looking at the sky…". It

is ingrained in America as the normative that whites are mostly part of the middle-class and upper-class, while blacks are part of the working-class. Black individuals are being classified as low-income based entirely on their skin color. It is pronounced that Twyla is being discriminated against because she is a black woman, living in a low-income neighborhood where she lacks basic resources. For example, when Twyla and Roberta become hostile with one another over school busing, the supposedly white mothers start moving towards Twyla's car to harass her. She points out that "[my] face[ ] looked mean to them" and that these mothers "could not wait to throw themselves in front of a police car" (Morrison 151). Twyla is indicating that these mothers are privileged based on their skin color, while she had to wait until her car started to rock back and forth to a point where "the four policeman who had been drinking Tab in their car finally got the message and [then] strolled over" (Morrison 151). This shows that Roberta and the mothers protesting are white, while Twyla is a black woman fighting for her resources. Not only is Twyla being targeted due to her race, but as well her class by protesting mothers who have classified her based on intersectionality.

Intersectionality is also alluded in "Recitatif" based on Roberta's interests. Twyla confronts Roberta at the "Howard Johnson's" while working as a waitress with her "blue and white triangle on [her] head" and "[her] hair shapeless in a net" (Morrison 145). Roberta boasts that her friend has "an appointment with Hendrix" and shames Twyla for not knowing Jimi Hendrix (Morrison 145). Roberta begins to explain that "he's only the biggest" 338ockstar, guitarist, or whatever Roberta was going to say. It is clear that Roberta is infatuated with Jimi Hendrix, who was an African American rock guitarist. Because Jimi Hendrix is a black musician, the reader could assume that Roberta is also black. At the same time, Roberta may be white since Jimi Hendrix appealed to a plethora of people. In addition, Twyla illustrates when she saw Roberta "sitting in [the] booth" she was "with two guys smothered in head and facial" (Morrison 144). These men may be two white counter culturists, and possible polygamists, in a relationship with Roberta who is also a white. From Roberta's enthusiasm in Jimi Hendrix it alludes that she may be black or white, and categorized from this interest.

Intersectionality states that people are prone to "predict an individual's identity, beliefs, or values based on categories like race" (Williams). Morrison chose not to disclose the race of Twyla and Roberta to allow the reader to make conclusions about the two women based on the vague stereotypes Morrison presented throughout "Recitatif". Narration, setting, and allusion

helped make intersectionality apparent, which in turn allowed the readers understand, or see, that race is in fact a social construction. "Recitatif" forces the readers to come to terms with their own racial prejudices.

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Assignment: Summary, Analysis & Response Essay

From Summary, Analysis, Response: A Functional Approach to Reading, Understanding, and Responding to Nonfiction in *OER Commons* by Chauna Ramsey, 28 Jan 2016

The goal of a summary, analysis and response (SAR) essay is to provide a reaction to a nonfiction article.

Assignment Guidelines

SARs should be:

- exactly three paragraphs long and no longer than two typed, double-spaced pages.
- free of errors in grammar and punctuation
- written in present tense and in an academic tone (often more formal than the tone of the nonfiction work you are writing about)
- formatted using MLA or APA citation method. Check with your instructor.

Organization of SAR

Paragraph 1 (of 3): Summarize
Summarize the ideas, mainly with your own words, including BRIEF (2-5 word) cited, direct quotations when necessary. Include the author's first and last name—correctly spelled—as well as the book title in italics. This should be the shortest of the three paragraphs.

Paragraph 2 (of 3): Analyze
Please carefully craft a focused paragraph that explores why the article was written and what larger lesson(s) it explores. Please use one direct quotation to support your analysis.

Paragraph 3 (of 3): Respond/React
Give a personal response to the reading. What ideas do you find interesting? Why? (Even if you don't like the article, you should still be able to find something *interesting* about it.) Do you agree with the author's "message"? Is the author's purpose achieved? This is the only paragraph where you should use the first-person "I."

Development of each Paragraph

Paragraph 1 (of 3): Summarize

Summarize the ideas, mainly with your own words, including brief (2-5 word) direct quotations when necessary. Include the author's first and last names—correctly spelled—as well as the essay title in quotation marks. This should be the shortest of the paragraphs. Keep your summary in the _present_ tense. Note: The verbs you use in summarizing an essay suggest an author's purpose and can imply a judgment of that purpose. These verbs are also known as signal phrases or attributive tags.

If you say, "The author . . .
- Tells" (suggests the author's purpose is to explain or narrate)
- Explains" (suggests author's purpose is to explain or inform)
- Argues" (suggests author is trying to persuade)
- Claims" (suggests author is trying to persuade; further suggests you don't buy what the author is saying)
- Informs" (suggests dryly expository writing)
- Persuades" (suggests persuasive writing, duh)
- Exposes" (suggests author's purpose is to investigate something hidden)
- Teaches" (suggests author is explaining or informing)
- Narrates" (suggests author is telling a personal story)
- Relates" (suggests author's purpose is to explain through comparison)
- Distinguishes" (suggests author's purpose is to explain by contrasting topics)
- Compares" (suggests author's purpose is to draw similarities between topics)
- Contrasts" (suggests author's purpose is to find differences between topics)
- Warns" (suggests author's purpose is to persuade through caution)
- Suggests" (suggests gently persuasive writing)
- Implies" (suggests persuasive writing; further suggests you're skeptical about the author's motivations and/or implications)

Note: Summaries are not like movie trailers, designed to entice the viewer into thinking there's something interesting coming. Instead, summaries should explain clearly and succinctly (briefly) what those interesting ideas are and what the author's argument is.

Sample summaries

In _"The Culture of American Film," Julia Newman claims that analyzing movies for "cultural significance" (294) can lead to greater understanding of our society and of changes in our society._

In "Nothing but Net," Mark McFadden uses specific examples, questions directed at the reader, and personal experience to argue that instead of protecting "work rules and the rules of common decency" (paragraph 1), internet spying technology is ultimately ineffectual and creates an atmosphere of mistrust.

Paragraph 2 (of 3): Analyze
Keep analysis in the present tense

Context:	This essay is a contribution to a larger discussion or debate about what? What events or ideas prompted the author to write this essay?
Audience:	Who is likely to read this essay? Where was it originally published, and what type of publication is/was it? Who can access this language?
Purpose*:	To entertain? To persuade? To congratulate? To instruct? To warn? To scold? To inform or explain? Some combination of these?
Organizational	Chronological? (in order of time)
Form:	Cause and effect? (something causes something) Comparison and contrast? (similarities and differences) Classification? (putting things into categories) Some combination of these?
Tone**:	Resigned? Antagonistic? Humorous? Assured? Happy? Confident? Sympathetic? Urgent? Encouraging? Frustrated? Energetic? Pleading? Detached? Ambivalent? Apathetic? Clinical? Amused? Smug? Or some combination?
Tools:	Facts and figures? Illustrations? Allusions to other works? Direct quotations? Brevity? (shortness) Subheadings? Imagery? Analogies? Similes? Expert testimony? Humor or sarcasm? Personal experience? Questions directed at reader? Concessions to the opposition? Fallacies? (flaws in logic—don't identify these as tools unless you plan to criticize the essay in your personal-reaction paragraph.
Thesis:	The one or two sentences that best summarize THE POINT of the essay. (Sometimes the point is implied instead of overtly stated.)

Note: Professional writing does NOT usually look like the traditional five-paragraph form.

*All essays have an element of persuasion.
**Tone usually changes as the essay proceeds.

Summary, Analysis & Response Essay Worksheet

Use your SAR guidelines to help you fill out the blanks below.

A. Summarize the essay with one to three sentences. The summary should include the author's full name (correctly spelled), the title of essay (correctly punctuated), and all main ideas. The summary should be written in the present tense and with an academic tone. Include the POINT—this is not like a book jacket.

   Example: In *"The Culture of American Film," Julia Newman claims that analyzing movies for "cultural significance" (294) can lead to greater understanding of our society and of changes in our society.*

B. Analyze the essay by filling in the blanks below.
   a. **Context**: This essay is a contribution to a larger discussion or debate about

   b. **Audience**: People most likely to read the essay and agree with the author are

   c. **Purpose**: The author wrote this essay in order to . . . (circle one or more) entertain explain/inform persuade*   warn congratulate instruct   scold
       other_____

d. **The organizational form of the essay is** . . . (check one or more)
_____ **chronological** (from _____ to _____) _____
compare and contrast: author examines similarities and differences between
_____ and _____ _____
classification: author puts types of _____
into these *categories*: _____, _____
& _____
_____ **cause and effect**: author claims _____
cause/contribute to _____
_____ **some** *other* **form** best described as _____

e. **The author's tone** (attitude toward the subject of the essay) at the beginning of the
essay can best be described as _____ and
_____, then in <u>page/paragraph</u> number _____, it changes to
_____ and _____. The
concluding tone is _____.

f. **Tools the author uses** to accomplish his/her purpose(s) include
_____, _____, and
_____ .

g. **The author's thesis** appears in paragraph/page number____ and is (copy or put in
your own words):

(If you copied the thesis, did you put the borrowed words in quotation marks?)

Advice and warnings about your first SARs . . .

- This type of writing is very formulaic, so don't worry about being pretty or having an engaging "voice." Instead, be clear.
- Write with an academic tone, so avoid "things," "stuff," "you," "kids," and "nowadays." Sometimes your tone will be more formal than the author of the essay.
- Your summary should include the author's first and last name—correctly spelled—and the title of the essay. Use first *and* last names the first time you use refer to the author (in the summary); use only the last name every other time. Don't refer to the author by her/his first name only.
- Students often forget that an essay can have more than one purpose and all essays have at least some element of persuasion.
- Analysis paragraphs are often incomplete. It should have ELEVEN things: identification of context, audience, purpose, organizational form, tone, 3 tools, thesis, and two direct quotations.
- Be sure to identify which TYPE of organizational form the author uses: compare and contrast? classification (putting things in categories)? chronological? cause and effect?
- Don't be afraid to use "red flag" words to guide your reader through the analysis paragraph. You can actually *use* the words "purpose," "tone," "thesis," etc. to direct your reader through your SAR.
- Limit your opinion to the third paragraph. Much of the second paragraph really is opinion, but state it as fact. This makes you sound like you know what you're talking about, which is more convincing and more professional.
- Remember, longer is not necessarily better, but SOME discussion is good. A one-page SAR is too short. One and a half full pages can be okay, but two full pages is probably best.)
- Proofread, use the writing labs, and proofread again before printing.
- Re-read the directions, advice, and warnings before printing. There's a lot to remember here!

Principles of Proper Quotation Format

1. Keep quotations as short as possible.
2. If a sentence begins with quotation marks and ends with quotation marks and contains only words taken from a source, you have not introduced the quotation well. Never have such a "stand-alone" quotation.
3. MLA format: A sentence containing a quotation should end with the source and page number (or paragraph number) in parentheses. Usually this parenthetical citation comes before the final period but outside any quotation marks at the end of the sentence.
4. APA format: A sentence containing a quotation should end with the source, year of publication and page number (or paragraph number) in parentheses. Usually this parenthetical citation comes before the final period but outside any quotation marks at the end of the sentence.

There are three styles of quotations distinguished by how the passage is incorporated into your own wording:

A. In a **"Tag Quotation,"** an introductory phrase (usually identifying the source of the quotation) is joined by a comma to a full, sentence-long quotation.

> Example in MLA format: *According to Grafton, "This need for forbiddenness also accounts for Charity's voyeuristic impulse to continue watching Harney" (357).*

> Example in APA format: *Smith (2017) argues, "This insistence seems strange, even forced" (p. 113).*

B. In an **"Analytic Quotation,"** a complete sentence of analysis by the student is followed by a colon introducing a quotation that illustrates support for the argument. (The quotation illustrates the student's analysis.)

> Example in MLA: *Life in North Dormer is intolerably oppressive to Charity: "She is stifled by its petty bourgeois conventions and longs for adventure" (Singley 113).*

> Example in APA: *Tom finds himself wondering why he came: "He couldn't identify a reason for his own behavior, and this troubled him" (Brown, 2009, p. 385).*

C. In a **"Blend Quotation,"** a short phrase or even just a single key word is quoted and included in the student's own sentence in such a fluid way that only the quotation marks may reveal the material to be a quotation. This is the best type of quotation.

> Example in MLA format: *Their "silent lies" (Watson 22) prevent the relationship from ever fully recovering.*

> Example in APA format: *From the outset of Edith Wharton's Summer, Charity Royall dramatizes the "American quest for freedom" (Singley, 2001, p. 155).*

If a sentence begins with quotation marks and ends with quotation marks and contains only words taken from a source, you have not introduced the quotation properly. Never have such a "stand-alone" quotation.

Using Direct Quotations: Work direct quotations directly into the fabric of your sentences.

Here is a sample of an "analytic" quotation

In MLA format: *Smith uses personal experience as a tool. He also uses expert testimony:* "*Studies by the Kaufmann Group indicate a 78% increase in depression" (6).*

In APA format: *Smith (2014) uses personal experience as a tool. He also uses expert testimony: "Studies by the Kaufmann Group indicate a 78% increase in depression" (p. 6).*

Or, even better, this "blended" quotation in MLA format: *Smith uses professional vocabulary and personal experience as tools to convince his readers and engage them. Other tools include expert testimony, as seen in his reference to the study by the Kaufmann Group, which found a "78% increase in depression" associated with second-hand smoke (6).*

In APA format: *Smith (2014) uses professional vocabulary and personal experience as tools to convince his readers and engage them. Other tools include expert testimony, as seen in his reference to the study by the Kaufmann Group, which found a "78% increase in depression" associated with second-hand smoke (p. 6).*

Don't say:
Tools Smith uses include professional vocabulary, expert testimony, and personal experience. "Studies by the Kaufmann Group indicate a 78% increase in depression" (6).

This is poor use of a direct quotation and it's completely unclear. Does it support your identification of professional vocabulary? Expert testimony? Personal experience? Who knows?!?

Tip:

When quoting a source in MLA or APA format, remember this rule: **You must ALWAYS properly introduce your sources.**

There are two ways to do this.

1. To introduce a quote with a complete sentence, use a colon. Anderson clearly loves **dogs: "I** grew up with dogs and now have adopted three of my own."

2. To introduce a quote with an incomplete sentence, use a comma. Anderson clearly loves dogs. She **says, "I** grew up with dogs and now have adopted three of my own."

NEVER "drop" quotes. Anderson clearly loves **dogs. "I** grew up with dogs and now have adopted three of my own."

Complete sentence: "quote."

Incomplete sentence, "quote."

Sample SAR essay in MLA format

"The Culture of American Film"

In "The Culture of American Film," Julia Newman argues that analyzing movies for "cultural significance" (294) can lead to greater understanding of changes in our society.

This essay was written in the context of a growing movement in academia toward viewing popular films as literature and analyzing movies as cultural text. Newman's intended audience is probably university-level scholars, but her ideas are accessible to anyone interested in examining film as it suggests underlying societal structures. One purpose of this essay is to explain how to view films as indications of what's going on in our society, but Newman also wants to persuade the reader that there's more to movies than just entertainment. The organizational form of the essay is classification, as Newman places movies into categories of those that do reflect changes in our society and those that do not, then she compares and contrasts these categories. In addition, the essay employs a chronological organizational form in which Newman describes the plots of various movies from 50 years ago to the present. The tone of the essay is consistently encouraging and knowledgeable. There's a sort of majestic tone to the introduction, too, as Newman pronounces that the "significance of storytelling has diminished over the decades, and cinema has risen to take its place" (291). Tools Newman uses to accomplish her purpose include specific examples of film analyses, an impressive balance between academic and accessible word choices, and concessions to the opposition, like when she writes, "However, it is easy to overstate these connections" (292). The thesis of the essay appears on page 298: "But as cinematic forms of storytelling overtake written forms of expression, the study of movies as complex text bearing cultural messages and values is becoming more and more important." In other words, we can learn a lot about structural shifts within our culture through studying popular film as literary text.

I found the ideas in this essay quite compelling. The essay makes me want to examine the movies of ten or twenty years ago to consider what they suggested about our society then. The essay also makes me think about films that have been nominated for Academy Awards this year, like *The Artist,* and what the popularity of this silent movie says about changes taking place in our culture right now. I do wish Newman had used more current examples; most of her examples are so old that I've never seen them. I also wonder how much knowledge of history is necessary

to really apply her thesis. . . . I don't think I'll ever have a strong enough understanding of American history to apply Newman's ideas to movies that have been popular in the past, and I can't imagine trying to examine currently popular movies for what they suggest about cultural shifts that are happening right now. It seems like the type of analysis she encourages is only possible in retrospect and with a strong understanding of movements in American history.

Writing Project Four:
Process of Writing Argumentation

Overview

Argument is a rhetorical mode in which the writer attempts to convince readers to agree with the claim presented in the thesis. While the word "argument" might conjure thoughts of screaming in frustration, this form of writing is quite the opposite. Writers use a variety of logical reasoning strategies, combined with a look at both sides of an argument, to prove a well-planned thesis. Shane Abrams' textbook, *EmpoWord: A Student-Centered Anthology and Handbook for College Writers,* offers multiple approaches to argument, as well as explanations of the different kinds of logic students might employ in this type of paper.

Introduction: Research and Argumentation

From *EmpoWord: A Student-Centered Anthology & Handbook for College Writers* by Shane Abrams, 2019

"Fake news" is a phrase you've probably encountered way more than you would have liked since the 2016 U.S. presidential election. While this phrase has gained more and more momentum and traction, it holds different purposes and meanings in different contexts. Across all these different rhetorical situations, though, we can agree that the popularization of the phrase speaks to an increased skepticism toward the bodies of knowledge that surround us.

For me, such distrust points to the oversimplified dichotomy of fact vs. opinion. The gray area between fact and opinion is much broader than we like to believe, and often we present deeply entrenched opinions as if they were facts. (Whether or not it is intentional, this phenomenon has serious consequences.) As Michael Kinsley, in his article "The Intellectual Free Lunch" points out in his *New Yorker* 1995 essay, American individualist ideology dictates that citizens be "omni-opinionated"—at the expense of having many poorly informed opinions. It is crucial, Kinsley says, that we take two steps to confront the "intellectual free lunch":

> NPR released a fascinating investigatory piece on fake news production in 2016 called "We Tracked Down A Fake-News Creator in The Suburbs. Here's What We Learned."

a) Develop increased humility about what we can and do know to be true; and
b) Increase the intensity and frequency of our critical interrogation of truth (or what seems to be true).

Because yes, there is a lot of fake news out there. And there's a lot of real news that certain people insist is fake. How do we mobilize skepticism to produce a more ethical world, rather than letting it undermine the pursuit of truth?

At the beginning of the semester, you explored your own truth through personal narrative; later, you interrogated the truths embedded in a certain text. Here, you will learn how to encounter a body of texts, then develop an argument that synthesizes diverse truths. Writing in a research-based context means exploring and interrogating the broad, complex networks of rhetoric and knowledges that you have always been a part of. It means situating yourself in an interconnected world of discourse, and carefully bringing your own voice into that world.

To induct you into this mode of rhetoric production, this section focuses on research concepts and techniques, as well as traditional methods of argumentation. This section concludes with a

persuasive research essay assignment in which you will synthesize your ability to research, interpret, and argue in a formal writing situation.

Argumentation

To a nonconfrontational person (like me), **argument** is a dirty word. It surfaces connotations of raised voices, slammed doors, and dominance; it arouses feelings of anxiety and frustration.

But argument is not inherently bad. In fact, as a number of great thinkers have described, conflict is necessary for growth, progress, and community cohesion. Through disagreement, we challenge our commonsense assumptions and seek compromise. The negative connotations surrounding 'argument' actually point to a failure in the _way_ that we argue.

Review the video—"The Importance of Empathy—which we introduced in the first chapter. It provides some useful insight in to the sort of listening, thinking, and discussion required for productive arguments.
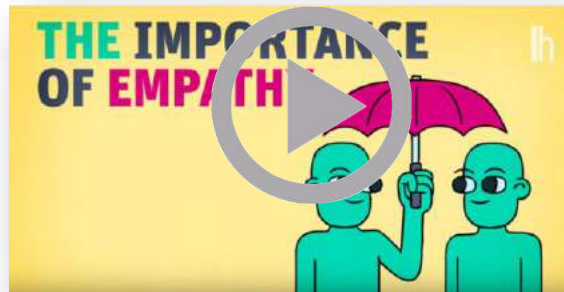
Now, spend a few minutes reflecting on the last time you had an argument with a loved one. What was it about? What was it _really_ about? What made it difficult? What made it easy?

Often, arguments hinge on the relationship between the arguers: whether written or verbal, that argument will rely on the specific language, approach, and evidence that each party deems valid. For that reason, the most important element of the rhetorical situation is audience. Making an honest, impactful, and reasonable connection with that audience is the first step to arguing better.

Unlike the argument with your loved one, it is likely that your essay will be establishing a brand-new relationship with your reader, one which is untouched by your personal history, unspoken bonds, or other assumptions about your intent. This clean slate is a double-edged sword: although you'll have a fresh start, you must more deliberately anticipate and navigate your assumptions about the audience. What can you assume your reader already knows and

believes? What kind of ideas will they be most swayed by? What life experiences have they had that inform their worldview?

This chapter will focus on how the answers to these questions can be harnessed for productive, civil, and effective arguing. Although a descriptive personal narrative and a text wrestling analysis require attention to your subject, occasion, audience, and purpose, an argumentative essay is the most sensitive to rhetorical situation of the genres covered in this book. As you complete this unit, remember that you are practicing the skills necessary to navigating a variety of rhetorical situations: thinking about effective argument will help you think about other kinds of effective communication.

Vocabulary

argument—a rhetorical mode in which different perspectives on a common issue are negotiated. See Aristotelian and Rogerian arguments.

Aristotelian argument—a mode of argument by which a writer attempts to convince their audience that one perspective is accurate.

audience—the intended consumers for a piece of rhetoric. *Every* text has at least one audience; sometimes, that audience is directly addressed, and other times we have to infer.

call-to-action—a persuasive writer's directive to their audience; usually located toward the end of a text. Compare with purpose.

*ethos—*a rhetorical appeal based on authority, credibility, or expertise.

*kairos—*the setting (time and place) or atmosphere in which an argument is actionable or ideal. Consider alongside "occasion."

logical fallacy—a line of logical reasoning which follows a pattern of that makes an error in its basic structure. For example, *Kanye West is on TV; Animal Planet is on TV. Therefore, Kanye West is on Animal Planet.*

*logos—*a rhetorical appeal to logical reasoning.

multipartial—a neologism from 'impartial,' refers to occupying and appreciating a variety of perspectives rather than pretending to have no perspective. Rather than unbiased or neutral, multipartial writers are balanced, acknowledging and respecting many different ideas.

*pathos—*a rhetorical appeal to emotion.

rhetorical appeal—a means by which a writer or speaker connects with their audience to achieve their purpose. Most commonly refers to *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*.

Rogerian argument—a mode of argument by which an author seeks compromise by bringing different perspectives on an issue into conversation. Acknowledges that no one perspective is absolutely and exclusively 'right'; values disagreement in order to make moral, political, and practical decisions.

syllogism—a line of logical reasoning similar to the transitive property (If a=b and b=c, then a=c). For example, *All humans need oxygen; Kanye West is a human. Therefore, Kanye West needs oxygen.*

"But I Just Want to Write an Unbiased Essay"

Let's begin by addressing a common concern my students raise when writing about controversial issues: neutrality. It's quite likely that you've been trained, at some point in your writing career, to avoid bias, to be objective, to be impartial. However, this is a habit you need to unlearn, because *every text is biased* by virtue of being rhetorical. All rhetoric has a purpose, whether declared or secret, and therefore is partial.

> **"Honest disagreement is often a good sign of progress."**
> - Mahatma Gandhi

Instead of being impartial, I encourage you to be **multipartial**. In other words, you should aim to inhabit many different positions in your argument—not zero, not one, but many. This is an important distinction: no longer is your goal to be unbiased; rather, it is to be balanced. You will not provide your audience a neutral perspective, but rather a perspective conscientious of the many other perspectives out there.

Common Forms of Argumentation

In the study of argumentation, scholars and authors have developed a great variety of approaches: when it comes to convincing, there are many different paths that lead to our destination. For the sake of succinctness, we will focus on two: the Aristotelian argument and the Rogerian Argument. (The Toulmin model of argumentation is another common framework and structure which is not discussed here. See Purdue OWL for a discussion on Toulmin arguments.) While these two are not opposites, they are built on different values. Each will employ **rhetorical appeals** like those discussed later, but their purposes and guiding beliefs are different.

Aristotelian Argument

In Ancient Greece, debate was a cornerstone of social life. Intellectuals and philosophers

devoted hours upon hours of each day to honing their argumentative skills. For one group of thinkers, the Sophists, the focus of argumentation was to find a distinctly "right" or "wrong" position. The more convincing argument was the right one: the content mattered less than the technique by which it was delivered.
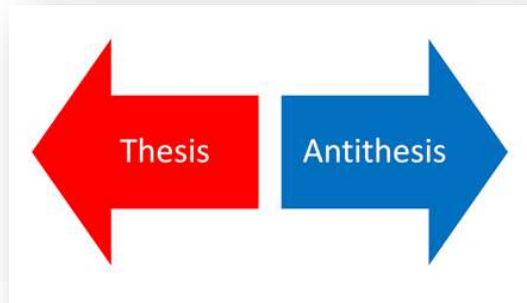
In turn, the purpose of an **Aristotelian argument** is to persuade someone (the other debater and/or the audience) that the speaker was correct. Aristotelian arguments are designed to bring the audience from one point of view to the other.

In this diagram, you can observe the tension between a point and counterpoint (or, to borrow a term from German philosopher Johann Gottlieb Fichte, "thesis" and "antithesis.") These two viewpoints move in two opposite directions, almost like a tug-of-war.

Therefore, an Aristotelian arguer tries to demonstrate the validity of their direction while addressing counterarguments: "Here's what I believe and why I'm right; here's what you believe and why it's wrong." The author seeks to persuade their audience through the sheer virtue of their truth.

You can see Aristotelian argumentation applied in the student example "We Don't Care about Child Slaves."

Rogerian Argument

In contrast, **Rogerian arguments** are more invested in compromise. Based on the work of psychologist Carl Rogers, Rogerian arguments are designed to enhance the connection between both sides of an issue. This kind of argument acknowledges the value of disagreement in material communities to make moral, political, and practical decisions.

Often, a Rogerian argument will begin with a fair statement of someone else's position and consideration of how that could be true. In other words, a Rogerian arguer addresses their 'opponent' more like a teammate: "What you think is not unreasonable; I disagree, but I can see how you're thinking, and I appreciate it." Notice that by taking the other ideas on their own terms, you demonstrate respect and cultivate trust and listening.

The rhetorical purpose of a Rogerian argument, then, is to come to a conclusion by negotiating common ground between moral-intellectual differences. Instead of

debunking an opponent's counterargument entirely, a Rogerian arguer would say,
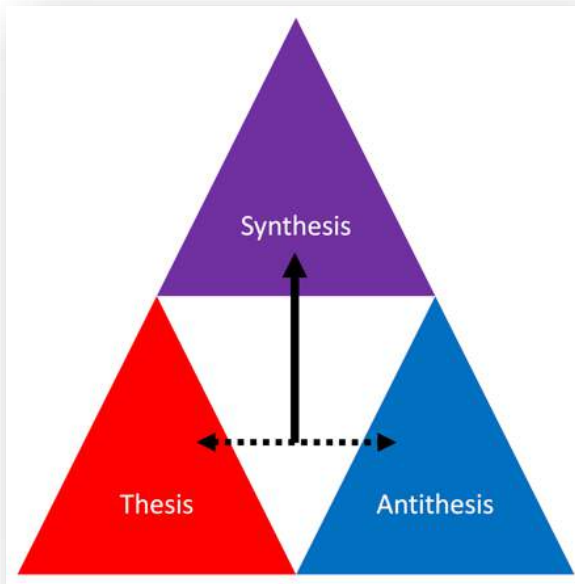
"Here's what each of us thinks, and here's what we have in common. How can we proceed forward to honor our shared beliefs but find a new, informed position?"

The **thesis** is an intellectual proposition.

The **antithesis** is a critical perspective on the thesis.

The **synthesis** solves the conflict between the thesis and antithesis by reconciling their common truths and forming a new proposition.

In Fichte's model of *thesis-antithesis-synthesis,* both debaters would pursue synthesis. The author seeks to persuade their audience by showing them respect, demonstrating a willingness to compromise, and championing the validity of their truth as one among other valid truths.

Fichte's model can be found is discussed by John Wetzel "The MCAT Writing Assignment." WikiPremed, Wisebridge Learning Systems LLC, 2013,

You can see Rogerian argumentation applied in the student example, "Effective Therapy Through Dance and Movement."

Sample Comparison of Aristotelian and Rogerian arguments

Position	Aristotelian	Rogerian
Wool sweaters are the best clothing for cold weather.	*Wool sweaters are the best clothing for cold weather because they are fashionable and comfortable. Some people might think that wool sweaters are itchy, but those claims are ill-informed. Wool sweaters can be silky smooth if properly handled in the laundry.*	*Some people might think that wool sweaters are itchy, which can certainly be the case. I've worn plenty of itchy wool sweaters. But wool sweaters can be silky smooth if properly handled in the laundry; therefore, they are the best clothing for cold weather. If you want to be cozy and in-style, consider my laundry techniques and a fuzzy wool sweater.*

Activity: Before moving on, try to identify one rhetorical situation in which Aristotelian argumentation would be most effective, and one in which Rogerian argumentation would be preferable. Neither form is necessarily better, but rather both are useful in specific contexts. In what situations might you favor one approach over another?

Rhetorical Appeals

As we reviewed in Writing Project Three: Analysis, you will need to revisit rhetorical appeals for your argumentation essay.
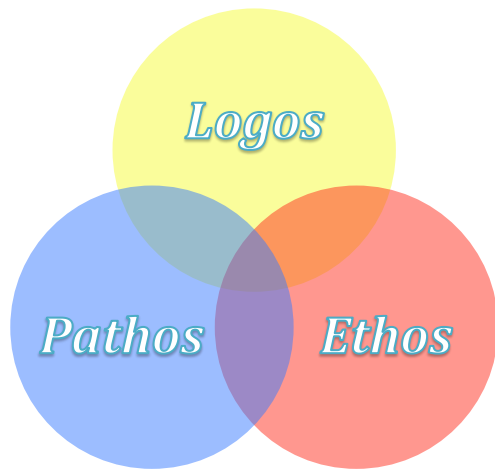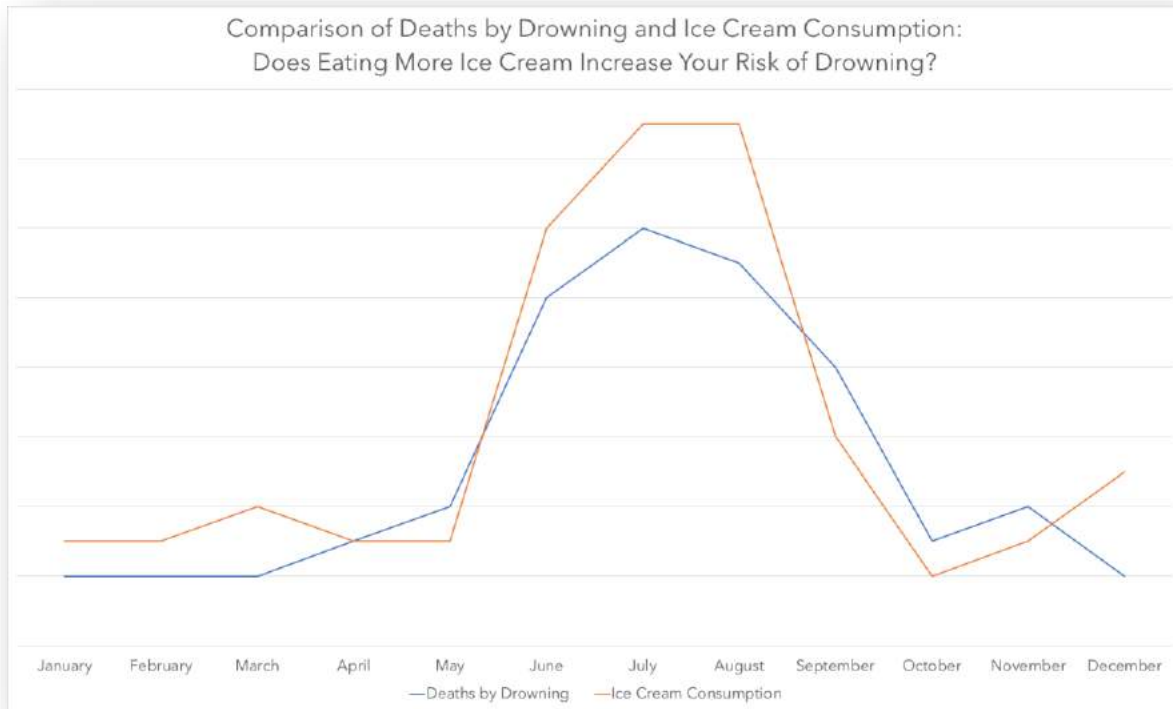
Regardless of the style of argument you use, you will need to consider the ways you engage your audience. Aristotle identified three kinds of **rhetorical appeals: logos, pathos**, and **ethos**. Some instructors refer to this trio as the "rhetorical triangle," though I prefer to think of them as a three-part Venn diagram. I find this distinction especially valuable because there is some slippage in what instructors mean by "rhetorical triangle"—e.g., "logos, pathos, ethos" vs. "reader, writer, text." The latter set of definitions, used to determine rhetorical situation, is superseded in this text by SOAP (subject, occasion, audience, purpose). The best argumentation engages all three of these appeals, falling in the center where all three overlap. Unbalanced application of rhetorical appeals is likely to leave your audience suspicious, doubtful, or even bored.

Logos

You may have inferred already, but *logos* refers to an appeal to an audience's logical reasoning. *Logos* will often employ statistics, data, or other quantitative facts to demonstrate the validity of an argument. For example, an argument about the wage gap might indicate that women, on average, earn only 80 percent of the salary that men in comparable positions earn; this would imply a logical conclusion that our economy favors men.

However, stating a fact or statistic does not alone constitute *logos*. For instance, when I show you this graph, I am not yet making a logical appeal.

Comparison of Deaths by Drowning and Ice Cream Consumption:
Does Eating More Ice Cream Increase Your Risk of Drowning?

This correlation is an oft-cited example, but the graph is a fabrication to make a point, not actual data.

Yes, the graph is "fact-based," drawing on data to illustrate a phenomenon. That characteristic alone, though, doesn't make a logical appeal. For my appeal to be logical, I also need to *interpret* the graph:

As is illustrated here, there is a direct positive correlation between ice cream consumption and deaths by drowning: when people eat more ice cream, more people drown. Therefore, we need to be more careful about waiting 30 minutes after we eat ice cream.

Of course, this conclusion is inaccurate; it is a **logical fallacy** described in the table below called "post hoc, ergo propter hoc." However, the example illustrates that your logic is only complete when you've drawn a logical conclusion from your facts, statistics, or other information.

There are many other ways we draw logical conclusions. There are entire branches of academia dedicated to understanding the many kinds of logical reasoning, but we might get a better idea by looking at a specific kind of logic. Let's take for example the **logical syllogism,** which might look something like this:

| All humans require oxygen. | → | Kanye West is a human. | → | Therefore, Kanye West requires oxygen. |

Pretty straightforward, right? We can see how a general rule (major premise) is applied to a specific situation (minor premise) to develop a logical conclusion. I like to introduce this kind of logic because students sometimes jump straight from the major premise to the conclusion; if you skip the middle step, your logic will be less convincing.

It does get a little more complex. Consider this false syllogism: it follows the same structure (general rule + specific situation), but it reaches an unlikely conclusion.

| All penguins are black and white. | → | My television is black and white. | → | Therefore, my television is a penguin. |

This is called a logical fallacy. Logical fallacies are part of our daily lives. Stereotypes, generalizations, and misguided assumptions are fallacies you've likely encountered. You may have heard some terms about fallacies already: red herring, slippery slope, non sequitur. Fallacies follow patterns of reasoning that would otherwise be perfectly acceptable to us, but within their basic structure, they make a mistake. Aristotle identified that fallacies happen on the "material" level (the content is fallacious—something about the ideas or premises is flawed) and the "verbal" level (the writing or speech is fallacious—something about the delivery or medium is flawed).

It's important to be able to recognize these so that you can critically interrogate others' arguments and improve your own. Here are some of the most common logical fallacies:

Fallacy	Description	Example

Post hoc, ergo propter hoc	"After this, therefore because of this" – a confusion of cause-and-effect with coincidence, attributing a consequence to an unrelated event. This error assumes that correlation equals causation, which is sometimes not the case.	Statistics show that rates of ice cream consumption and deaths by drowning both increased in June. This must mean that ice cream causes drowning.
Non sequitur	"Does not follow" – a random digression that distracts from the train of logic (like a "red herring"), or draws an unrelated logical conclusion. John Oliver calls one manifestation of this fallacy "whataboutism," which he describes as a way to deflect attention from the subject at hand.	Sherlock is great at solving crimes; therefore, he'll also make a great father. Sherlock Holmes smokes a pipe, which is unhealthy. But what about Bill Clinton? He eats McDonald's every day, which is also unhealthy.
Straw Man	An oversimplification or cherry-picking of the opposition's argument to make them easier to attack.	People who oppose the destruction of Confederate monuments are all white supremacists.
Ad hominem	"To the person" – a personal attack on the arguer, rather than a critique of their ideas.	I don't trust Moriarty's opinion on urban planning because he wears bowties.
Slippery Slope	An unreasonable prediction that one event will lead to a related but unlikely series of events that follows.	If we let people of the same sex get married, then people will start marrying their dogs too!
False Dichotomy	A simplification of a complex issue into only two sides.	Given the choice between pizza and Chinese food for dinner, we simply *must* choose Chinese.

Learn about other logical fallacies in the Additional Recommended Resources appendix.

Pathos

The second rhetorical appeal we'll consider here is perhaps the most common: pathos refers to the process of engaging the reader's emotions. (You might recognize the Greek root pathos in "sympathy," "empathy," and "pathetic.") A writer can evoke a great variety of emotions to support their argument, from fear, passion, and joy to pity, kinship, and rage. By playing on the audience's feelings, writers can increase the impact of their arguments.

There are two especially effective techniques for cultivating *pathos* that I share with my students:
- Make the audience aware of the issue's relevance to them specifically—"How would you feel if this happened to you? What are we to do about this issue?
- Tell stories. A story about one person or one community can have a deeper impact than broad, impersonal data or abstract, hypothetical statements.

Consider the difference between

> *About 1.5 million pets are euthanized each year*

> and

> *Scooter, an energetic and loving former service dog with curly brown hair like a Brillo pad, was put down yesterday.*

Both are impactful, but the latter is more memorable and more specific.

Pathos is ubiquitous in our current journalistic practices because people are more likely to act (or, at least, consume media) when they feel emotionally moved. Consider, as an example, the outpouring of support for detained immigrants in June 2018, reacting to the Trump administration's controversial family separation policy. As stories and images like this one surfaced, millions of dollars were raised in a matter of days on the premise of *pathos*, and resulted in the temporary suspension of that policy.

> "Facebook's Walled Wonderland is Inherently Incompatible with News" by Frederic Filloux (2016) is an example of this.

Ethos

Your argument wouldn't be complete without an appeal to *ethos*. Cultivating *ethos* refers to the means by which you demonstrate your authority or expertise on a topic. You'll have to show your audience that you're trustworthy if they are going to buy your argument.

There are a handful of ways to demonstrate *ethos*:

- By personal experience: Although your lived experience might not set hard-and-fast rules about the world, it is worth noting that you may be an expert on certain facets of your life. For instance, a student who has played rugby for fifteen years of their life is in many ways an authority on the sport.
- By education or other certifications: Professional achievements demonstrate *ethos* by revealing status in a certain field or discipline.
- By citing other experts: The common expression is "Stand on the shoulders of giants." You can develop *ethos* by pointing to other people with authority and saying, "Look, this smart/experienced/qualified/important person agrees with me."

A common misconception is that *ethos* corresponds with "ethics." However, you can remember that *ethos* is about credibility because it shares a root with "authority."

1 Former President of South Africa Jacob Zuma delivering a speech.

Sociohistorical Context of Argumentation

This textbook has emphasized consideration of your rhetorical occasion, but it bears repeating here that "good" argumentation depends largely on your place in time, space, and culture. Different cultures throughout the world value the elements of argumentation differently, and argument has different purposes in different contexts. The content of your argument *and* your strategies for delivering it will change in every unique rhetorical situation.

Continuing from *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*, the notion of *kairos* speaks to this concern. To put it in plain language, *kairos* is the force that determines what will be the best argumentative approach in the moment in which you're arguing; it is closely aligned with rhetorical occasion. According to rhetoricians, the characteristics of the *kairos* determine the balance and application of *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*.

Moreover, your sociohistorical context will bear on what you can assume of your audience. What can you take for granted that your audience knows and believes? The "common sense" that your audience relies on is always changing: common sense in the U.S. in 1950 was much different from common sense in the U.S. in 1920 or common sense in the U.S. in 2018. You can make assumptions about your audience's interests, values, and background knowledge, but only with careful consideration of the time and place in which you are arguing.

As an example, let's consider the principle of logical noncontradiction. Put simply, this means that for an argument to be valid, its logical premises must not contradict one another: if A = B, then B = A. If I said that a dog is a mammal and a mammal is an animal, but a dog is not an animal, I would be contradicting myself. Or, "No one drives on I-84; there's too much traffic." This statement contradicts itself, which makes it humorous to us.

However, this principle of non-contradiction is not universal. Our understanding of cause and effect and logical consistency is defined by the millennia of knowledge that has been produced before us, and some cultures value the contradiction rather than perceive it as invalid. This is not to say that either way of seeing the world is more or less accurate, but rather to emphasize that your methods of argumentation depend tremendously on sociohistorical context.

See "Power and Place Equal Personality" (Deloria) or "Jasmine-Not-Jasmine" (Han) for non-comprehensive but interesting examples. Deloria, Jr., Vine. "Power and Place Equal Personality." Indian Education in America *by Deloria and Daniel Wildcat, Fulcrum, 2001, pp. 21-28.*

Argumentation Activities

Op-Ed Rhetorical Analysis

One form of direct argumentation that is readily available is the opinion editorial, or op-ed. Most news sources, from local to international, include an opinion section. Sometimes, these pieces are written by members of the news staff; sometimes, they're by contributors or community members. Op-eds can be long (e.g., comprehensive journalistic articles, like Ta-Nehisi Coates' 2014 landmark "The Case for Reparations" or his (and others) testimony to the U.S. Congress on C-SPAN in 2019) or they could be brief (e.g., a brief statement of one's viewpoint, like in your local newspaper's Letter to the Editor section).

To get a better idea of how authors incorporate rhetorical appeals, complete the following rhetorical analysis exercise on an op-ed of your choosing.

1. Find an op-ed (opinion piece, editorial, or letter to the editor) from either a local newspaper, a national news source, or an international news corporation. Choose something that interests you, since you'll have to read it a few times over. Examples can be found at the New York Times, NPR and the Washington Post.
2. Print out the op-ed or create a PDF in order to digitally annotated the text.
3. Read the op-ed through once, annotating parts that are particularly convincing, points that seem unsubstantiated, or other eye-catching details.
4. Briefly (in one to two sentences) identify the rhetorical situation (SOAP) of the op-ed.
5. Write a citation for the op-ed in an appropriate format.
6. Analyze the application of rhetoric.
   a. Summarize the issue at stake and the author's position.
   b. Find a quote that represents an instance of *logos*.
   c. Find a quote that represents an instance of *pathos*.
   d. Find a quote that represents an instance of *ethos*.
   e. Paraphrase the author's **call-to-action** (the action or actions the author wants the audience to take). A call-to-action will often be related to an author's rhetorical purpose.
7. In a one-paragraph response, consider: Is this rhetoric effective? Does it fulfill its purpose? Why or why not?

VICE News Rhetorical Appeal Analysis

VICE News, an alternative investigatory news outlet, has recently gained acclaim for its inquiry-driven reporting on current issues and popular appeal, much of which is derived from effective application of rhetorical appeals.

You can complete the following activity using any of their texts, but I recommend "State of Surveillance" from June 8, 2016. Take notes while you watch and complete the organizer on the following pages after you finish.

What is the title and publication date of the text?
Briefly summarize the subject of this text.
How would you describe the purpose of this text?

Pathos	Provide at least 3 examples of *pathos* that you observed in the text	How would you describe the overall tone of the piece? What mood does it evoke for the viewer/reader?
Logos	Provide at least 3 examples of *logos* that you observed in the text:	In addition to presenting data and statistics, how does the text logically interpret evidence?
Ethos	Provide at least 3 examples of *ethos* that you observed in the text:	How might one person, idea, or source both enhance and detract from the cultivation of *ethos*? (Consider Edward Snowden in "State of Surveillance," for instance.)

Audience Analysis: Tailoring Your Appeals

Now that you've observed the end result of rhetorical appeals, let's consider how you might tailor your own rhetorical appeals based on your audience.

First, come up with a claim that you might try to persuade an audience to believe. Then, consider how you might develop this claim based on the potential audiences listed in the organizer on the following pages. An example is provided after the empty organizer if you get stuck.

Claim:	
Audience #1: Business owners	What assumptions might you make about this audience? What do you think they currently know and believe?
Logos	
Pathos	
Ethos	

Audience #2: Local political officials	What assumptions might you make about this audience? What do you think they currently know and believe?
Logos	
Pathos	
Ethos	
Audience #3: One of your family members	What assumptions might you make about this audience? What do you think they currently know and believe?
Logos	
Pathos	
Ethos	

Audience #4: Invent your own	What assumptions might you make about this audience? What do you think they currently know and believe?
Logos	
Pathos	
Ethos	

Model:

Claim:	Employers should offer employees discounted or free public transit passes.
Audience #1: Business owners	What assumptions might you make about this audience? What do you think they currently know and believe?
Logos	*They are concerned with profit margins – I need to show that this will benefit them financially: "If employees are able to access transportation more reliably, then they are more likely to arrive on time, which increases efficiency."*
Pathos	*They are concerned with employee morale – I need to show that access will improve employee satisfaction: "Every employer wants their employees to feel welcome at the office. Does your work family dread the start of the day?"*
Ethos	*They are more likely to believe my claim if other business owners, the chamber of commerce, etc., back it up: "In 2010, Portland employer X started providing free bus passes, and their employee retention rate has increased 30%."*
Audience #2: Local political officials	What assumptions might you make about this audience? What do you think they currently know and believe?
Logos	*They are held up by political bureaucracy – I need to show a clear, direct path to executing my claim: "The implementation of such a program could be modeled after an existing system, like EBT cards."*

	Pathos	They are concerned with reelection – I need to show that this will build an enthusiastic voter base: *"When politicians show concern for workers, their approval rates increase. If the voters are happy, you'll be happy!"*
	Ethos	They are more likely to believe my claim if I show other cities and their political officials executing a similar plan – I could also draw on my own experiences because I am a member of the community they represent: *"As an employee who uses public transit (and an enthusiastic voter), I can say that I would make good use of this benefit."*
Audience #3: One of your family members		What assumptions might you make about this audience? What do you think they currently know and believe?
	Logos	My mom has to drive all over the state for her job – I could explain how this will benefit her: *"If you had a free or discounted pass, you could drive less. Less time behind the wheel means a reduction of risk!"*
	Pathos	My mom has to drive all over the state for her job – I could tap into her frustration: *"Aren't you sick of a long commute bookending each day of work? The burning red glow of brakelights and the screech of tires—it doesn't have to be this way."*
	Ethos	My mom might take my word for it since she trusts me already: *"Would I mislead you? I hate to say I told you so, but I was totally right about the wool sweater thing."*

Audience #4: Invent your own *Car drivers*	What assumptions might you make about this audience? What do you think they currently know and believe?
Logos	*They are concerned with car-related expenses – I need to lay out evidence of savings from public transit: "Have you realized that taking the bus two days a week could save you $120 in gas per month?"*
Pathos	*They are frustrated by traffic, parking, etc. – I could play to that emotion: "Is that a spot? No. Is that a spot? No. Oh, but th—No. Sound familiar? You wouldn't have to hear this if there were an alternative.*
Ethos	*Maybe testimonies from former drivers who use public transit more often would be convincing: "In a survey of PSU students who switched from driving to public transit, 65% said they were not only confident in their choice, but that they were much happier as a result!"*

Sample Texts by Student Authors

Effective Therapy Through Dance and Movement

Two chairs, angled slightly away from one another, a small coffee table positioned between them, and an ominous bookshelf behind them, stocked with thick textbooks about psychodynamic theory, Sigmund Freud, and of course, the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders. This is a psychoanalytic psychotherapist's typical clinical set-up. Walking into the room, your entire body feels tense—rigid with stress as you enter the therapist's office only to find the aforementioned sight. Your heartbeat reverberates throughout your body, your throat tightens ever-so-slightly, and your mouth goes dry as an overwhelming sense of nervousness sets in.

Now, imagine instead walking into a beautiful studio, wearing your most comfortable clothing. You take off your shoes, and put your hands in the pockets of your sweatpants as you begin to slip and slide around the sprung hardwood floor whilst a childish smile creeps across your face. Your therapist is not there necessarily to dissect your personality or interpret your behavior, but instead to encourage your mental and physical exploration, leading you on a journey of self-discovery. This is the warm and encouraging environment that dance/movement therapy (DMT) may take place in.

In its essence, DMT is the therapeutic use of physical movement—specifically dance in this context—to encourage and support emotional, intellectual, and motor functions of the mind and body. The focus of the therapy lies within the connection and correlation between movement and emotion ("About"). Unlike so-called "normal" therapies, which are set in a clinical environment, and are conducted by somebody with an extensive background in psychology, DMT is generally practiced by individuals whose background is primarily in dance and the performing arts, with psychology or psychotherapy education falling second. Although some may argue otherwise, I believe that DMT is a viable form of therapy, and that dance and movement can act as the catalyst for profound mental transformation; therefore, when dance and therapy are combined, they create a powerful platform for introspection along with interpersonal discovery, and mental/behavioral change.

Life begins with movement and breathing; they precede all thought and language. Following movement and breath, gesture falls next in the development of personal

communication and understanding (Chaiklin 3). Infants and toddlers learn to convey their wants and needs via pointing, yelling, crying, clapping. As adults, we don't always understand what it is they're trying to tell us; however, we know that their body language is intended to communicate something important. As a child grows older, a greater emphasis is placed on verbally communicating their wants and needs, and letting go of the physical expression. Furthermore, the childish means of demonstrating wants and needs become socially inappropriate as one matures. Perhaps we should not ignore the impulses to cry, to yell, or to throw a tantrum on the floor, but instead encourage a channeled physical release of pent-up energy.

I personally, would encourage what some would consider as emotional breakdowns within a therapeutic setting. For example, screaming, sobbing, pounding one's fists against the floor, or kicking a wall all seem taboo in our society, especially when somebody is above the age of three. There is potential for said expressions to become violent and do more harm than good for a client. Therefore, I propose using dance and movement as a method of expressing the same intense emotions.

As a dancer myself, I can personally attest to the benefits of emotional release through movement. I am able to do my best thinking when I am dancing, and immediately after I stop. When dancing, whether it is improvised movement or learned choreography, the body is in both physical and mental motion, as many parts of the brain are activated. The cerebrum is working in overdrive to allow the body to perform certain actions, while other areas of the brain like the cerebellum are trying to match your breathing and oxygen intake to your level of physical exertion. In addition, all parts of the limbic system are triggered. The limbic system is comprised of multiple parts of the brain including the amygdala, hippocampus, thalamus, and hypothalamus. These different areas of the brain are responsible for emotional arousal, certain aspects of memory, and the willingness to be affected by external stimuli. So, when they are activated with movement, they encourage the endocrine system—specifically the pituitary gland—to release hormones that make you feel good about yourself, how you are moving, and allow you to understand what emotions you're feeling and experiencing (Kinser).

As a form of exercise as well, dancing releases endorphins—proteins that are synthesized by the pituitary gland in response to physiologic stressors. This feeling is so desirable that opioid medications were created with the intent of mimicking the sensation that accompanies an

endorphin rush (Sprouse-Blum 70). Along with the beta-proteins comes a level of mental clarity, and a sense of calm. Dance movement therapists should utilize this feeling within therapy, allowing participants to make sense of crises in their life as they exist in this heightened state.

Similar to the potential energy that is explored in physics, when set to music, physical movement manifests a mental state that allows for extensive exploration and introspective discovery. DMT is effective as a therapy in that it allows clients to manifest and confront deep psychological issues while existing in a state of nirvana—the result of dance. Essentially, DMT allows the participant to feel good about him or herself during the sessions, and be open and receptive to learning about their patterns of thought, and any maladaptive behavior ("About").

Playing specifically to this idea of finding comfort through one's own body, a case study was done involving an adolescent girl (referred to as "Alex") who struggled with acute body dysmorphic disorder—a mental illness whose victims are subject to obsession with perceived flaws in their appearance. The aim of the study was to examine "the relationship between an adolescent female's overall wellness, defined by quality of life, and her participation in a dance/movement therapy [DMT]-based holistic wellness curriculum" (Hagensen 150). During the six-week-long data-collection and observation period, Alex's sessions took place in a private psychotherapy office and included normal dance and movement based therapy, along with a learning curriculum that focused on mindfulness, body image, movement, friendships, and nutrition. Her therapist wanted not only to ensure that Alex receive the necessary DMT to overcome her body dysmorphic disorder, but also to equip her with the tools to better combat it in the future, should it resurface.

In total, the case study lasted four months, and included nine individual therapy sessions, and a handful of parental check-in meetings (to get their input on her progress). Using the Youth Quality of Life-Research Version (YQOL-R) and parent surveys, both qualitative and quantitative data were collected that revealed that Alex did indeed learn more about herself, and how her body and mind function together. The psychologists involved concluded that the use of DMT was appropriate for Alex's case, and it proved to be effective in transforming her distorted image of herself (Hagensen 168).

Some may dispute this evidence by saying that the case of a single adolescent girl is not sufficient to deem DMT effective; however, it is extremely difficult to limit confounding variables in large-scale therapeutic experiments. In the realm of psychology, individual studies

provide data that is just as important as that of bigger experiments. To further demonstrate DMT's effectiveness on a larger scale though, I turn to a study that was conducted in Germany in 2012 for evidence.

After recruiting 17 dance therapists and randomly selecting 162 participants, a study was conducted to test the efficacy of a 10-week long DMT group and whether or not the quality of life (QOL) of the participants improved. Ninety-seven of the participants were randomly assigned to the therapy group (the experimental group), whilst the remaining 65 were placed on a waitlist, meaning that they did not receive any treatment (the control group) (Bräuninger 296). All of the participants suffered from stress, and felt that they needed professional help dealing with it. The study utilized a subject-design, and included a pre-test, post-test, and six-month follow-up test. As hypothesized, the results demonstrated that participants in the experimental DMT group significantly improved the QOL, both in the short term (right after the sessions terminated) and in the long term (at the six-month follow-up). The greatest QOL improvements were in the areas of psychological well-being and general life in both the short- and long-term. At the end of the study, it was concluded that, "Dance movement therapy significantly improves QOL in the short and long term" (Bräuninger 301).

DMT does prove to be an effective means of therapy in the cases of body dysmorphic disorder and stress; however, when it comes to using DMT in the treatment of schizophrenia, it seems to fall short. In an attempt to speak to the effectiveness of dance therapy in the context of severe mental illnesses and disorders, a group of psychologists conducted a study to "evaluate the effects of dance therapy for people with schizophrenia or schizophrenia-like illnesses compared with standard care and other interventions" (Xia 675). Although DMT did not do any harm, there was no identifiable reduction in the participant's symptoms, nor was there an overall improvement in mental cognition. It was concluded that the results of the study did not affirm nor deny the use of dance/movement therapy amongst the group of schizophrenic participants (Xia 676).

I believe that the aforementioned case study brings to light something key about DMT: the kinds of people and mental illnesses that it can be successful for. As demonstrated by the study conducted on schizophrenic patients, DMT isn't necessarily effective for the entire spectrum of mental illness. DMT has been shown to be more effective for those dealing with less serious mental illnesses, or are simply struggling to cope with passing crises in their life. For

example, problems with stress, self-image, family, time management, and relationships are ideal issues to deal with in a DMT setting (Payne 14). Studies have shown that these are the most successfully resolved personal conflicts in this therapy.

Although DMT may not be an effective treatment for certain people or problems, it is unlikely that it will cause detriment to patients, unlike other therapies. For example, it is very common for patients in traditional verbal therapy to feel intense and strong emotions that they were not prepared to encounter, and therefore, not equipped to handle. They can have an increased anxiety and anxiousness as a result of verbal therapy, and even potentially manifest and endure false memories (Linden 308). When a client is difficult to get talking, therapists will inquire for information and ask thought-provoking questions to initiate conversation or better develop their understanding of a patient's situation. In some cases, this has been shown to encourage the development of false memories because the therapist is overbearing and trying too hard to evoke reactions from their reluctant clients. These negative side effects of therapy may also manifest themselves in DMT; however, this is very unlikely given the holistic nature of the therapy, and the compassionate role of the therapist.

Along with its positive effects on participants, another attribute to the utilization of DMT is that a holistic curriculum may be easily interwoven and incorporated alongside the standard therapy. Instead of participation only in standard therapy sessions, a therapist can also act as a teacher. By helping participants learn about mindfulness and introspection techniques, along with equipping them with coping skills, the therapist/teacher is able to help their clients learn how to combat problems they may face in the future, after therapy has ended. Like in the case of Alex, it is helpful to learn not just about thinking and behavioral patterns, but what they mean, and techniques to keep them in check.

A holistic curriculum is based on "the premise that each person finds identity, meaning, and purpose in life through connections to the community, to the natural world, and to spiritual values such as compassion and peace" (Miller). In other words, when instilled in the context of DMT, participants learn not only about themselves, but also about their interactions with others and the natural world. Although some find such a premise to be too free-spirited for them, the previously mentioned connections are arguably some of the most important one's in an individual's life. Many people place too great of an emphasis on being happy, and finding happiness, but choose to ignore the introspective process of examining their relationships. By

combining DMT and a holistic curriculum, one can truly begin to understand how they function cognitively, what effect that has on their personal relationships, and what their personal role is in a society and in the world.

Finally, DMT is simply more practical and fun than other, more conventional forms of therapy. It is in essence the vitamin C you would take to not just help you get over a cold, but that you would take to help prevent a cold. In contrast, other therapy styles act as the antibiotics you would take once an infection has set in—there are no preventative measures. When most people make the decision to attend therapy, it is because all else has failed and speaking with a therapist is their last resort. Since DMT is a much more relaxed and natural style of therapy, learned exercise and techniques can easily be incorporated into daily life. While most people won't keep a journal of their dreams, or record every instance in the day they've felt anxious (as many clinical therapists would advise), it would be practical to attend a dance class once a week or so. Just by being in class, learning choreography and allowing the body to move, one *can* lose and discover themself all at the same time. DMT can be as simple as just improvising movement to a song and allowing the mind to be free for a fleeting moment (Eddy 6). And although short, it can still provide enough time to calm the psyche and encourage distinct moments of introspection.

DMT is an extremely underrated area of psychology. With that being said, I also believe it can be a powerful form of therapy and it has been shown to greatly improve participants' quality of life and their outlook on it. As demonstrated by the previous case studies and experiments, DMT allows clients to think critically about their own issues and maladaptive behaviors, and become capable of introspection. Although DMT may not be effective for all mental illnesses, it is still nonetheless a powerful tool for significant psychological change, and should be used far more often as a form of treatment. Instead of instantly jumping to the conclusion that traditional psychotherapy is the best option for all clients, patients and therapists alike should perhaps recognize that the most natural thing to our body—movement—could act as the basis for interpersonal discovery and provide impressive levels of mental clarity.

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Teacher Takeaways

"This is a good example of Rogerian argument. Rather than taking a confrontational position that might alienate those who disagree, the author acknowledges the grounds for disagreement while explaining why opponents' concerns may be misplaced. Logos and ethos *are both successfully employed in that process. However, the use of pathos is largely limited to the first two paragraphs, where the reader is invited to imagine two radically different therapy scenarios. That works well, but using* pathos *more broadly might vary the tone of the essay and engage the reader more directly in the argument."*

– Professor Dunham

We Don't Care About Child Slaves

When you walk into the mall or any department store, your main goal is to snatch a deal, right? You scout for the prettiest dress with the lowest price or the best fitting jeans with the biggest discount. And once you find it, you go to the checkout and purchase it right away. Congratulations—now it's all yours! But here's the thing: the item that you just purchased could have possibly been made from the sweat, blood, and tears of a six-year-old child in Vietnam. According to the International Labour Organization (ILO), one in ten Vietnamese children aged 5 to 17 are slave workers, and Vietnam is the second biggest source of imported goods to the US. This means that a lot of the things we get from Target, Walmart, and countless other stores are made by child slaves. The problem is that the bargain on that cute shirt we just got was too good for us to think twice—about where it came from, how it was made. As a society, we need to take action against child labor by being conscious of where we buy our goods so we don't feed the system that exploits children.

When we think of child slavery, we are horrified by it. How can someone treat children in such a way? It's horrific, it's terrible, and it's a serious crime! But then again, those shoes you saw in the store are so cute and are at such a cheap price, you must buy them! Even if they were

made by child slaves, you can't do anything about that situation and purchasing them won't do any harm at all, right? The unfortunate reality is that we are all hypocritical when it comes to this issue. I'm pretty sure that all of us have some sort of knowledge of child slave workers in third-world countries, but how come we never take it into consideration when we buy stuff? Maybe it's because you believe your actions as one person are too little to affect anything, or you just can't pass up that deal. Either way, we need to all start doing research about where we are sending our money.

As of 2014, 1.75 million Vietnamese children are working in conditions that are classified as child labor according to the ILO (Rau). Most of these children work in crowded factories and work more than 42 hours a week. These children are the ones who make your clothes, toys, and other knick-knacks that you get from Target, Walmart, etc. If not that, they're the ones who make the zippers on your coats and buttons on your sweater in a horrifying, physically unstable work environment.

How exactly do these children end up in this situation? According to a BBC report, labor traffickers specifically target children in remote and poor villages, offering to take them to the city to teach them vocational training or technical skills. Their parents usually agree because they are not aware of the concept of human trafficking since they live in an isolated area. Also, it gives the family an extra source of income. The children are then sent to other places and are forced to work in mostly farms or factories. These children receive little to no pay and most of the time get beaten if they made a mistake while working. They are also subject to mental abuse and at the worst, physically tortured by their boss. Another reason why children end up in the labor force is because they must provide for their family; their parents are unable to do so for whatever reason (Brown).

In 2013, BBC uncovered the story of a Vietnamese child labor victim identified as "Hieu." Hieu was a slave worker in Ho Chi Minh city who jumped out of the third floor window of a factory with two other boys to escape his "workplace." Aged 16 at the time, Hieu explained that a woman approached him in his rural village in Dien Bien, the country's poorest province, and offered him vocational training in the city. He and 11 other children were then sent to the city and forced to make clothes for a garment factory in a cramped room for the next two years. "We started at 6AM and finished work at midnight," he said. "If we made a mistake making the clothes they would beat us with a stick." Fortunately for Hieu, he managed to escape and is one

of the 230 children saved by The Blue Dragon Foundation, a charity that helps fight against child labor (Brown).

For the rest of the victims, however, hope is yet to be found. According to the US Department of Commerce, most of the apparel that is sold in the US is made overseas, and Vietnam is the second biggest source for imported goods right behind China. Bangladesh, Indonesia, and Sri Lanka are also on the list of the top sources of US apparel imports. This means that the demand for goods from these countries is high; therefore, the need for child slave workers is increasing.

One of the biggest corporations in the world that has an ongoing history of the use of child slaves is Nike. According to IHSCS News, workers at Vietnam shoe manufacturing plants make 20 cents an hour, are beaten by supervisors, and are not allowed to leave their work posts. Vietnam isn't the only place that has factories with dangerous working conditions owned by the athletic-wear giant (Wilsey). Nike also has sweatshops in Bangladesh, Pakistan, Indonesia, and China, just to name a few, that have all been investigated by officials due to inhumane working conditions. Everything from clothing and shoes, to soccer balls are potentially made by child slaves in these countries (Greenhouse). Please keep this in mind the next time you visit your local Nike store.

Vietnam has actually been praised for its efforts in combating child slave issues. According to The Borgen Project, Vietnam has increased the number of prosecutions it holds to help end overseas gang activity (Rau). However, the country lacks internal control in child trafficking, and traffickers who are caught receive light punishments. The person who trafficked Hieu and the 11 other children only faced a fine of $500 and his factory was closed down, but he did not go to court (Brown).

Let's be real: doing our part to fight against child labor as members of a capitalistic society is not the easiest thing to do. We are all humans who have needs and our constant demand to buy is hard to resist, especially when our society is fueled by consumerism. However, big changes takes little steps. We can start to combat this issue by doing research on where we spend our money and try to not support corporations and companies that will enable the child labor system. We can also donate to charities, such as The Blue Dragon Foundation, to further help the cause. Yes, it is hard to not shop at your favorite stores and I can't stop you from doing so. But all I ask is that you educate yourself on where you are spending your money, and

hopefully your moral compass will guide you onto the right path. If you are horrified by the thought of a 5-year-old child being beaten and working 24 hours a day, do not be a part of the problem. Keep Hieu—and the other 1.75 million children who are currently suffering in Vietnam—in mind the next time you buy something.

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Carnivore Consumption Killing Climate

The year of 1955 was the year of many revolutionary names: you might remember the rise of Elvis or the valor of Rosa Parks that year. Some might recognize it as the birth year of two of the 20th centuries best and brightest: Mr. Jobs, and Mr. Gates. However, I recognize it as the birth year of a pair even brighter than that of Steve and Bill. A pair of golden arches that is: McDonald's was founded April 15, 1955, and ever since then, the market for fast, greasy, and cheap food has been a staple in many countries around the world. Which has led to a steady rise in the consumption of meat and other animal products. This spells out disaster for not only personal health but the health of the environment. The direct link between the consumption of animal products and global warming is negatively effecting the health of this generation. If action isn't taken by each of us, global warming will be hazardous for future generations who will be left with the burden of reversing the wastefulness of their greedy ancestors.

While there are many industries that contribute to global warming, the food and farming industry has one of the largest impacts on the environment. For starters, every step of the process, from the birth of the calf to the burger patty sizzling on the grill, produces near irreversible damage to the environment. All livestock, not only cows, passively contribute to global warming. "Livestock, especially cattle, produce methane (CH_4) as part of their digestion. This process is called enteric fermentation, and it represents almost one third of the emissions from the Agriculture sector" ("Greenhouse"). While this may seem insignificant to nice small farms with only a few cows, large corporations own thousands of cattle, all of which add up to

significant amount of enteric fermentation. Not to mention, the thousands of gallons of gas that goes into transporting the cows and there are tons of coal or fossil fuels being burned to power big warehouses where cows and other various meat-producing animals are crammed into undersized cages, where they are modified and bred for slaughter.

Moreover, the driving of semis release carbon dioxide into the air. These trucks are used to haul the animals, their feed, and the final product, your food. The final number of trips, when all said and done, adds up to an enormous amount of gas being burned. "When we burn fossil fuels, such as coal and gas, we release carbon dioxide (CO_2). CO_2 builds up in the atmosphere and causes Earth's temperature to rise" ("Climate"). In summary, the burning of gas and other fossil fuels in one major way the meat, and the entire food industry contributes to global warming. The rising of the earth's temperature is like the flick of the first domino in the line. Heating of the Earth being the first domino leading to melting the ice caps and so on. Everyone has heard the spiel of melting ice caps and "saving the polar bears!"; however, there are many serious and harmful effects of such CO_2 emissions. Some may rebuttal that "global warming doesn't have any effect on me", but there is a list of health problems caused by global warming that do negatively impact humans.

Unless people can come together and reduce, not just their CO2 footprint, but all greenhouse gas emissions there will continue to be an increase medical problems globally. The rising temperatures is causing longer allergy seasons and an increase in allergens or dust, pollen and other particles in the air. "Research studies associate fine particles [allergens] with negative cardiovascular outcomes such as heart attacks, formation of deep vein blood clots, and increased mortality from several other causes. These adverse health impacts intensify as temperatures rise" (Portier 14). For further explanation, polluting the atmosphere by burning gas and raising mass numbers of livestock is causing the global temperature to rise. These negative health issues are only the outcome of global warming. I have purposely omitted the health problems, though many, of eating red meat. Cutting meat out of your diet will improve your individual health, but more importantly, it will improve the health of the earth. Some critics might argue that eating just one burger can't raise the entire Earth's temperature. The simple answer is, it doesn't. However, making the conscious decision to eat meat on a day to day basis adds up to a slew of health problems accompanied by a large personal carbon footprint.

Acidification of the oceans is one of the harmful effects on the environment caused by an inflated carbon footprint. This happens when the CO_2 that is released into the atmosphere, absorbs into the ocean, thus leading to a change in the pH level of the ocean. "High concentrations of carbon dioxide in the atmosphere increase the amount that is dissolved into the ocean, leading to acidification... many [people on coastal regions] depend on marine protein for daily subsistence, the consequences of perturbing delicate ocean and coastal systems will be far-reaching" (Portier 6). This is problematic for any who live on coastal regions and may rely heavily on seafood in their diet but is also a problem for the fish as well. Disrupting an entire food chain could have many unforeseen consequences.

Meat lovers will interject: "well food other than meat is produced in factories, don't those contribute to global warming too?" These arguments are not invalid; while the meat industry may cause much of the food and agriculture's emissions, other methods of food production are outdated and harmful as well. The problem of global warming, is not solely the fault of the meat industry, the blame should be put onto anyone who produces more than their fair share of greenhouse gases. For example, the way rice is cultivated could very well be a place CO_2 emissions could be cut. "A change in rice processing and consumption patterns could reduce CO_2 emission by 2-16%" (Norton 42). The implementation made to reduce the footprint of rice cultivation, could then be remodeled to be effectively used to reduce the pollution of the food and agriculture sector as a whole.

However, more simple things than changing the way food is produced can help save the environment. It can be as simple as picking up a piece of litter off the ground to deciding to recycle all your bottles and cans. But for those looking to make a greater contribution to saving the world, stop eating meat. Or, if that is too difficult, reduce the amount of meat you eat. A paper published by the World Resources Institute "showed that reducing heavy red meat consumption, would lead to a per capita food and land use-related greenhouse gas emissions reduction of between 15 and 35 percent by 2050. Going vegetarian could reduce those per capita emissions by half" (Magill). As a vegetarian I gave up eating meat mainly for this reason. But not only can you save the environment by giving up meat, by doing so you can save more than just your life, but millions of lives; "switching to vegetarianism could help prevent nearly 7m premature deaths and help reduce health care costs by $1b" (Harvey). As mentioned, there are multiple positive impacts of eliminating meat from your diet, and it is the best way to reduce

your carbon footprint. In tandem, being aware of your carbon footprint is very important, because not monitoring individual emissions is causing greenhouse gases to reach dangerous levels. Which is beginning to cause a variety of health problems for many people which will only intensify if nothing is done on a personal and global level.

Not only do we have to worry about the changes to ocean and costal life, but life everywhere will get far worse if nothing is done to stop the warming of our planet. A world dominated by scientifically advanced greedy carnivores is not a world worth saving. The earth is on a slippery slope that is leading to extinction. The way we consume animal products is irresponsible because it poses a major threat to the environment and endangers humans. To respond to this, we need to develop new ways to combat ecological problems and change wasteful consumption habits. If we cannot stop our polluting and wasteful ways, we are destined to lose the planet that harbors everything we know.

To change the eating habits of an entire nation might be a feat all its own; changing the eating habits of an entire world seems impossible. I am confident that it all starts with one person making the right choice. I urge you to follow not only in my footsteps, but join the millions of others who are putting down their steak knives to fight climate change. I find it horrifying that some people would rather destroy their own race than change what goes on their plate. There is overwhelming evidence that illuminates the fiery connection between global warming and serious health problems. Now this generation and future generations will need to create regulations and invent new solutions to enjoy the same planet we have all called home.

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Interacting with Sources

Less than one generation ago, the biggest challenge facing research writers like you was tracking down relevant, credible, and useful information. Even the most basic projects required sifting through card catalogues, scrolling through endless microfiche and microfilm slides, and dedicating hours to scouring the stacks of different libraries. But now, there is no dearth of information: indeed, the Internet has connected us to more information than any single person could process in an entire lifetime.

Once you have determined which conversation you want to join, it's time to begin finding sources. Inquiry-based research requires many encounters with a diversity of sources, so the Internet serves us well by enabling faster, more expansive access. But while the Internet makes it much easier to find those sources, it comes with its own host of challenges. The biggest problems with primarily Internet-based research can be boiled down to two issues:

- There is too much out there to sift through everything that might be relevant, and
- There is an increased prominence of unreliable, biased, or simply untrue information.

This section focuses on developing strategies and techniques to make your research and research writing processes more efficient, reliable, and meaningful, especially when considering the unique difficulties presented by research writing in the digital age. Specifically, you will learn strategies for discovering, evaluating, and integrating sources.

Vocabulary

believer—a posture from which to read; reader makes efforts to appreciate, understand, and agree with the text they encounter.

block quote—a direct quote of more than four lines which is reformatted according to stylistic guidelines.

bootstrapping—the process of finding new sources using hyperlinked subject tags in the search results of a database.

citation mining—the process of using a text's citations, bibliography, or notes to track down other similar or related sources.

claim of evaluation—an argument determining relative value (i.e., better, best, worse, worst). Requires informed judgment based on evidence and a consistent metric.

claim of phenomenon—an argument exploring a measurable but arguable happening. Typically more straightforward than other claims, but should still be arguable and worth discussion.

claim of policy—an argument that proposes a plan of action to address an issue. Articulates a stance that requires action, often informed by understanding of both phenomenon and evaluation. Often uses the word "should." See call-to-action.

CRAAP Test—a technique for evaluating the credibility and use-value of a source; researcher considers the Currency, Relevance, Accuracy, Authority, and Purpose of the source to determine if it is trustworthy and useful.

credibility—the degree to which a text—its content, its author, and/or its publisher—is trustworthy and accurate.

direct quote—the verbatim use of another author's words. Can be used as evidence to support your claim, or as language to analyze/close-read to demonstrate an interpretation or insight.

doubter—a posture from which to read; reader makes efforts to challenge, critique, or undermine the text they encounter.

evidence—a part or combination of parts that lends support or proof to an arguable topic, idea, or interpretation.

the naysayer's voice—a voice that disagrees with the writer or speaker included within the text itself. Can be literal or imaginary. Helps author respond to criticism, transition between ideas, and manage argumentation.

paraphrase—author reiterates a main idea, argument, or detail of a text in their own words without drastically altering the length of the passage(s) they paraphrase. Contrast with summary.

primacy effect—a psychological effect experienced by most audiences: the opening statements of a text are more memorable than much of the content because they leave a 'first impression' in the audience's memory. Contrast with recency effect.

recency effect—a psychological effect experienced by most audiences: the concluding statements of a text are more memorable than much of the content because they are more recent in the audience's memory. Contrast with primacy effect.

signpost—a phrase or sentence that directs your reader. It can help you make connections, guide your reader's interpretation, ease transitions, and re-orient you to your thesis. Also known as a "signal phrase."

summary—a rhetorical mode in which an author reiterates the main ideas, arguments, and details of a text in their own words, condensing a longer text into a smaller version. Contrast with paraphrase.

thesis (statement)—a 1-3 sentence statement outlining the main insight(s), argument(s), or concern(s) of an essay; not necessary in every rhetorical situation; typically found at the beginning of an essay, though sometimes embedded later in the paper. Also referred to as a "So what?" statement.

ß**use-value—**the degree to which a text is usable for your specific project. A source is not inherently good or bad, but rather useful or not useful. Use-value is influenced by many factors, including credibility. See credibility and CRAAP Test.

Research Methods: Discovering Sources

Let's bust a myth before going any further: there is no such thing as a "good" source. Check out this video from Portland Community College.

What makes a source "good" is actually determined by your purpose: *how* you use the source in your text is most important to determining its value. If you plan to present something as truth—like a fact or statistic—it is wise to use a peer-reviewed journal article (one that has been evaluated by a community of scholars). But if you're trying to demonstrate a perspective or give **evidence**, you may not find what you need in a journal.

Your Position	A Supporting Fact (Something you present as <u>factual</u>)	An Example that Demonstrates Your Position (Something that you present as <u>a perspective</u>)
Women are unfairly criticized on social media.	A peer-reviewed scholarly article: Sills, Sophie, et al. "Rape Culture and Social Media: Young Critics and a Feminist Counterpublic." *Feminist Media Studies*, vol. 16, no. 6, 2016, pp. 935–951.	A popular but clickbait-y news site: Tamplin, Harley. "Instagram Users Are Massive Narcissists, Study Shows." *Elite Daily*, Bustle Digital Group 3 April 2017, https://www.elitedaily.com/social-news/instagram-study-narcissistic-social-media-site/1848268.

If you want to showcase a diversity of perspectives, you will want to weave together a diversity of sources.

As you discover useful sources, try to expand your usual research process by experimenting with the techniques and resources included in this chapter.

The first and most important determining factor of your research is *where* you choose to begin. Although there are a great number of credible and useful texts available across different search platforms, I generally encourage my students begin with two resources:

- Their college or university's library and its website, and
- Google Scholar.

These resources are not bulletproof, and you can't always find what you need through them. However, their general search functionality and the databases from which they draw tend to be more reliable, specific, and professional. It is quite likely that your argument will be better received if it relies on the kind of sources you discover with these tools.

Your Library

Although the following information primarily focuses on making good use of your library's online tools, one of the most valuable and under-utilized resources at your disposal are the librarians themselves. The LCSC Library has reference librarians on staff. You are also eligible to get a library card at the Lewiston City Library and use the resources they have.

Research librarians (or, reference librarians) are not only well-versed in the research process, but they are also passionate about supporting students in their inquiry. The LCSC Library offers research support that you can access on-campus and remotely.
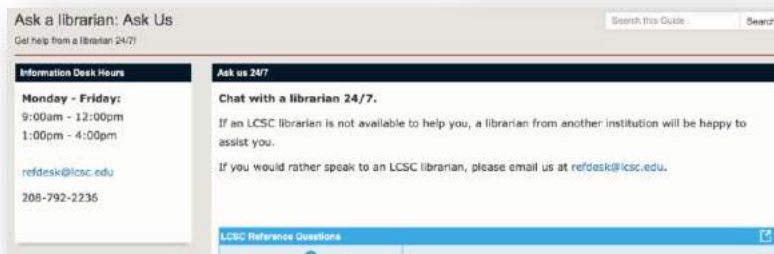
The first step in learning how your library will support you is to investigate their website. I encourage you to spend ten minutes familiarizing yourself with the college and community library websites, reviewing the following services:
- FAQ, student support, 24/7 Librarian Chat

- The LCSC Library has an integrated search bar (i.e., a search engine that allows you to search some or all databases and the library catalogue simultaneously).
- Learn how to access the "advanced search" function of the library's search bar.
- Log in to the library and save sources you find.
- Learn how to request sources not available at the library through Interlibrary Loan.
- Check out the multimedia or digital resource services, like video streaming or eBook libraries available through both the LCSC and Lewiston City Libraries.
- The Lewiston City Library subscribes to Kanapy, a video streaming service with both popular movies and documentaries. You can access digital books through Overdrive & Libby. The library also provides access to local and regional newspapers.

The two libraries provide different access to scholarly articles, books, and other media. They have subscriptions to databases filled will academic works in addition to owning a body of physical texts (books, DVDs, magazines, etc.). The Lewiston City Library is a part of a larger network of community libraries, and you can request books from the whole system, whereas LCSC can use Interlibrary loan to access material not available onsite.

It is worth noting that most library websites use an older form of search technology. You have likely realized that day-to-day search engines like Google will predict what you're searching, correct your spelling, and automatically return results that your search terms might not have exactly aligned with. (For example, I could google *How many basketball players on Jazz roster* and I would still likely get the results I needed.) Most library search engines don't do this, so you need to be very deliberate with your search terms.

Here are some tips:
- Consider synonyms and jargon that might be more likely to yield results. As you research, you will become more fluent in the language of your subject. Keep track of vocabulary that other scholars use, and revise your search terms based on this context-specific language.
- Use the Boolean operators ? and * for expanded results:
  - wom?n yields results for woman, women, womyn, etc.
  - medic* yields results for medic, medicine, medication, medicinal, medical, etc.
- Use the advanced search feature to combine search terms, exclude certain results, limit the search terms' applicability, etc.
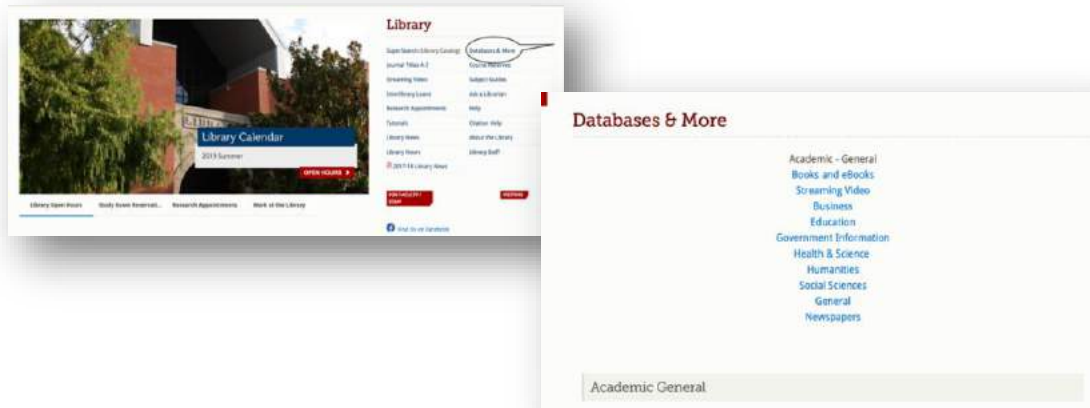
Academic Search Premier, and *EBSCO* are two large databases that LCSC subscribes to; they are quite broad and well established. While the library has an integrated search function, you will want to access these databases directly. Look for a link on the library website to "Databases & More" to find specific networks of sources.

Google Scholar (scholar.google.com)

Because Google Scholar is a bit more intuitive than most library search engines, and because it draws from large databases, you might find it easier to use. Many of the results you turn up using Google Scholar are available online as free access PDFs.
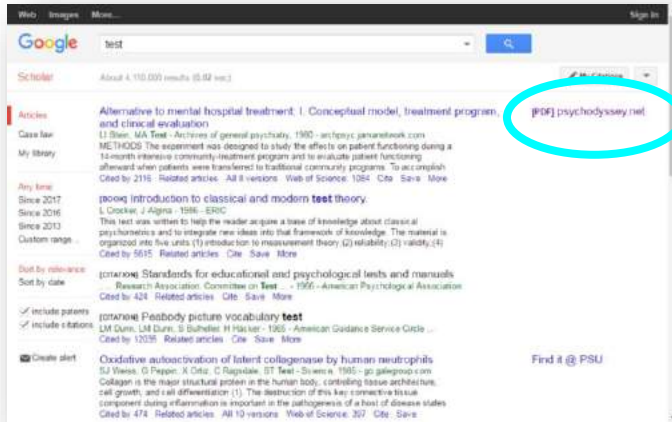
That said, Scholar will often bring up citations for books, articles, and other texts that you don't have access to. Before you use Google Scholar, make sure you're logged in to your school account in the same browser; the search engine should provide links to "Find it @ LCSC" if your institution subscribes to the appropriate database.
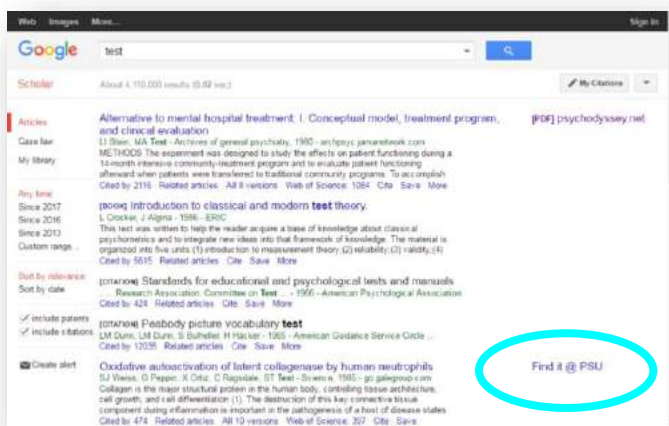
If you find a citation, article preview, or other text via Google Scholar but can't access it easily, you can return to your library website and search for it directly. It's possible that you have access to the text via a loaning program like ILLiad.

Google Scholar will also let you limit your results by various constraints, making it easier to wade through many, many results.
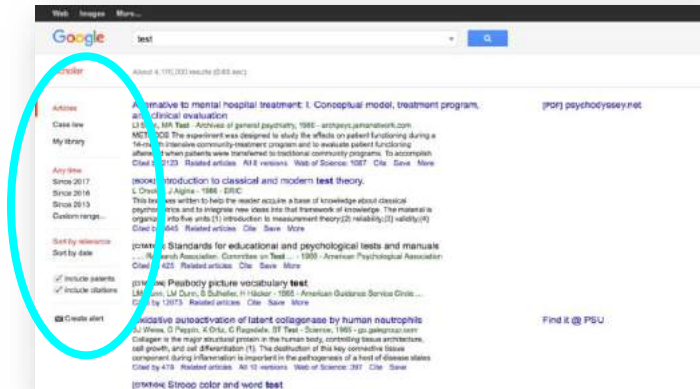
Although Google Scholar is fairly intuitive, like the Google you already know, there are a number of features of both Google and Google Scholar that you may not already know! Check out these pages for more detail:

- "Google Tricks That Will Change the Way You Search" by Jack Linshi
- "Refine web searches" and "Filter your search results" from Google's help section

Wikipedia

A quick note on Wikipedia: many instructors forbid the use of Wikipedia as a cited source in an essay. Wikipedia is a great place for quick facts and background knowledge, but because its content is user-created and -curated, it is vulnerable to the spread of misinformation characteristic of the broader Internet. Wikipedia has been vetting their articles more thoroughly in recent years, but only about 1 in 200 are internally rated as "good articles." There are two hacks that you should know in order to use Wikipedia more critically:

It is wise to avoid a page has a warning banner at the top, such as:
- This article needs to be updated,
- The examples and perspective in this article deal primarily with the United States and do not represent a worldwide view of the subject,
- The neutrality of this article is disputed,
- This article needs additional citations for verification,
- This article includes a list of references, but its sources remain unclear because it has insufficient inline citations.

If your Wikipedia information is crucial and seems reliable, use the linked citation to draw from instead of the Wikipedia page, as pictured below. This will help you ensure that the linked content is legitimate (dead links and suspect citations are no good) and avoid citing Wikipedia
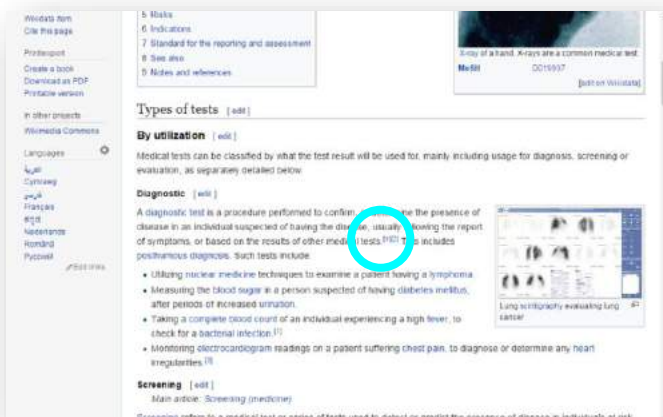
as a main source.

Other Resources

As we will continue to discuss, the most useful sources for your research project are not always proper academic, peer-reviewed articles. For instance, if I were writing a paper on the experience of working for United Airlines, a compelling blog post by a flight attendant that speaks to the actual working conditions they experienced might be more appropriate than a data-driven scholarly investigation of the United Airlines consumer trends. You might find that a TED Talk, a published interview, an advertisement, or some other non-academic source would be useful for your writing. Therefore, it's important that you apply the skills and techniques from "Evaluating Sources" to all the texts you encounter, being especially careful with texts that some people might see as unreliable.

Additional Techniques for Discovering Sources

All it takes is one or two really good sources to get you started. You should keep your perspective wide to catch as much as you can—but if you've found a handful of good sources, there are four tools that can help you find even more:

The author of that perfect article probably got some of their information from somewhere else, just like you. **Citation mining** is the process of using a text's citations, bibliography, or notes to track down other similar or related sources. Plug the author's citations into your school's library search engine or Google Scholar to see if you have access.

Bootstrapping is a technique that works best on search engines with detail features, like your library search engine. As you can see in the screenshot below, these search engines tag each text with certain subject keywords. By clicking on those keywords, you can link to other texts tagged with the same keywords, typically according to Library of Congress standards. WorldCat is a tremendous tool that catalogs the most citations of any database I've ever seen. Even
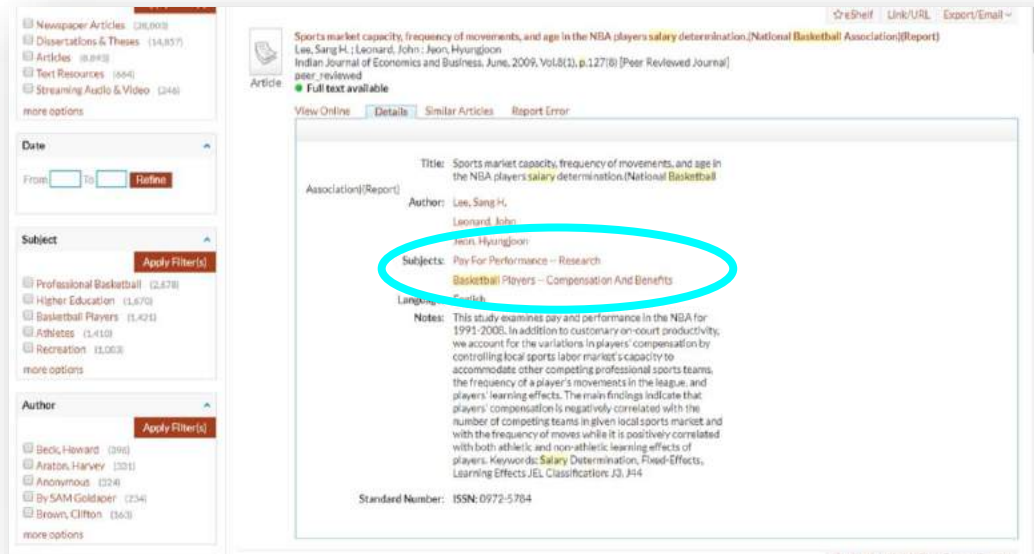
though you can't always access texts through WorldCat, you can figure out which nearby libraries might be able to help you out.

The first and most important piece of advice I can offer you as you begin to dig into these sources: stay organized. By taking notes and keeping record of where each idea is coming from, you save yourself a lot of time—and avoid the risk of unintentional plagiarism. If you could stand to brush up on your notetaking skills, take a look at Appendix A: Engaged Reading Strategies.

Research Methods: Evaluating Sources

If there's no such thing as an inherently "good" or "bad" source, how do we determine if a source is right for our purposes? As you sift through sources, you should consider credibility and use-value to determine whether a source is right for you. Credibility refers to the reliability and accuracy of the author, their writing, and the publisher. Use-value is a broad term that includes whether you should use a text in your research paper, as well as how you will use that text. The CRAAP Test will help you explore both credibility and use-value.

Currency

How recently was the text created? Does that impact the accuracy or value of its contents, either positively or negatively?

Generally, a text that is current is more credible and useful: data will be more accurate, the content will reflect more up-to-date ideas, and so on. However, there are some exceptions.

- A text that is not current might be useful because it reflects attitudes of its publication era. For instance, if I were writing a paper on sexism in the office environment, it might be convincing to include a memo on dress codes from 1973.
- A text that is current might not be useful because the phenomena it discusses might not have existed long enough to have substantial evidence or study. For instance, if I were writing a paper on nanorobotics, it would be difficult to evaluate long-term impacts of this emergent technology because it simply hasn't been around long enough.

Relevance

Is the text closely related to your topic? Does it illuminate your topic, or is it only tangentially connected?

A text that is relevant is generally more useful, as you probably already realize. Exceptions to this might include:

- A text that is too relevant might not be useful because it might create overlap or redundancy in your argument. You should use texts like this to pivot, complicate, or challenge your topic so you are not just repeating someone else's ideas.
- A text that is only slightly relevant might be useful in providing background knowledge, drawing out an analogy, or gesturing to important questions or ideas you don't have room to discuss in the scope of your paper.

Accuracy

Is there any reason to doubt the validity of the text? Is it possible that the information and ideas included are simply untrue?

You might start out by relying on your instincts to answer these questions, but your evaluation of accuracy should also informed more objectively by the other elements of the CRAAP Test (e.g., if a text is outdated, it might no longer be accurate). Of course, the importance of this element depends on your use of the source; for instance, if I were writing a paper on conservative responses to Planned Parenthood, I might find it useful to discuss the inaccurate videos released by a pro-choice group several years ago.

Authority

Who is the author? Who is the publisher? Do either or both demonstrate ethos *through their experience, credentials, or public perception?*

This element also depends on your use of the source; for instance, if I were writing a paper on cyberbullying, I might find it useful to bring in posts from anonymous teenagers. Often, though, academic presses (e.g., Oxford University) and government publishers (e.g., hhs.gov) are assumed to have an increased degree of authority when compared with popular presses (e.g., *The Atlantic*) or self-published texts (e.g., blogs). It may be difficult to ascertain an author and a publisher's authority without further research, but here are some red flags if you're evaluating a source with questionable authority:

- There is no author listed.
- The website hosting the webpage or article is incomplete, outdated, or broken.
- The author seems to use little factual evidence.
- The author is known for extreme or one-dimensional views.
- The source has a sponsoring organization with an agenda that might undermine the validity of the information.

Purpose	*What is the author trying to achieve with their text? What are their motivations or reasons for publication and writing? Does that purpose influence the credibility of the text?*
	As we've discussed, every piece of rhetoric has a purpose. It's important that you identify and evaluate the implied and/or declared purposes of a text before you put too much faith in it.

Even though you're making efforts to keep an open mind to different positions, it is likely that you've already formed some opinions about your topic. As you review each source, try to read both with and against the grain; in other words, try to position yourself at least once as a **doubter** and at least once as **believer**. Regardless of what the source actually has to say, you should (a) try to take the argument on its own terms and try to appreciate or understand it; *and* (b) be critical of it, looking for its blind spots and problems. This is especially important when we encounter texts we really like or really dislike—we need to challenge our early perceptions to interrupt projection.

As you proceed through each step of the CRAAP Test, try to come up with answers as both a doubter and a believer. For example, try to come up with a reason why a source's Authority makes it credible and useful; then, come up with a reason why the same source's Authority makes it unreliable and not useful.

This may seem like a cumbersome process, but with enough practice, the CRAAP Test will become second nature. You will become more efficient as you evaluate more texts, and eventually you will be able to identify a source's use-value and credibility without running the entire test. Furthermore, as you may already realize, you can eventually just start eliminating sources if they fail to demonstrate credibility and/or use-value through at least one step of the CRAAP Test.

Interpreting Sources and Processing Information

Once you've found a source that seems both useful and credible, you should spend some time reading, rereading, and interpreting that text. The more time you allow yourself to think through a text, the more likely your use of it will be rhetorically effective.

Although it is time-consuming, I encourage you to process each text by:
- Reading once through, trying to develop a global understanding of the content
- Re-reading at least once, annotating the text along the way, and then copying quotes, ideas, and your reactions into your notes
- Summarizing the text in your notes in casual prose
- Reflecting on how the text relates to your topic and your stance on the topic
- Reflecting on how the text relates to others you've read

You need not perform such thorough reading with texts you don't intend to use—e.g., if you determine that the source is too old to inform your work. However, the above list will ensure that you develop a nuanced and accurate understanding of the author's perspective. Think of this process as part of the ongoing conversation: before you start expressing your ideas, you should listen carefully, ask follow-up questions to clarify what you've heard, and situate the ideas within the context of the bigger discussion.

Research Methods: Drawing from Sources and Synthesizing

Finding Your Position, Posture, and Perspective

As you begin drafting your research essay, remember the conversation analogy: by using other voices, you are entering into a discussion that is much bigger than just you, even bigger than the authors you cite. However, what you have to say is important, so you are bringing together your ideas with others' ideas from a unique interpretive standpoint. Although it may take you a while to find it, you should be searching for your unique position in a complex network of discourse.

Here are a few questions to ask yourself as you consider this:
- How would I introduce this topic to someone who is completely unfamiliar?
- What are the major viewpoints on this topic? Remember that very few issues have only two sides.
- With which viewpoints do I align? With which viewpoints do I disagree? Consider agreement ("Yes"), disagreement ("No"), and qualification ("Yes, but...").

- What did I know about this issue before I began researching? What have I learned so far?
- What is my rhetorical purpose with this project? If your purpose is to argue a position, be sure that you feel comfortable with the terms and ideas discussed in the previous section on argumentation.

Articulating Your Claim

Once you've started to catch the rhythm of the ongoing conversation, it's time to find a way to put your perspective into words. Bear in mind that your thesis statement should evolve as you research, draft, and revise: you might tweak the wording, adjust your scope, change your position or even your entire topic in the course of your work. Because your thesis is a "working thesis" or "(hypo)thesis," you should use the following strategies to draft your thesis but be ready to make adjustments along the way.

Your thesis statement can and should evolve as you continue writing your paper.
Often, I prefer to think of a thesis instead as a (hypo)thesis—an informed estimation of the answer(s) to your research question.

Previously, we introduced the T3, Occasion/Position, and Embedded Thesis models. As a refresher,

A **T3 statement** articulates the author's stance, then offers three supporting reasons, subtopics, or components of the argument.

> *Throughout history, women have been legally oppressed by different social institutions, including exclusion from the workplace, restriction of voting rights, and regulations of healthcare.*

An **Occasion/Position** statement starts with a statement of relevance related to the rhetorical occasion, then articulates the author's stance.

> *Recent Congressional activity in the U.S. has led me to wonder how women's freedoms have been restricted throughout history. Women have been legally oppressed by many different institutions since the inception of the United States.*

An **Embedded Thesis** presents the research question, perhaps with a gesture to the answer(s). This strategy requires that you clearly articulate your stance somewhere later in your paper, at a point when your evidence has led you to the answer to your guiding question.

> *Many people would agree that women have experienced oppression throughout the history of the United States, but how has this oppression been exercised legally through different social institutions?*

Of course, these are only three strategies to write a thesis. You may use one of them, combine several of them, or use a different strategy entirely.
To build on these three strategies, we should look at three kinds of claims: three sorts of postures that you might take to articulate your stance as a thesis.

Claim of Phenomenon: This statement indicates that your essay will explore a measurable but arguable happening.

> **"Research is to see what everybody else has seen, and to think what nobody else has thought."**
> - Albert Szent-Györgyi

> *Obesity rates correlate with higher rates of poverty.*

Claims of phenomenon are often more straightforward, but should still be arguable and worth discussion.

Claim of Evaluation: This statement indicates that your essay will determine something that is better, best, worse, or worst in regard to your topic.

> *The healthiest nations are those with economic safety nets.*

Claims of evaluation require you to make an informed judgment based on evidence. In this example, the student would have to establish a metric for "healthy" in addition to exploring the way that economic safety nets promote healthful behaviors—What makes someone "healthy" and why are safety nets a pathway to health?

Claim of Policy: This statement indicates that your essay will propose a plan of action to best address an issue.

> *State and federal governments should create educational programs, develop infrastructure, and establish food-stamp benefits to promote healthy eating for people experiencing poverty.*

Claims of policy do the most heavy lifting: they articulate a stance that requires action, from the reader or from another stakeholder. A claim of policy often uses the word "should."

You may notice that these claims can be effectively combined at your discretion. Sometimes, when different ideas overlap, it's absolutely necessary to combine them to create a cohesive stance. For instance, in the example above, the claim of policy would require the author to establish a claim of phenomenon, too: before advocating for action, the author must demonstrate what that action responds to. For more practice, check out the activity in the following section titled "Articulating Your Claim — Practicing Thesis Development."

Situating Yourself Using Your Research

While you're drafting, be diligent and deliberate with your use of other people's words, ideas, and perspectives. Foreground *your* thesis (even if it's still in progress) and use paraphrases, direct quotes, and summary in the background to explain, support, complicate, or contrast your perspective.

Depending on the work you've done to this point, you may have a reasonable body of quotes, summaries, and paraphrases that you can draw from. Whether or not you've been collecting evidence throughout your research process, be sure to return to the original sources to ensure the accuracy and efficacy of your quotes, summaries, and paraphrases.

In the section on *Writing Project Three*, we encountered paraphrasing, quoting, and summarizing for a text wrestling essay, but let's take a minute to revisit them in this new rhetorical situation. How do you think using support in a research paper is different from using support in an analysis?

> **Whether you are quoting, paraphrasing, or summarizing, you must *always* include an appropriate citation.**

A **direct quote** uses quotation marks (" ") to indicate where you're borrowing an author's words verbatim in your own writing. Use a direct quote if someone else wrote or said something in a distinctive or particular way and you want to capture their words exactly.

Direct quotes are good for establishing *ethos* and providing evidence. In a research essay, you will be expected to use some direct quotes; however, too many direct quotes can overwhelm your thesis and actually undermine your sense of *ethos*. Your research paper should strike a balance between quoting, paraphrasing, and summarizing—and articulating your own perspective!

Summarizing refers to the action of boiling down an author's ideas into a shorter version in your own words. Summary demonstrates your understanding of a text, but it also can be useful in giving background information or making a complex idea more accessible.

When we **paraphrase**, we are processing information or ideas from another person's text and putting it in our own words. The main difference between paraphrase and summary is scope: if summarizing means rewording and condensing, then paraphrasing means rewording without drastically altering length. However, paraphrasing is also generally more faithful to the spirit of the original; whereas a summary requires you to process and invites your own perspective, a paraphrase ought to mirror back the original idea using your own language.

Paraphrasing is helpful for establishing background knowledge or general consensus, simplifying a complicated idea, or reminding your reader of a certain part of another text. It is

also valuable when relaying statistics or historical information, both of which are usually more fluidly woven into your writing when spoken with your own voice.

Each of these three tactics should support your argument: you should integrate quotes, paraphrases, and summary in with your own writing. Below, you can see three examples of these tools. Consider how the direct quote, the paraphrase, and the summary each could be used to achieve different purposes.

Original Passage

It has been suggested (again rather anecdotally) that giraffes do communicate using infrasonic vocalizations (the signals are verbally described to be similar—in structure and function—to the low-frequency, infrasonic "rumbles" of elephants). It was further speculated that the extensive frontal sinus of giraffes acts as a resonance chamber for infrasound production. Moreover, particular neck movements (e.g. the neck stretch) are suggested to be associated with the production of infrasonic vocalizations.

from

Baotic, Anton, Florian Sicks and Angela S. Stoeger. "Nocturnal 'Humming' Vocalizations: Adding a Piece of the Puzzle of Giraffe Vocal Communication." BioMed Central Research Notes vol. 8, no. 425, 2015. *US National Library of Medicine*, doi 10.1186/s13104-015-1394-3.

Quote

Some zoological experts have pointed out that the evidence for giraffe hums has been "rather anecdotally" reported (Baotic et al. 3). However, some scientists have "speculated that the extensive frontal sinus of giraffes acts as a resonance chamber for infrasound production" (Ibid. 3).

Paraphrase

Giraffes emit a low-pitch noise; some scientists believe that this hum can be used for communication with other members of the social group, but others are skeptical because of the dearth of research on giraffe noises. According to Baotic et al., the anatomy of the animal suggests that they may be making deliberate and specific noises (3).

Summary

Baotic et al. conducted a study on giraffe hums in response to speculation that these noises are used deliberately for communication.

These examples also demonstrate additional citation conventions worth noting:

- A parenthetical in-text citation is used for all three forms. (In MLA format, this citation includes the author's last name and page number. In APA format the citation includes the author's last name, year of publication, and page number.) The purpose of an in-

text citation is to identify key information that guides your reader to your Works Cited page in MLA or References in APA.

- If you use the author's name in the sentence, you do not need to include their name in the parenthetical citation.
- If your material doesn't come from a specific page or page range, but rather from the entire text, you do not need to include a page number in the parenthetical citation.
- If there are many authors (generally more than three), you can use "et al." to mean "and others."
- If you cite the same source consecutively in the same paragraph (without citing any other sources in between), you can use "Ibid." to mean "same as the last one."

There are infinite ways to bring evidence into your discussion, one particularly useful additional resource is the text "Annoying Ways People Use Sources" by Kyle D. Stedman.

For now, let's revisit a formula that many students find productive as they find their footing in research writing: Front-load + Quote/Paraphrase/Summarize + Cite + Explain/elaborate/analyze.

front-load (1-2 sentences)	+	quote, paraphrase, or summarize	+	(cite)	+	explain, elaborate, analyze (2-3 sentences)
Set your reader up for the quote using a **signpost** (also known as a "signal phrase"). Don't drop quotes in abruptly: by front-loading, you can guide your reader's interpretation.		Use whichever technique is relevant to your rhetorical purpose at that exact point.		Use an in-text citation appropriate to your discipline. It doesn't matter if you quote, paraphrase, or summarize—all three require a citation.		Perhaps most importantly, you need to make the value of this evidence clear to the reader. What does it mean? How does it further your thesis?

This might feel formulaic and forced at first, but following these steps will ensure that you give each piece of evidence thorough attention.

What might this look like in practice?

> *Humans and dolphins are not the only mammals with complex systems of communication. As a matter of fact, some scientists have "speculated that the extensive frontal sinus of giraffes acts as a resonance chamber for infrasound production" (Baotic et al. 3). Even though no definitive answer has been found, it's possible that the structure of a giraffe's head allows it to create sounds that humans may not be able to hear. This hypothesis supports the notion that different species of animals develop a sort of "language" that corresponds to their anatomy.*

1. Front-load
   Humans and dolphins are not the only mammals with complex systems of communication. As a matter of fact,,
2. Quote
   some scientists have "speculated that the extensive frontal sinus of giraffes acts as a resonance chamber for infrasound production"
3. Cite
   (Baotic et al. 3).

4. Explain/elaborate/analyze

    Even though no definitive answer has been found, it's possible that the structure of a giraffe's head allows it to create sounds that humans may not be able to hear. This hypothesis supports the notion that different species of animals develop a sort of "language" that corresponds to their anatomy.

Extended Quotes

A quick note on **block quotes**: Sometimes, you may find it necessary to use a long direct quote from a source. For instance, if there is a passage that you plan to analyze in-depth or throughout the course of the entire paper, you may need to reproduce the whole thing. You may have seen other authors use block quotes in the course of your research. In the middle of a sentence or paragraph, the text will break into a long direct quote that is indented and separated from the rest of the paragraph.

There are occasions when it is appropriate for you to use block quotes, too, but they are rare. Even though long quotes can be useful, quotes long enough to block are often too long. Using too much of one source all at once can overwhelm your own voice and analysis, distract the reader, undermine your *ethos*, and prevent you from digging into a quote. It's typically a better choice to

- abridge (omit words from the beginning or end of the quote, or from the middle using an ellipses […]),
- break up (split one long quote into two or three shorter quotes that you can attend to more specifically), or
- paraphrase

a long quote, especially because that gives you more space for the last step of the formula above.

If, in the rare event that you must use a long direct quote, one which runs more than four lines on a properly formatted page in MLA format or more than forty words in APA format, follow the guidelines from the appropriate style guide.

In MLA & APA format, block quotes are:
(a) indented one inch from the margin,
(b) double-spaced,
(c) not in quotation marks, and
(d) use original end-punctuation and an in-text citation after the last sentence.

The paragraph will continue after the block quote without any indentation.

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit. Aenean lobortis malesuada rhoncus.

Praesent nec nibh nisl. Aliquam sapien libero, elementum sed dolor quis, ultrices placerat odio.

Nullam nec felis venenatis, pellentesque lacus non, volutpat est.

> Sed libero libero, pulvinar volutpat tellus sed, bibendum molestie erat. In vitae
> lorem nec lacus pellentesque viverra non eget leo. Vestibulum rutrum lacus in
> nulla pretium, sed dictum nisi egestas. Aenean condimentum ut purus ac efficitur.
> Cras felis nibh, fermentum et placerat sed, convallis in ligula. (Citation)

Vestibulum ante ipsum primis in faucibus orci luctus et ultrices posuere cubilia Curae; Aenean

blandit, sapien nec pellentesque placerat, velit nisi interdum lacus, non efficitur velit erat

imperdiet mauris. Duis eget elementum sem.

Readerly Signposts

Signposts are phrases and sentences that guide a reader's interpretation of the evidence you are about to introduce. Readerly signposts are also known as "signal phrases" or "attributive tags" because they give the reader a warning of your next move. In addition to foreshadowing a paraphrase, quote, or summary, though, your signposts can be active agents in your argumentation.

Before using a paraphrase, quote, or summary, you can prime your reader to understand that evidence in a certain way.

For example, let's take the imaginary quote, "The moon landing was faked in a sound studio by Stanley Kubrick."

[X] insists, "The moon landing was faked in a sound studio by Stanley Kubrick."
Some people believe, naively, that "The moon landing was faked in a sound studio by Stanley Kubrick."

Common knowledge suggests that "The moon landing was faked in a sound studio by Stanley Kubrick."

[X] posits that "The moon landing was faked in a sound studio by Stanley Kubrick."

Although some people believe otherwise, the truth is that "The moon landing was faked in a sound studio by Stanley Kubrick."

Although some people believe that "The moon landing was faked in a sound studio by Stanley Kubrick," it is more likely that...

Whenever conspiracy theories come up, people like to joke that "The moon landing was faked in a sound studio by Stanley Kubrick."

The government has conducted many covert operations in the last century: "The moon landing was faked in a sound studio by Stanley Kubrick."

A very useful resource for applying these signposts is the text *They Say, I Say* by Cathy Birkenstein and Gerald Graff, which you can find in the LCSC Writing Center.

Addressing Counterarguments

As you recall from the chapter on argumentation, a good argument acknowledges other voices. Whether you're trying to refute those counterarguments or find common ground before moving forward, it is important to include a diversity of perspectives in your argument. One highly effective way to do so is by using the readerly signpost that I call **the naysayer's voice**.

Simply put, the naysayer is a voice that disagrees with you that you imagine into your essay. Consider, for example, this excerpt from Paul Greenough:

> *It appears that tigers cannot be accurately counted and that uncertainty is as endemic to their study as to the study of many other wildlife populations. In the meantime, pugmark counting continues. … In the end, the debate over numbers cannot be resolved; while rising trends were discernible through the 1970s and 1980s, firm baselines and accurate numbers were beyond anyone's grasp.*
> *CRITIC: Are you emphasizing this numbers and counting business for some reason?*
> *AUTHOR: Yes. I find it instructive to compare the degree of surveillance demanded by the smallpox eradication campaign…with the sketchy methods sufficient to keep Project Tiger afloat. …*
> *CRITIC: Maybe numbers aren't as central to these large state enterprises as you assume?*
> *AUTHOR: No, no—they live and die by them.* (Greenough, 215)

Greenough, Paul. "Pathogens, Pugmarks, and Political 'Emergency': The 1970s South Asian Debate on Nature." *Nature in the Global South: Environmental Projects in South and Southeast Asia*, Duke University Press, 2003, pp. 201-230.

Notice the advantages of this technique:

- Greenough demonstrates, first and foremost, that the topic he's considering is part of a broad conversation involving many voices and perspectives.
- He is able to effectively transition between ideas.
- He *controls* the counterargument by asking the questions he wants to be asked.

Give it a shot in your own writing by adding a reader's or a naysayer's voice every few paragraphs: imagine what a skeptical, curious, or enthusiastic audience might say in response to each of your main points.

Revisiting Your Research Question, Developing an Introduction, and Crafting a Conclusion

Once you've started synthesizing ideas in your drafting process, you should frequently revisit your research question to refine the phrasing and be certain it still encompasses your concerns. During the research and drafting process, it is likely that your focus will change, which should motivate you to adjust, pivot, complicate, or drastically change your path of inquiry and working thesis. Additionally, you will acquire new language and ideas as you get the feel for the conversation. Use the new jargon and concepts to hone your research question and thesis.

Introductions

Introductions are the most difficult part of any paper for me. Not only does it feel awkward, but I often don't know quite what I want to say until I've written the essay. Fortunately, we don't have to force out an intro before we're ready. Give yourself permission to draft out of order! For instance, I typically write the entire body of the essay before returning to the top to draft an introduction.

If you draft out of order, though, you should dedicate time to crafting an effective introduction before turning in the final draft. The introduction to a paper is your chance to make a first impression on your reader. You might be establishing a conceptual framework, setting a tone, or showing the reader a way in. Furthermore, due to the **primacy effect,** readers are more likely to remember your intro than most of the rest of your essay.

In this brief section, I want to note two pet peeves for introductions, and then offer a handful of other possibilities.

Don't
- *Start with fluffy, irrelevant, or extremely general statements.* Sometimes, developing authors make really broad observations or facts that just take up space before getting to the good stuff. You can see this demonstrated in the "Original" version of the student example below.
- *Offer a definition for something that your audience already knows.* At some point, this method became a stock-technique for starting speeches, essays, and other texts: "Merriam Webster defines *x* as...." You've probably heard it before. As pervasive as this technique is, though, it is generally ineffective for two reasons: (1) it is hackneyed—

overused to the point of meaninglessness, and (2) it rarely offers new insight—the audience probably already has sufficient knowledge of the definition. There is an exception to this point, though! You can overcome issue #2 by *analyzing* the definition you give: does the definition reveal something about our common-sense that you want to critique? Does it contradict or overlook connotations? Do you think the definition is too narrow, too broad, or too ambiguous? In other words, you can use the definition technique as long as you're *doing* something with the definition.

Do

These are a few approaches to introductions that my students often find successful. Perhaps the best advice I can offer, though, is to try out a lot of different introductions and see which ones feel better to you, the author. Which do you like most, and which do you think will be most impactful to your audience?

- **Tell a story**. Not only will this kick your essay off with *pathos* and specificity, but it can also lend variety to the voice you use throughout the rest of your essay. A story can also provide a touchstone, or a reference point, for you and your reader; you can relate your argument back to the story and its characters as you develop more complex ideas.
- **Describe a scene**. Similarly, thick description can provide your reader a mental image to grasp before you present your research question and thesis. This is the technique used in the model below.
- **Ask a question**. This is a common technique teachers share with their students when describing a "hook." You want your reader to feel curious, excited, and involved as they start reading your essay, and posing a thought-provoking question can bring them into the conversation too.
- **Use a striking quote or fact**. Another "hook" technique: starting off your essay with a meaningful quote, shocking statistic, or curious fact can catch a reader's eye and stimulate their curiosity.
- **Consider a case study**. Similar to the storytelling approach, this technique asks you to identify a single person or occurrence relevant to your topic that represents a bigger trend you will discuss.
- **Relate a real or imaginary dialogue**. To help your readers acclimate to the conversation themselves, show them how people might talk about your topic. This also provides a good opportunity to demonstrate the stakes of the issue—why does it matter, and to whom?
- **Establish a juxtaposition**. You might compare two seemingly unlike ideas, things, or questions, or contrast two seemingly similar ideas, things, or questions in order to clarify your path of inquiry and to challenge your readers' assumptions about those ideas, things or questions.

Here's an example of Portland State University student, Jesse Carroll's (2015) placeholder introduction in their draft, followed by a revised version using the scene description approach from above. He tried out a few of the strategies above before settling on the scene description for his revision. Notice how the earlier version "buries the lede," as one might say—hides the most interesting, relevant, or exciting detail. By contrast, the revised version is active, visual, and engaging.

Original:

Every year over 15 million people visit Paris, more than any other city in the world. Paris has a rich, artistic history, stunning architecture and decadent mouth-watering food. Almost every visitor

here heads straight for the Eiffel Tower ("Top destinations" 2014). Absorbing the breathtaking view, towering over the metropolis below, you might notice something missing from the Parisian landscape: tall buildings. It's easy to overlook but a peculiar thing. Around the world, most mega cities have hundreds of towering skyscrapers, but here in Paris, the vast majority of buildings are less than six stories tall (Davies 2010). The reason lies deep below the surface in the Paris underground where an immense cave system filled with dead bodies is attracting a different kind of visitor.

Revised:

On a frigid day in December of 1774, residents of a small walled district in Paris watched in horror as the ground before them began to crack and shift. Within seconds a massive section of road collapsed, leaving behind a gaping chasm where Rue d'Enfer (Hell Street) once stood. Residents peeked over the edge into a black abyss that has since become the stuff of wonder and nightmares. What had been unearthed that cold day in December, was an ancient tunnel system now known as The Empire of the Dead.

You may notice that neither of these model introductions articulates a thesis statement or a research question. How would you advise this student to transition into the central, unifying insight of their paper?

Conclusions

A close second to introductions, in terms of difficulty, are conclusions. Due to the **recency effect**, readers are more likely to remember your conclusion than most of the rest of your essay.

Most of us have been trained to believe that a conclusion repeats your thesis and main arguments, perhaps in different words, to remind the reader what they just read—or to **fluff** up page counts.

This is a misguided notion. True, conclusions shouldn't introduce completely new ideas, but they shouldn't only rehearse everything you've already said. Rather, they should tie up loose ends and leave the reader with an extending thought—something more to meditate on once they've left the world you've created with your essay. Your conclusion is your last chance to speak to your reader on your terms based on the knowledge you have now shared; repeating what you have already established is a wasted opportunity.

Instead, here are few other possibilities. (You can include all, some, or none of them.)

Look back to your introduction. If you told a story, shared a case study, or described a scene, you might reconsider that story, case study, or scene with the knowledge developed in the course of your paper. Consider the "ouroboros"—the snake eating its own head. Your conclusion can provide a satisfying circularity using this tactic.

Consider what surprised you in your research process. What do those surprises teach us about commonsense assumptions about your topic? How might the evolution of <u>your</u> thought on a topic model the evolution you expect from your readers?

End with a quote. A final thought, meaningfully articulated, can make your readers feel settled and satisfied.

Propose a call-to-action. Especially if your path of inquiry is a matter of policy or behavior, tell the reader what they should do now that they have seen the issue from your eyes.

Gesture to questions and issues you can't address in the scope of your paper. You might have had to omit some of your digressive concerns in the interest of focus. What remains to be answered, studied, or considered?

Here's an example of a placeholder conclusion in a draft, followed by a revised version using the "gesture to questions" and "end with a quote" approach from above. You may not be able to tell without reading the rest of the essay, but the original version simply restates the main points of each paragraph. In addition to being repetitive, the original is also not very exciting, so it does not inspire the reader to keep thinking about the topic. On the other hand, the revised version tries to give the reader more to chew on: it builds from what the paper establishes to provoke more curiosity and lets the subject continue to grow.

Original:

In conclusion, it is likely that the space tourism industry will flourish as long as venture capitalists and the private sector bankroll its development. As noted in this paper, new technology will support space tourism and humans are always curious to see new places. Space tourism is currently very expensive but it will become more affordable. The FAA and other government agencies will make sure it is regulated and safe.

Revised:

It has become clear that the financial, regulatory, and technological elements of space tourism are all within reach for humanity—whether in reality or in our imaginations. However, the growth of a space tourism industry will raise more and more questions: Will the ability to leave our blue marble exacerbate income inequity? If space tourism is restricted to those who can afford exorbitant costs, then it is quite possible that the less privileged will remain earthbound. Moreover, should our history of earthly colonization worry us for the fate of our universe? These questions and others point to an urgent constraint: space tourism might be logistically feasible, but can we ensure that what we imagine will be ethical? According to Carl Sagan, "Imagination will often carry us to worlds that never were. But without it we go nowhere" (2).

Sagan, Carl. *Cosmos*, Ballantine, 2013.

Activities

Research Scavenger Hunt

To practice using a variety of research tools and finding a diversity of sources, try to discover resources according to the following constraints. Once you find a source, you should make sure you can access it later—save it to your computer; copy a live, stable URL; request it from the library; and/or email it to yourself. For this assignment, you can copy a URL or doi for digital resources or library call number for physical ones.

If you're already working on a project, use your topic for this activity. If you don't have a topic in mind, choose one by picking up a book, paper, or other written text near you: close your eyes and point to a random part of the page. Use the noun closest to your finger that you find vaguely interesting as a topic or search term for this exercise.

	URL, doi, or Call Number
A peer-reviewed journal article through a database	
A source you bootstrapped using subject tags	
A newspaper article	
A source through Google	
A source originally cited in a Wikipedia article	

A physical text in your school's library (book, DVD, microfilm, etc.)	
A source through Google Scholar	
A source you citation-mined from another source's bibliography	
An eBook	
A text written in plain language	
A text written in discipline-specific jargon	
A text that is not credible	
A text older than twenty years	
A text published within the last two years	

Identifying Fake News

To think more about credibility, accuracy, and truth, read the article "Fake news 'symptomatic of crisis in journalism'" by Naima Bouteldja from *Al Jazeera*. Then, test your skills using this fake news quiz game.

Interacting with Sources Graphic Organizer

The following graphic organizer asks you to apply the skills from the previous section using a text of your choice. Complete this graphic organizer to practice critical encounters with your research and prepare to integrate information into your essay.

1. Discovering a Source: Find a source using one of the methods described in this chapter; record which method you used below (e.g., "Google Scholar" or "bootstrapped a library article").

2. Evaluating Credibility and Use-Value: Put your source through the CRAAP Test to determine whether it demonstrates credibility and use-value. Write responses for each element that practice reading with the grain and reading against the grain.

	With Grain (Believer) *"This source is great!"*	Against Grain (Doubter) *"This source is absolute garbage!"*
Currency		
Relevance		
Accuracy		
Authority		
Purpose		

3. <u>Citation</u>: Using citation and style resources like Purdue OWL for guidance, write an accurate citation for this source for a Works Cited page.

4. <u>Paraphrase/Quote/Summarize</u>: Choose a "golden line" from the source.
First, copy the quote, using quotation marks, and include a parenthetical in-text citation.

5. <u>Paraphrase</u> the quote and include a parenthetical in-text citation.

6. <u>Summarize</u> the main point of the source and include a parenthetical in-text citation; you may include the quote if you see fit.

7. <u>Integrating Information</u>: Using your response from step 4, write a sample paragraph that integrates a quote, paraphrase, or summary. Use the formula discussed earlier in this chapter (front-load + P/Q/S + explain/elaborate/analyze).

Articulating Your Claim – Practicing Thesis Development

To practice applying the strategies for developing and revising a thesis statement explored in this chapter, you will write and revise a claim based on constraints provided by your groupmates. This activity works best with at least two other students.

Part One – Write

First, on a post-it note or blank piece of paper, write down any article of clothing. Then, choose one type of claim (Claim of Phenomenon, Claim of Evaluation, or Claim of Policy, introduced in "Research Methods: Drawing from Sources and Synthesizing") and write "Phenomenon," "Evaluation," or "Policy" on a different post-it note or blank piece of paper.

Exchange your article of clothing with one student and your type of claim with another. (As long as you end up with one of each that you didn't come up with yourself, it doesn't matter how you rotate.) Now, write a thesis statement using your choice of strategy:

- T3 (*Throughout history, women have been legally oppressed by different social institutions, including exclusion from the workplace, restriction of voting rights, and regulations of healthcare.*)
- O/P (*Recent Congressional activity in the U.S. has led me to wonder how women's freedoms have been restricted throughout history. Women have been legally oppressed by many different institutions since the inception of the United States.*)
- Embedded Thesis (*Many people would agree that women have experienced oppression throughout the history of the United States, but how has this oppression been exercised legally through different social institutions?*)

Your thesis should make a claim about the article of clothing according to the post-its you received.

Example:

sweater

evaluation

Now that it's November, it's time to break out the cold weather clothing. When you want to be both warm and also fashionable, a striped wool sweater is the best choice.

Part Two – Revise

Now, write one of the rhetorical appeals (*logos*, *pathos*, or *ethos*) on a new post-it note. Exchange with another student. Revise your thesis to appeal predominantly to that rhetorical appeal.

Example:

Original:
Now that it's November, it's time to break out the cold weather clothing. When you want to be both warm and also fashionable, a striped wool sweater is the best choice.

logos

Revised:
With the colder months looming, we are obliged to bundle up. Because they help you maintain consistent and comfortable body temperature, wool sweaters are the best option.

Finally, revise your thesis once more by adding a concession statement.

Example:

Original:
With the colder months looming, we are obliged to bundle up. Because they help you maintain consistent and comfortable body temperature, wool sweaters are the best option.

Revised:
With the colder months looming, we are obliged to bundle up. Even though jackets are better for rain or snow, a sweater is a versatile and functional alternative. Because they help you maintain consistent and comfortable body temperature, wool sweaters are the best option.

Guiding Interpretation (Readerly Signposts)

In the organizer below, create a signpost for each of the quotes in the left column that reflects the posture in the top row.

	Complete faith	Uncertainty	Cautious disbelief	"Duh"
"Peanut butter and jelly sandwiches are a nutritious part of a child's lunch."		Most parents have wondered if "peanut butter and jelly sandwiches are a nutritious part of a child's lunch."		
"The bees are dying rapidly."			Even though some people argue that "the bees are dying rapidly," it may be more complicated than that.	

	Complete faith	Uncertainty	Cautious disbelief	"Duh"
"Jennifer Lopez is still relevant."	We can all agree, "Jennifer Lopez is still relevant."			
"Morality cannot be learned."				It should be obvious that "morality cannot be learned."

Appendix

Overview

The Appendix includes additional writing samples, as well as sections on revision, peer-review, annotation, reading, and metacognition. This section addresses techniques and knowledge you will need throughout the semester.

Examples by Professional and Student Authors

Professional Examples

O'Brien, Tim. "The Vietnam in Me." *The New York Times: Books*, 2 Oct. 1994.

Chopin, Kate. "The Story of an Hour." 1894. *The Kate Chopin International Society*, 13 Aug. 2017.

Douglass, Frederick. *My Bondage and My Freedom*, Partridge and Oakey, 1855. "A Change Came O'er the Spirit of My Dream." *Lit2Go*, University of Southern Florida, 2017.

Saifer, David. "'Between the World And Me': An Important Book on Race and Racism." *Tucson Weekly*, 25 Aug. 2015.

Marsh, Calum. "Nicholas Britell *Moonlight* (Original Motion Picture Soundtrack) Album Review." *Pitchfork*. 30 June 2017.

Uwuajaren, Jarune and Jamie Utt. "Why Our Feminism Must Be Intersectional (And 3 Ways to Practice It)." *Everyday Feminism*, 11 Jan. 2015.

Video examples

Video: "Running Down the Hill"

Video: "21"

Roche, Patrick. "21." March 2014, CUPSI, University of Colorado, Boulder, CO. Published by *Button Poetry*, 24 April 2014,

Vazquez, Robyn. "Running Down the Hill." 2 July 2017, Deep End Theater, Portland, OR.

Student Examples

My Favorite Place

Starbucks has always been my go-to place. Never have I felt so welcomed with opened arms in an environment other than my home. Every time I enter through the translucent glass door, a familiar joyful barista in their signature bright green apron, shouts out "Welcome in!" My mood instantly lifts up and I already feel euphoric. I ambitiously make my way past the wall of signature coffees and desirable coffee mugs with the Starbucks logo of the twin-tailed crowned siren imprinted on them and join the lengthy line of famished customers anxiously standing along the crystal-clear polished pastry case. The layered case features its variety of heavenly, toothsome sweets along with their finest breakfast sandwiches displayed like trophies for everyone to admire. The pleasing scent of flakey butter croissants and toffee doodle cookies turn heads as it leaks its way out through the cracks of the pastry case. The scrumptious aroma of one

of the slow-roasted ham and swiss breakfast sandwiches escapes out of the oven as one of the baristas pulls it out, finding its way on my lips and making my mouth water, I can almost taste it.

I listen to the indecisive girls in front of me. "Should I get a caramel macchiato or caramel latte?" says one of the brunettes with urgency as she slowly sways closer to the cashier. "Get an iced caramel macchiato!" shouts her eager friend. They place their order then move to the end of the bar chatting about how she forgot to order her drink iced. "What can I get for you today?" the attentive and neighborly barista says as she quickly takes out her sharpie. "Grande Ethiopia pour-over," I say. I pay and take my receipt and make my way to the next counter. A smoky and rich, sweet-caramel breeze wafts up from the espresso machines, racing to my nose, almost strong enough to caffeinate me instantly. I wait patiently for my coffee, zoning out to the sound of milk being aeriated and the crushing sound of iced beverages being blended. My attention is caught by the black display boards hanging above the glossy brick wall behind the bar and register. I marvel at the handcrafted chalk drawings promoting the new seasonal drinks that adds a mellow character to the setting. Another amicable barista heads in my direction, handing me my intense hot black coffee with a cheery smile on her face. Earthy and acidity impressions hit my tongue when I take my first sip. My eyes begin to dilate as I start to unfold the soft and velvety layers of coffee with the hidden notes of dark cocoa and sweet citrus.

I observe the room, admiring its new and sleek modern architecture. The interior has custom murals and exposed brick walls which create a warm atmosphere. Reclaimed slick-smooth woods were used for the bars, tables and condiment stations. The lights in transparent dark-orange colored bulbs dangling from the ceiling, gives the shop a soft and warm hue, making the environment cozy. The chestnut colored tiles surround the bar and register. The smooth, cocoa colored wooden tables are distributed evenly around the mom. The enormous window walls naturally lights the room. I follow the space-grey colored stone bricks beneath my feet and make my way to the pleasantly-warm fireplace with a solid chrome black and gold metal rim around it. A vibrant picture of a green and orange oil painting of Kenya's safari sits on the mantel above. This small spot gives the whole atmosphere a noticeable warm home feel.

Soft-toned jazz and enthusiastic conversations fill the room, blending harmoniously. A family of five surround one of the circular tables by the entrance, laughing and accusing one another of cheating when one loses at Uno. I can hear the sociable barista behind the bar engaging with one of the regulars about how each other's weekend went. Other conversations are

being made at the condiment bar with the three well-dressed gentlemen in navy blue suits and red ties with neatly combed hair talk about the overwhelming work week ahead as they sweeten their dark roast coffee with a variety of sweeteners and half and half. Several students have nested at one of the middle tables with their notebooks, laptops and pencils scattered in front of them. The constant clacking of their keyboards starts to create a steady beat. The alerting sound of a timer echoes through the room, going off every fifteen minutes to signal one of the baristas to brew a fresh pot of coffee. The buzzing noise of coffee grinding always follows.

This warm and welcoming, comfortable environment created here is why I always come back to Starbucks. It brings me a place of peace. It's where I get my VIP treatment—my mind is put to ease and I can feel my muscles unclench from head-to-toe as I continuously take sips of my elegant and balanced coffee that I paired with my favorite soft and flavorful pumpkin loaf. It's an oasis where I can clear my mind of distractions and focus on work or socialize with my friends or the familiar baristas. It's my home away from home.

Essay by Cristian Lopez, Portland Community College, 2017. Reproduced with permission from the student author.

<div align="center">Untitled</div>

<div align="center">(A text wrestling analysis of "Girl" by Jamaica Kincaid)</div>

Societal norms, as well as the skewed expectations of women in society, are in large part passed down from older generations (as well as often being enforced by older generations) to susceptible young children who are just beginning to form their own moral code. "Girl" is an unconventional poem, written by Jamaica Kincaid, that illustrates a mother's detailed instructions on what her daughter must do in order for her to be accepted and successful in society at that time. Separated by semicolons, the mother relentlessly lists the rules and duties forced onto women at that time, never allowing her to intervene or even question what she was being told. This blind (almost mindless) list of expectations of women emphasizes the oppressed role that women are faced with, and often expected to comply with without question.

As children, our morals and values are shaped not only by our own experiences, but that of our family; wisdom, along with hard life lessons that have been learned over years and generations, are passed down from a mother to child. Although the identity of the narrator is

never implicitly revealed, I believe that it is a mother passing on life lessons (as bleak as they may be) to her daughter. You can see this mother-daughter relationship best in Kincaid's concluding lines, "always squeeze bread to make sure it's fresh; but what if the baker won't let me feel the bread? you mean to say after all you are really going to be the kind of woman who the baker won't let near the bread?" (Kincaid 129). The italicized line signals that the daughter (or the "girl") is speaking here. There is only one other instance in the poem where the daughter intervenes, interrupting her mother's cascading list of teachings; early in the poem, the mother asks (or rather asserts), "is it true that you sing benna in Sunday school?" and then later insists, "don't sing benna in Sunday school" (128). Chiming in a bit late, the daughter defensively inserts, "but I don't sing benna on Sundays at all, and never in Sunday school" (128). In this instance, the mother does not acknowledge o respond to what the daughter has said, rather just continues on with her sporadic list of instructions (like a chant of "this is how you…" and "don't…"). This illustration of the mother as a clear authoritative figure that is educating her child of the gender roles that are present (and that must be followed!) in their present society is a great representation of how these notions survive and are passed down from teachings of older generations.

Concerning the structure of the poem "Girl", I believe that Kincaid made the choice to make her poem into one large paragraph and use semicolons to separate the mother's advice and commands (without ending the sentence) in order to convey that all of the items on the mother's list are related in the sense that, when they are applied together, the sum of these actions and behaviors equals what societal and gender norms say it means to be a well-behaved woman. Having the poem structured this way also creates a sense of power for the mother figure because the discussion is extremely one-sided, and her unending breath creates the sense of urgency that she must get through everything she has to say, and she doesn't even have time to stop and breath in between her lessons. For me, this urgency projects what I consider to be fear from the mother of what will happen to her daughter if she doesn't learn these lessons or behave according to society. This fear is most likely rooted from her own negative personal experiences, as well as knowledge passed down from former generations.

The mother does not want her daughter to be rejected from or reprimanded by society. So, although the mother is delivering her advice in such way that seems cruel and impersonal, I believe that it emphasizes her seriousness and strong belief for what she is saying. Finally, I

propose that this informal structure is a method meant to contrast the insignificance that the mother feels about proper grammar (or even proper education) with the importance she feels towards having her daughter behave as a proper, well-trained woman.

Works Cited

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Untitled

(A text wrestling analysis of "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" by Ursula K. Le Guin)

A small child, alone, playing his new video game. A stay-at-home dad collapsing into his office chair at his computer after a long day at work. A successful businesswoman starting her day on the treadmill, sweat trickling down her temples. How many would be considered happy: all of them, perhaps none of them? The short story "The Ones Who Walk Away from Omelas" by Ursula Le Guin describes a fictional town during its summer festival and the processions. The story is populated with contrasts and comparisons about the idea of happiness between Le Guin's fictional society and ours, and it suggests reasons as to why both societies fall short of experiencing true joy.

A thought-provoking question arises early in Le Guin's fairytale: "How is one to tell about joy?" (Le Guin 2), as if she is troubled by the idea of trying to describe joy to the reader. Perhaps she knows the reader will not understand happiness. For how can one understand happiness if they have never experienced it before? "We have almost lost hold; we can no longer describe a happy man, nor make any celebration of joy" (Le Guin 2). With the increase in technology and the rise in power of corporations, we have been receding from happiness. Every big event or holiday celebration is exploding with advertisements, informing us on more "stuff" we could have. Few of these advertisements, almost none, predict an enlightened future, free from overbearing material things. Instead, our celebrations should more similarly follow that of the summer festival of Omelas.

Le Guin begins her story describing the fictional town during its summer festival. This festival consists of different processions—one of them being dance— where citizens of the town celebrate in the streets. "In other streets the music beat faster, the shimmering of gong and tambourine, and the people went dancing" (Le Guin 1). The people of Omelas crowd in the streets to play music and dance, enjoying in the company of their neighbors. One of the factors in this society's happiness is dance. Later in the passage Le Guin goes on to describe a procession of nudes offering rituals of sex to members of society. "Surely the beautiful nudes can just wander about, offering themselves like divine soufflés to the hunger of the needy and the rapture of the flesh. Let them join the processions" (Le Guin 3). The joyful stimulation of lust: nothing brings more joy than a lover's touch. But what else does a society need to be happy beside loving and dancing with others? How about children in the Omelas? Le Guin describes that children are raised communally in this fictional society: "Let the offspring of these rituals [processions of sex] be beloved and looked after by all" (Le Guin 3). In Omelas the infants and children are taken care of by the entire town. This symbolizes the unity in the town and the fact that everyone cares for one another. This may seem like a hard for people of today to grasp, because our society teaches us to only look out for ourselves and things that will stave off our never-ending hunger for joy. Although there are multiple endorphin producers that curb the appetite of reasonable happiness, there are many that set our society's joy apart from this fictional town's.

One of the main differences between Le Guin's society and ours is the share we place in material items. Our society is caught up on material items, using them to assess personal happiness levels. This is a place of discord between the people in the fictional town and people today: "I think that there would be no cars or helicopters in and above the streets; this follows from the fact that the people of Omelas are happy people" (Le Guin 3). The citizens of Omelas don't take the same pride or comfort in objects as we do. The author is hinting to another reason our society is not happy. Le Guin feels that machines are no means of measuring happiness: the residents of Omelas "could perfectly well have central heating, subway trains, washing machines... Or they could have none of it" (Le Guin 3). This follows from the idea that material items are not what makes these people happy. One of the biggest contrasts between our society and Omelas is the investment we put towards material possessions; people in Omelas thrive on a different kind of happiness.

The author then goes on to contrast the types of happiness and joy experienced by both groups of people: "The trouble is that we have a bad habit… of considering happiness as something rather stupid" (Le Guin 2). Le Guin is conveying the idea that when a society such as ours deems happiness as unimportant, we will start to lose all sense of the word. This is perhaps the reason our society values power, wealth, and weapons over happiness. When a culture condemns knowledge and praises violence, their reality of happiness becomes skewed.

The author continues the juxtaposition between her fictional society and ours: "The joy built upon the successful slaughter is not the right kind of joy" (Le Guin 4). Happiness is not something that can be bought, stolen, or won in battle, and joy isn't found by means of power and pain for the people of Omelas. They don't focus on violence and wealth: "But there is no king. They did not use swords or keep slaves…. [They] also got on without the stock exchange, the advertisement, the secret police, and the bomb" (Le Guin 2). She contrasts our society from theirs by highlighting these differences. The other main difference between the societies being the value we place on the harm and hurt of others.

However, Le Guin's society may more closely resemble our society than first thought. The child, found in the basement tool closet of one of the town's buildings, is described by the author as "feeble-minded" or "born defective" (Le Guin 5). It is kept there solely for the sake of the town's happiness, enabling citizens in the streets above to reap joy from the festival. This compares to today's society in the sense that people rush through life paying no attention to the needy or homeless, only seldom stealing a glance to reassure themselves that they do indeed have it better. This is where our society generates happiness; to know that we have it better than someone else somehow brings us joy. However, it is wrong for a population to remain happy based on the suffering of a single person or persons. The story goes on to describe that everyone in the town goes to see the child at least once, not one person offering a single shred of help to the poor, withering child. The people of Omelas know if they extended any means of help or gratitude to the child, the entire town will be stripped of all the joy and happiness they experience. This is a conscious choice the citizens must make daily: to idly stand by knowing of the suffering child.

Moreover, I infer that the author intended the child in the tool closet to have a much greater meaning. The child is an allusion to the idiom of "having skeletons in the closet." It symbolizes the very thing that keeps everyone from experiencing true joy—"the right kind of

joy" (Le Guin 4). As mentioned, Le Guin points out that the child is what holds this fictional town together, "They would like to do something for this child. But there is nothing they can do…. [If] it were cleaned and fed and comforted..., in that day and hour all the prosperity and beauty and delight of Omelas would wither and be destroyed" (Le Guin 4). Much like the people of the town, we rely on past mistakes or haunting memories to sprout into the people we are today. In the story, there are members of society that can't handle the guilt festering from knowing of the broken-down child, so they leave behind the "joyous" town. The ones who walk away from Omelas are searching for something more profound—the true meaning of happiness.

The biggest problem with our society is that we are too focused on individual gain and not enough on the happiness and well-being of everyone. We do not need video games, treadmills, or even cars and helicopters to be happy. Nor is happiness determined by account balances, high scores, and followers. While our society feels like we have a sense of joy and happiness it is truly a mask for selfish desires. This clouded iteration of happiness is what keeps us from experiencing true joy. While the fictional town might fall into similar shortcomings as we do, they are far closer to discovering what true joy exactly means. As Le Guin reiterates, what makes the fictional town joyous is a "boundless and generous contentment, a magnanimous triumph felt not against some outer enemy but in communion with the finest and fairest souls of all men" (Le Guin 4). While this might be close, the true meaning of happiness is the coming together of all individuals to take solace purely in the company of others while eradicating the suffering of all.

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Inauthenticity, Inadequacy, and Transience: The Failure of Language in "Prufrock"

"The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock," widely regarded as the work that brought T.S. Eliot into a position of influence and prominence amongst his literary contemporaries, delineates

the psychosocial trappings of a first-person speaker struck by the impossibility of identity, interaction, and authenticity in a modern society. Although the poem establishes J. Alfred Prufrock, a typical 'anti-hero' of modernist style, as its speaker and central focus, Eliot seeks to generalize to a broader social commentary: the piece reveals the paralyzing state of universal disempowerment in social interaction by exploring a broken system of signification and identity.

Eliot's poem filters its communication through the first-person speaker, J. Alfred Prufrock; however, the audience is implicated directly and indirectly in the consciousness of Prufrock. Ironically, the central conflict of the poem is the subject's inability to engage and communicate with the world around him. However, in multiple fashions, even in the very process of performance and reading of the poem, we the audience are interpellated into Prufrock's hellish existence. The epigraph of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" draws from Dante's Inferno, immediately conjuring the idea of Hell for the audience. The epigraph, in conjunction with the first line of the piece—"Let us go then, you and I" (1)—and the repetition of second-person and collective first-person pronouns, implicates the reader in an implied tour of Prufrock's personal Hell, a state of imprisonment within his own consciousness.

Prufrock is a speaker characterized first and foremost by overwhelming fear and alienation, stemming from his hypersensitivity to time, his disillusionment with the failure of communication, and his inability to construct a stable self. He frequently questions his capacity to relate to those around him, wondering repeatedly, "[H]ow should I presume?" (54, 61). Prufrock, worrisome over the audacity implicit in presumption and fearful of the consequences, hesitates to engage at all, instead setting himself in frustrated isolation and insecurity. Throughout the work, Eliot insists that one of the few certainties of Prufrock's bleak existence is, paradoxically, uncertainty: from Prufrock's overarching and unnamed "overwhelming question" (10) to the oft-quoted "Shall I part my hair behind? Do I dare to eat a peach" (122), the clearest recurring element of the poem is Prufrock's equivocation. The ambiguity of consequence is too dangerous for Prufrock. He is concerned that his participation in society shall "disturb the universe" (45) and so chooses rather to retreat into his tangled web of hypotheticals.

Eliot symbolizes the society Prufrock so fears in the third stanza as a yellow fog, invading the descriptions of the architecture and appearance of the city.

> The yellow fog that rubs its back upon the window-panes,
>
> The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the window-panes,

Licked its tongue into the corners of the evening,

Lingered upon the pools that stand in drains,

Let fall upon its back the soot that falls from chimneys,

Slipped by the terrace, made a sudden leap,

And seeing that it was a soft October night,

Curled once about the house, and fell asleep. (15-22)

The description of this yellow fog is animalistic and untamed. Its presence is quiet but oppressive, weighing heavily on the tone of the poem with the sort of gaseous intractability and inescapability of our fluid and chaotic social formation and the hegemony that it relies upon. The yellow fog figuratively permeates the entire piece, ubiquitous and stifling, but most evidently as it encroaches on Prufrock's discussion and distortion of time, beginning in the following stanza.

While the third stanza most overtly draws attention to Prufrock's temporal hyper-awareness (using the frequent repetition of the word "time"), Eliot constructs an underlying theme of impermanence as early as the epigraph and first stanza of the poem. The original speaker of the epigraph, Guido da Montefeltro, reminds us of the imprisoning and irreversible flow of time, and signal words like "one-night" (6) and "tedious" (8) in the first stanza highlight a hyper-awareness of time. In spite of Prufrock's implied worldview that genuine social interaction is dangerous, impossible, or even futile, he is painfully aware of the disappearance of opportunity within his hesitation. He admits, "I have measured out my life with coffee spoons" (51), "I grow old … I grow old …" (120), and, reflecting on his imprisonment, wonders, "[H]ow should I begin / To spit out all the butt-ends of my days and ways?" (59-60). In his position of retrospect, Prufrock imbues a clear tone of regret and loss, noting that he has expended most of his life in apprehension; he links his spent time to the humdrum by means of the "coffee spoons," to the useless and disposable by means of "butt-ends." By integrating a theme of transience and a tone of urgency, Eliot begins to explore Prufrock's social fears while also preparing to demonstrate the failure of language, as I discuss later. Considering the entanglement of the reader in the poem's exploration of Prufrock's psychological torture, we read that transience and mortality command all of our day-to-day actions and interactions—and how could this not leave us terrified and alienated like Prufrock himself?

As a consequence of such social fear and detachment, Eliot suggests, Prufrock struggles to establish public or personal identity: because he cannot truly associate with other members of

his world, he cannot classify himself within a framework of socially-defined identity. Prufrock frames his failure to adopt an archetype using a strikingly dehumanizing synecdoche: "I should have been a pair of ragged claws / Scuttling across the floors of silent seas" (73-74). Prufrock finds it more fitting that he be separated from the species than to continually find himself inadequate to the measure of social roles. These lines directly precede a process in which Prufrock evades commitment (as we learn is characteristic) by presenting three models of which he falls short, and then discarding the possibility of ever identifying his purpose.

First, Prufrock summons John the Baptist as a prototype by envisioning his own "head (grown slightly bald) brought in upon a platter" (82), but then immediately negates the comparison in the next line: "I am no prophet" (83). Prufrock identifies with the tragic, violent end of John the Baptist, reminding us of his overwhelming fear of the outside world. He makes clear that he can relate only to the death of the man, but not to the life: Prufrock believes that he lacks some essence of a prophet—perhaps charisma or confidence, perhaps respectability or status.

Prufrock seeks to find a more apt comparison, now considering a person as socially tortured as he but who ultimately discovered meaning. Prufrock attempts to adopt a different Biblical figure as a model of identity:

> Would it have been worth while […]
>
> To say: "I am Lazarus, come from the dead,
>
> Come back to tell you all, I shall tell you all"—
>
> If one, settling a pillow by her head,
>
> Should say: "That is not what I meant at all.
>
> That is not it, at all." (90-98)

By invoking the character of Lazarus,[1] Prufrock hopes to procure an archetype which fits him better than that of John the Baptist. However, Prufrock realizes that this mold is not adequate either; he questions whether he could interact with someone even with the support of enlightening, didactic knowledge of the afterlife. In so doing, he effectively 'tries on' an identity, only to abandon it upon fear of being misunderstood.

Ultimately, Prufrock comments on the ignobility of his very equivocation: "No! I am not Prince Hamlet, nor was meant to be" (111). Prufrock is intensely aware of his reluctance to commit, to make a decision, reminiscent of the tragic Dane—but he actively degrades himself by

rejecting the comparison. He suggests that, if anything, he is only fit to be a supporting character, and even then, only an obsequious and foolish one.

> [I am] an attendant lord, one that will do
>
> To swell a progress, start a scene or two,
>
> Advise the prince; no doubt, an easy tool,
>
> Deferential, glad to be of use,
>
> Politic, cautious, and meticulous;
>
> Full of high sentence, but a bit obtuse;
>
> At time, indeed, almost ridiculous—
>
> Almost, at times, the Fool. (112-9)

After the adoption and abandonment of three ambitious archetypes (John the Baptist, Lazarus, and Hamlet), Prufrock's "almost" in lines 118 and 119 tells us that he is even reluctant to embody a supporting character with a clearly defined role. Again, considering the involvement of the reader in Prufrock's plight, Eliot tells us that the literary and social characters which shape our models of human identity are inauthentic—that perhaps we are all destined to be no more than backing players to fill out a scene, or if we are lucky, provide comic relief.

To better understand Prufrock's disenfranchisement, we must recognize Eliot's portrayal of human interaction as broken, inadequate, and false. Within the structure of the poem, Eliot seems to imply the inadequacy of direct communication through circuitous, repetitious, and ambiguous text. Even as Prufrock introduces his "overwhelming question," he almost simultaneously refuses our inquiry to understand what he communicates—"Oh, do not ask, 'What is it?'" (9-10). By first calling attention to the ever-fleeting moments of time to instill a tone of haste, and then exacerbating those feelings with Prufrock's continued hesitation, Eliot highlights the infinite insufficiency of language. Even though there will be "time yet for a hundred indecisions, / And for a hundred visions and revisions, / Before the taking of a toast and tea" (27-34), "in a minute there is time / For decisions and revisions which a minute will reverse" (47-48). Eliot's recursive language implies that while there is time, each moment will be inevitably filled with the paralyzing equivocation that we have come to expect from Prufrock. In a frustrated interjection, Prufrock sums it up well: "It is impossible to say just what I mean!" (104).

More subtly, though, Eliot incorporates only a few voices aside from Prufrock himself, and it is these characters who especially illuminate the alienating nature of interaction and language for Prufrock. It is important to note that while the entirety of "The Love Song of J. Alfred Prufrock" seems to be an argumentative internal monologue within Prufrock's consciousness, Eliot provides brief voices from hypothetical speakers imagined through the mediation of Prufrock's mind.

The unnamed women of the poem are particularly telling: "In the room the women come and go / Talking of Michelangelo" (35-6). This seeming non sequitur is repeated twice within the course of four stanzas. Between the two occurrences of this sentence, Prufrock reassures us (and, in turn, himself) that "there will be time / To prepare a face to meet the faces that you meet" (26-27). Eliot combines a deliberate absence of identifying characteristics of these women, the phrase "come and go," and a reference to inauthenticity of identity; this combination implies that these women are fungible, and that their commentary on the celebrated artist is merely a façade to suggest sophistication. They offer no substance of interaction beyond falsehood, flowing in and out of a room with identical, generic conversation while bearing contrived faces, formulated only to meet other contrived faces. In this way, Prufrock is disillusioned and discouraged from communication, realizing his mistrust of language for its inherent unreliability. We, in turn, are encouraged to perceive and reject the duplicity of common social interaction.

The subsequent hypothetical speakers in the poem seem to explain and rationalize Prufrock's fears. In their sole moments of voice throughout the entire text, Prufrock insists that these speakers will criticize his appearance—"How his hair is growing thin!" (41) and "But how his arms and legs are thin!" (44)—or his failure to communicate, saying, "That is not what I meant at all. / That is not it, at all" (97-98, 109-110). Considering his anxieties of language, it is no surprise that Eliot's character recognizes the quickly-misunderstood nature of communication beyond the superficial "talk of Michelangelo." Nevertheless, Prufrock fears criticism for inadequacies which he must already recognize in himself: his deteriorating physical appearance, wasting away with each measured-out coffee spoon, or his inability to control language. This tension, this certainty of degrading or misconstrued response, further contributes to Eliot's implication of a broken system of language as embodied in Prufrock's alienation.

The penultimate voices Prufrock imagines, the mermaids, identify Prufrock's proximity to interaction. In another moment of doubt and seemingly scattered thought, Prufrock tells us he

has "heard the mermaids singing, each to each" (124). These mermaids symbolize Prufrock's last appeal for communicative redemption. But alas, Prufrock realizes his isolation—"I do not think that they will sing to me" (125)—and it is human language itself leaves us with the final crushing words of the poem:

> I have seen them [the mermaids] riding seaward on the waves
>
>> Combing the white hair of the waves blown back
>>
>> When the wind blows the water white and black.
>>
>> We have lingered in the chambers of the sea
>>
>> By sea-girls wreathed with seaweed red and brown
>>
>> Till human voices wake us, and we drown. (126-31)

This final contrast serves to remind us that while Prufrock is close enough to hear, close enough to "linger in the chambers of the sea," such hopes are dream-like, tenuous, ultimately shattered by human voices and all-engulfing reality. The reader will note that Prufrock and Eliot have shifted back to the collective first-person pronoun "we" for the final stanza, and distinguish in line 130 that the referent is not the sea-girls and Prufrock, but rather Prufrock and another party; we can reasonably interpret the other party is the audience. Eliot is illuminating once again that the plight of J. Alfred Prufrock and the plight of all humanity are parallel in their morbidity, futility, and failure. It is not just Prufrock who drowns; it is us.

J. Alfred Prufrock's quest to construct a genuine, personal expression—a "love song," even—results in an excursion through the infernal frustration of Prufrock's psychosocial imprisonment. In his portrayal of this character's alienation, indecision, fear, and disillusionment, T.S. Eliot demands that we too, wandering through certain half-deserted streets, are victims of the putrid yellow-smoke society around us: the snares of inauthentic identity, broken language, and constantly vanishing time.

Works Cited

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     edited by Joseph Kelly, Norton, 2008, pp. 109-114.

Endnote

1. There is some ambiguity regarding to which Lazarus—Lazarus of Bethany or Lazarus of "Dives and Lazarus"—Eliot alludes. Although Eliot does not specify in the text of the poem, I imagine that line 95 implies that it is the latter, and it is under this assumption that I continue analysis.

Unpublished essay by Shane Abrams, 2014, Portland State University.

Economics and Obesity

     Eating healthy can be difficult for everyone. You have to figure out what is healthy and find out what diet fits your goals, then you have the struggle of actually sticking to the diet and avoiding the temptation of junk food. However, eating a nutritious diet can become even more complicated if you are poor and live in a low-income area. Healthy food is too expensive for low-income people, forcing them to buy cheaper and less healthy alternatives. People may not even have access to unprocessed foods, like fruits and vegetables, if they live in poor neighborhoods that do not have a grocery store or supermarket. The lack of access to affordable, healthy, and unprocessed foods leads to an increased rate of obesity for low-income people, and current policies and interventions are not effective and need to be changed to help decrease rates of obesity.

     Obesity has been a problem in the United States for a long time. In the 1980s, the number of obese people began to increase rapidly. The percentage of obese adults went from 15.0% in 1980 to 32.9% in 2004, more than doubling (Hurt 781). Obesity can be extremely damaging to the body and can lead to other chronic diseases, such as diabetes and hypertension. It is clear and has been for a long time, that obesity is an epidemic in America, and researchers are trying to find the cause. Obesity is commonly associated with people picking food solely based on taste and not on nutritional content, leading them to choose delicious junk food over nutritious vegetables. While this is true for some, the rates of obesity were found to be higher in American counties that were poverty-dense (Levine 2667). This is not the only study to find that obesity

affects the poor more than others, as a study ran by U.S. Government found that rates of obesity and diet-related chronic diseases were highest in the most impoverished populations (Story 261). Obesity is affecting those who are least able to cope with it, as obesity and related chronic diseases can have a serious economic impact on people, especially those with diabetes. People with diabetes spend around 2.3 times as much on general medical care a year than someone without diabetes, and on average a diabetic person spends about $7,900 a year just on medical expenses associated with diabetes (Yang 1033). These costs are extremely damaging to low-income people who may already have trouble getting by as it is, and it is important that the economic causes of obesity are examined so that policies and interventions can be designed to help protect public health.

Higher rates of obesity in low-income areas has been associated with a lack of access to healthy foods. Many of these low-income areas are classified as food deserts, meaning there is nowhere to buy fresh fruits, vegetables, or other unprocessed foods. The nearest grocery store or supermarket can be over a mile away, as it is for Casey Bannister a resident of East Portland, Oregon. The closest grocery store to her is a mile and a half away, which can be hard for her to walk or bike especially when she has bags of groceries (Peacher). This is a common problem for many Americans who also live in food deserts. Many people have to rely solely on nearby convenience stores for food. These stores rarely sell fresh fruits, vegetables, or unprocessed meats and have a large selection of unhealthy foods. Along with that, the convenience stores found in low-income areas were more often small, independent stores which sold food for higher prices than chain stores (Beaulac), meaning consumers in poor neighborhoods were spending more there than they would in stores found in higher-income neighborhoods.

There is an appealingly simple answer to food deserts: add a grocery store. However, merely adding a grocery store is not going to solve the obesity problem in impoverished areas, as that is only one part of the problem. According to a study run by researcher Steven Cummins, the stores added to food deserts in Philadelphia did not impact that amount of fruits and vegetables consumed. He attributed this to many causes, including the fact that the kind of stores added may not necessarily sell cheaper food (Corapi). While food deserts do contribute to obesity, the main economic cause is more likely the price of healthy, nutritious food. A healthy diet is too expensive to be accessible to low-income people and families, even if they do have access to a supermarket.

Nutritious foods like fruits and vegetables, while healthy, are low in calories. Unhealthier foods have high amounts of calories for a much lower cost, making them extremely appealing to families on a budget. These calories are made up of grains and starches as well as added fats and sugars, which have been linked to an increased risk for obesity (Drewnowski 265S). Foods like these are quite clearly unhealthy, however, health must be disregarded when it is the only thing a person can afford to eat. A study by the American Diabetes Association found that on average healthy diets cost $18.16 per thousand calories, while unhealthy diets only cost $1.76 per thousand calories (Parker-Pope). Based on a person who needs two thousand calories a day, it would cost roughly $1,089.60 a month for one person to eat a healthy diet when an unhealthy diet would cost $105.60 a month. This means that a person eating a nutritious diet would spend over ten times as much as a person eating a nutrient deficient diet. People who earn minimum wage, especially those that have more than one person to support, cannot spend this much on food a month and are forced to instead buy unhealthier options and put themselves at a higher risk for obesity.

Influences such as the convenience of unhealthy food and advertisements may also impact the rates of obesity in low-income areas and populations. It is important that they are acknowledged as well before designing new policies or interventions, so that all possible causes and factors of obesity may be addressed. Unhealthy food, for example, fast food is almost always convenient and simple, as most foods come already cooked and ready to be eaten. While healthy food is usually raw and unprocessed, meaning it has to be prepared before being served. Cooking a proper meal can take an hour or more, and many working people do not have the time. Also, cooking requires a lot of knowledge about recipes and how to prepare raw food, as well as expensive resources like pots, pans, and knives. Fast food is quick and requires no prior knowledge about cooking food or any equipment, making it an easy choice for those who are poor or busy. Food advertisements may also influence people's choices. Most food advertisements seen on TV are for fast food and show this food as extremely desirable and a good deal. This may affect people's choices and make them more likely to buy fast food, as it is shown as delicious and within their budget. While these influences are unlikely to be the main cause of high rates of obesity for low-income people, it is still important that they are examined and thought of while interventions are being made.

With the obesity epidemic being so detrimental to individual's health, people and government have been pushing for interventions and policies to help fight against obesity. Some interventions have helped bring fruits and vegetables to low-income families and neighborhoods. Food pantries have been vitally important to providing food in food deserts. Saul Orduna, another resident of East Portland, lives in a food desert and gets about half to two-thirds of his groceries from the SUN food pantry. They provide him and his two children with fresh fruits and vegetables as well as milk, eggs, and bread. It is an important service for his family, as he only has $380 a month for food (Peacher). Services like this help bring food to those who cannot afford or access it, however, they are not a good long-term solution to food insecurity. Other policies and interventions have been suggested that are likely to have more negative effects. The taxation of junk food, particularly high-calorie beverages, has been proposed to discourage people from purchasing unhealthy foods and hopefully lower obesity rates (Drewnowski 265S). Taxing unhealthy foods might be a good incentive for middle and high income people to buy healthier food. However, without lowering the price of nutritional food, policies like this will only put more of an economic burden on low-income people and make it harder for them to get any food at all.

New policies and interventions are needed, and it is necessary that they address the many different influences on the rates of obesity, including access, price, and advertising. Tax subsidies implemented on healthy foods, such as unprocessed meats, fruits, and vegetables, would encourage people to buy that instead of other options. It is important that if tax subsidies are put on healthy food that it is advertised to the public. Advertising on TV and in stores could be used alongside tax subsidies to promote the newly affordable, healthy choices and make them seem more desirable. Putting healthy foods in the front of stores so that they are the first thing people see, rather than unhealthier options like chips and candy, would also help people choose more nutritious foods over other choices. These may seem like small changes; however, they could have a huge impact.

Education may also play an important part in lowering rates of obesity. Nutrition is extremely complicated, and there are some who may have never learned what is healthy and what is not. Others may know what is healthy, yet they do not know how to prepare and use such foods. Free community education classes could be used to teach people about health and nutrition. Along with cooking classes to teach people how to properly prepare and cook

vegetables and fruits. Both of these classes would help inform people about their own health and build their confidence in choosing and preparing food. Classes may also be helpful for teaching skills other than nutrition and cooking. In an interview with the researcher Steven Cummins, he stated that "We have to think very carefully about giving people the skills to make better decisions when they're in stores, as well as providing access to the stores in the first place" (Corapi). He brings up an important point about the importance of teaching people how to manage their money properly and how to find good deals on healthy food. A class teaching these kinds of skills could help people be more organized and deliberate in what they buy.

The obesity epidemic in low-income populations is a complex problem that has been going on for a long time. The answer sadly is not simple and is going to require involvement from the government, stores, and the communities of America. Until people are able to afford and access food themselves, it is important that people continue to support food banks and pantries, like the Oregon Food Bank, as they provide vital assistance to those who are food-insecure. Solving the problem of obesity in impoverished areas is going to be complicated, however, the result will have more people with equal access to nutritious, healthy food and lower rates of obesity.

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Student Veterans and Their Struggle with Higher Education

Did you know that student veterans are one of the largest and most diverse sub-cultures to matriculate into higher education in America? Ever since the inception of the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill, the enrollment of service members post-military-service has skyrocketed. "Institutions have not faced such a significant influx of veteran students on campus since World War II" (Cook iii). Although they receive years of extensive training in military service, the skills that vets have learned are generally not immediately transferrable into civilian employment. With an abysmal job market, most service members are forced into higher education to obtain employment. The passage of the Post-9/11 G.I. Bill was the most significant increase in education benefits for service members and veterans since the original G.I. Bill of 1944; however, recent data from the Department of Veterans Affairs (VA) shows that only a small percentage of veterans use all of their federal education benefits (Lighthall 81). According to American College Testing (ACT), in the United States approximately one in four freshmen do not return after their first year and almost half will not graduate—but the statistic is significantly worse for veterans (Cass 23). Billions of dollars are lost annually on freshman attrition and wasted G.I. Bill benefits (Ibid.). Why do so many service members struggle to succeed during their transition into higher education? The answer may vary from veteran to veteran, but they underlying theme is an

inability to successfully transition from a highly structured military lifestyle into a self-sustaining civilian one.

One major challenge faced by veterans is social reintegration after war. The well-known saying "War changes people" is profoundly true. Although not all vets see combat, it cannot be denied that the experience of battle is physically, emotionally, and spiritually damaging. Other students who have not served can never truly understand this. The people—students and faculty—have no understanding of what student veterans have been through, causing a feeling of alienation (Lighthall 84). Universities have long been a place where young people develop a purpose in life and make friends, but for many veterans, it can have the opposite effect. In "Lonely Men on Campus: Student Veterans Struggle to Fit In," Alex Horton writes a case study on a combat veteran struggling from this difficulty with social integration. He explains Josh Martell's experience: "He has quarantined himself almost entirely. He shows up for class, takes notes, and leaves, most of the time without communicating with students or professors" (Horton). Josh isolated himself, never saying "more than a few words to anyone" (Ibid.). This behavior is not abnormal: it is a reaction many veterans exhibit when they go to college. Horton explains how this reclusive behavior betrays the man Josh really is, explaining that he has transformed into an introvert. For many veterans, the feeling of being different or not relating to other students creates a feeling of isolation (Cass 29). Alienation from the student body certainly contributes to veteran attrition.

Coupled with this feeling of isolation, college campuses can have a drastic culture shock for veterans. During their years spent in the military, people in the service are inextricably tied to some sort of social system, and solitude is rare or even absent altogether. In "Ten Things You Should Know about Today's Student Veteran," Alison Lighthall explains how the many vets lose friends upon leaving the military, as well as a sense of purpose, identity, and structure. This can push anyone to their limit. Lighthall goes on to say that the unfamiliar social system of the university has no resemblance to the military. Classes and assignments might have less structure or looser expectations. They might require more self-management of time rather than following a strict schedule.

For myself, being a student veteran, I have faced many of these same struggles during my transition into higher education. I purposefully never solicit that I am a veteran unless I need to. It's not that I'm not proud of it, or even that I am ashamed of anything I have done; it's because I

don't want to feel any more singled out than I already do. I also find that people either have strong feelings against the military or simply have no understanding of what myself or other veterans have gone through. I try to avoid hearing questions like, "Did you know anyone who died?" or, "Have you killed anyone?" After spending years always surrounded by military personnel and within a unique culture, it is very difficult to relate to and want to be around college students. Like Josh, I find myself wanting to be alone rather than attempt to connect with my classmates.

Another major barrier for student veterans are the physical and mental health challenges that might have resulted from their service. This is another place where the vast majority of Americans who choose not to join the military do not have the context to understand the experience. Witnessing your best friend get blown apart or shot is a massive shock and emotionally devastating. Post-traumatic stress disorder (PTSD) haunts many of today's student veterans and further hinders their education. This is not to mention the risk of physical disability that veterans take when they enroll in service. Because of anxiety or injury related disorders, some veterans may show up to class late or even miss class. Other may show up early to orient themselves in a seat that has a full view of the classroom to reduce the sense of a physical threat (Lighthall 88). During class, they may have trouble staying focused or have difficulty composing themselves. They may struggle to process the information or skills being taught (Ibid. 85). Teachers should be aware of these challenges and support veterans in their learning and access needs.

Many veterans that suffer from PTSD go undiagnosed and attempt to live, work, and go to school without seeking aid (Cook 8-9). The mentality instilled in them is to not be a victim, and many student veterans fight PTSD without any assistance. Because of the stigma around PTSD and a veteran's desire to be self-sufficient, a student veteran might not seek help from Disability Services, the tutoring centers, or other on-campus resources.

Universities may be logistically suited to help veterans return to civilian life; however, the disconnected social experience, age discrepancies, and unique challenges make it difficult for them to seek help. Faculty and university officials are beginning to understand this issue as the veteran population steadily rises, but it may not be fast enough to help current student veterans. Helping this diverse subculture in today's universities starts first with awareness and an understanding of their needs. Educators should reach out to them with compassion and respect,

accommodate their individual learning needs, and most importantly, see them as unique people who chose to serve our country and endured burdens beyond anything we could imagine. It could make all the difference to that student veteran. It might even mean the difference between finding success in life, or ending up lost, jobless, and homeless.

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Concepts and Strategies for Revision

From *EmpoWord: A Student-Centered Anthology & Handbook for College Writers* by Shane Abrams

Let's start with a few definitions. What is an **essay**? It's likely that your teachers have been asking you to write essays for years now; you've probably formed some idea of the genre. But when I ask my students to define this kind of writing, their answers vary widely and only get at part of the meaning of "essay."

Although we typically talk of *an* essay (noun), I find it instructive to think about essay (verb): to try; to test; to explore; to attempt to understand. *An* essay (noun), then, is an attempt and an exploration. Popularized shortly before the Enlightenment Era by Michel de Montaigne, the essay form was invested in the notion that writing invites discovery: the idea was that he, as a lay-person without formal education in a specific discipline, would learn more about a subject through the act of writing itself.

What difference does this new definition make for us, as writers?

- **Writing invites discovery**. Throughout the act of writing, you will learn more about your topic. Even though some people think of writing as a way to capture a fully-formed idea, writing can also be a way to process through ideas: in other words, writing can be an act of thinking. It forces you to look closer and see more. Your revisions should reflect the knowledge you gain through the act of writing.
- **An essay is an attempt, but not all attempts are successful on the first try.** You should give yourself license to fail, to an extent. If to essay is to try, then it's okay to fall short. Writing is also an iterative process, which means your first draft isn't the final product.

Now, what is **revision**? You may have been taught that revision means fixing commas, using a thesaurus to brighten up word choice, and maybe tweaking a sentence or two. However, I prefer to think of revision as "re|vision."

Revision isn't just about polishing—it's about seeing your piece from a new angle, with "fresh eyes." Often, we get so close to our own writing that we need to be able to see it from a different perspective in order to improve it. Revision happens on many levels. What you may have been trained to think of as revision—grammatical and mechanical fixes—is just one tier. Here's how I like to imagine it:

Even though all kinds of revision are valuable, your global issues are first-order concerns, and proofreading is a last-order concern. If your entire topic, approach, or structure needs revision, it doesn't matter if you have a comma splice or two. It's likely that you'll end up rewriting that sentence anyway.

GLOBAL Revision

- Ideas, Focus, and Content
- Your Approach or Angle
- Overall Structure and Organization

LOCAL Revision

- Sentence Fluency and Pacing
- Word Choice

PROOFREADING

- Grammar & Mechanics
- Formatting

There are a handful of techniques you can experiment with in order to practice true revision. First, if you can, take some time away from your writing. When you return, you will have a clearer head. You will even, in some ways, be a different person when you come back—since we as humans are constantly changing from moment to moment, day to day, you will have a different perspective with some time away. This might be one way for you to make procrastination work in your favor: if you know you struggle with procrastination, try to bust out a quick first draft the day an essay is assigned. Then, you can come back to it a few hours or a few days later with fresh eyes and a clearer idea of your goals.

Second, you can challenge yourself to reimagine your writing using global and local revision techniques, like those included later in this appendix.

Third, you can (and should) read your paper aloud, if only to yourself. This technique distances you from your writing; by forcing yourself you read aloud, you may catch sticky spots, mechanical errors, abrupt transitions, and other mistakes you would miss if you were immersed in your writing. (Recently, a student shared with me that she uses an online text-to-speech voice reader to create this same separation. By listening along and taking notes, she can identify opportunities for local- and proofreading-level revision.)

Finally, and perhaps most importantly, you should rely on your **learning community**. Because you most likely work on tight deadlines and don't always have the opportunity to take time away from our projects, you should solicit feedback from your classmates, the Writing Center, your instructor, your Peer Workshop group, or your friends and family. As readers, they have valuable insight to the rhetorical efficacy of your writing: their feedback can be useful in developing a piece which is conscious of audience. To begin setting expectations and procedures for your Peer Workshop, turn to the first activity in this section.

Throughout this text, I have emphasized that good writing cannot exist in a vacuum; similarly, good rewriting often requires a supportive learning community. Even if you have had negative experiences with peer workshops before, I encourage you to give them another chance. Not only do professional writers consistently work with other writers, but my students are nearly always surprised by just how helpful it is to work alongside their classmates.

The previous diagram (of global, local, and proofreading levels of revision) reminds us that everyone has something valuable to offer in a learning community: because there are so many different elements on which to articulate feedback, you can provide meaningful feedback to your workshop, even if you don't feel like an expert writer.

During the many iterations of revising, remember to be flexible and to listen. Seeing your writing with fresh eyes requires you to step outside of yourself, figuratively.
Listen actively and seek to truly understand feedback by asking clarifying questions and asking for examples. The reactions of your audience are a part of writing that you cannot overlook, so revision ought to be driven by the responses of your colleagues.

On the other hand, remember that the ultimate choice to use or disregard feedback is at the author's discretion: provide all the suggestions you want as a group member, but use your best judgment as an author. If members of your group disagree—great! Contradictory feedback reminds us that writing is a dynamic, transactional action which is dependent on the specific rhetorical audience.

Vocabulary

annotation—engaged reading strategy by which a reader marks up a text with their notes, questions, new vocabulary, ideas, and emphases.

critical/active reading—also referred to in this text as engaged reading, a set of strategies and concepts to interrupt projection and focus on a text.

essay—a medium, typically nonfiction, by which an author can achieve a variety of purposes. Popularized by Michel de Montaigne as a method of discovery of knowledge: in the original French, "essay" is a verb that means "to try; to test; to explore; to attempt to understand."

fluff—uneconomical writing: filler language or unnecessarily wordy phrasing. Although fluff occurs in a variety of ways, it can be generally defined as words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs that do not work hard to help you achieve your rhetorical purpose.

iterative—literally, a repetition within a process. The writing process is iterative because it is non-linear and because an author often has to repeat, revisit, or re-approach different steps along the way.

learning community—a network of learners and teachers, each equipped and empowered to provide support through horizontal power relations. Values diversity insofar as it encourages growth and perspective, but also inclusivity. Also, a community that learns by adapting to its unique needs and advantages.

metacognition—literally, "thinking about thinking." May also include how thinking evolves and reflection on growth.

revision—the iterative process of changing a piece of writing. Literally, re-vision: seeing your writing with "fresh eyes" in order to improve it. Includes changes on global, local, and proofreading levels. Changes might include:
- rewriting (trying again, perhaps from a different angle or with a different focus)
- adding (new information, new ideas, new evidence)
- subtracting (unrelated ideas, redundant information, fluff)
- rearranging (finding more effective vectors or sequences of organization)
- switching out (changing words or phrases, substituting different evidence)

- mechanical clean-up (standardizing punctuation, grammar, or formatting)

SQ3R—an engaged reading strategy to improve comprehension and interrupt projection.

Survey, **Q**uestion, **R**ead, **R**ecite, **R**eview.

Revision Activities

Establishing Your Peer Workshop

Before you begin working with a group, it's important for you to establish a set of shared goals, expectations, and processes. You might spend a few minutes talking through the following questions:

- Have you ever participated in a Peer Workshop before? What worked? What didn't?
- What do you hate about group projects? How might you mitigate these issues?
- What opportunities do group projects offer that working independently doesn't? What are you excited for?
- What requests do you have for your Peer Workshop group members?

In addition to thinking through the culture you want to create for your workshop group, you should also consider the kind of feedback you want to exchange, practically speaking. In order to arrive at a shared definition for "good feedback," I often ask my students to complete the following sentence as many times as possible with their groupmates: "Good feedback is…"

The list could go on forever, but here a few that I emphasize:

"Good feedback is…"		
kind	actionable	not prescriptive (offers suggestions, not demands)
cognizant of process (i.e., recognizes that a first draft isn't a final draft)	respectful	honest
specific	comprehensive (i.e., global, local, and proofreading)	attentive

Once you've discussed the parameters for the learning community you're building, you can begin workshopping your drafts, asking, "What does the author do well and what could they do better?" Personally, I prefer a workshop that's conversational, allowing the author and the audience to discuss the work both generally and specifically; however, your group should use whatever format will be most valuable for you. Before starting your workshop, try to get everyone on the same page logistically by using the flowchart on the following two pages.

Establishing Your Peer Workshop

To set the tone and expectations for your unique workshop group, talk through the following prompts. Record your answers on the companion sheet. Part One asks you to establish a climate or culture for your group; Part Two will help you talk through logistics.
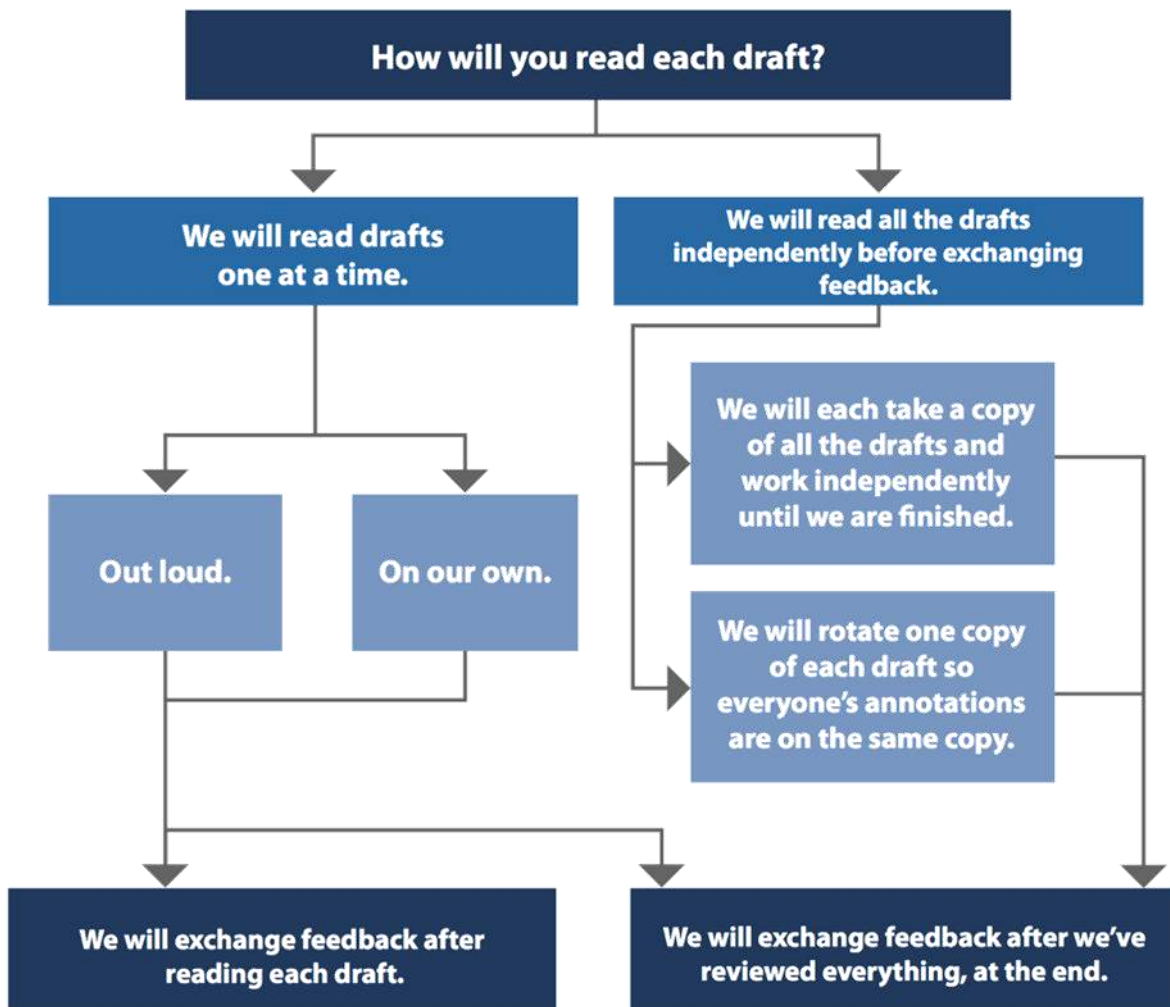
(1) Culture of your Workshop

(a.) Choose the 3-5 descriptors of good feedback that are most important to the members of your group.
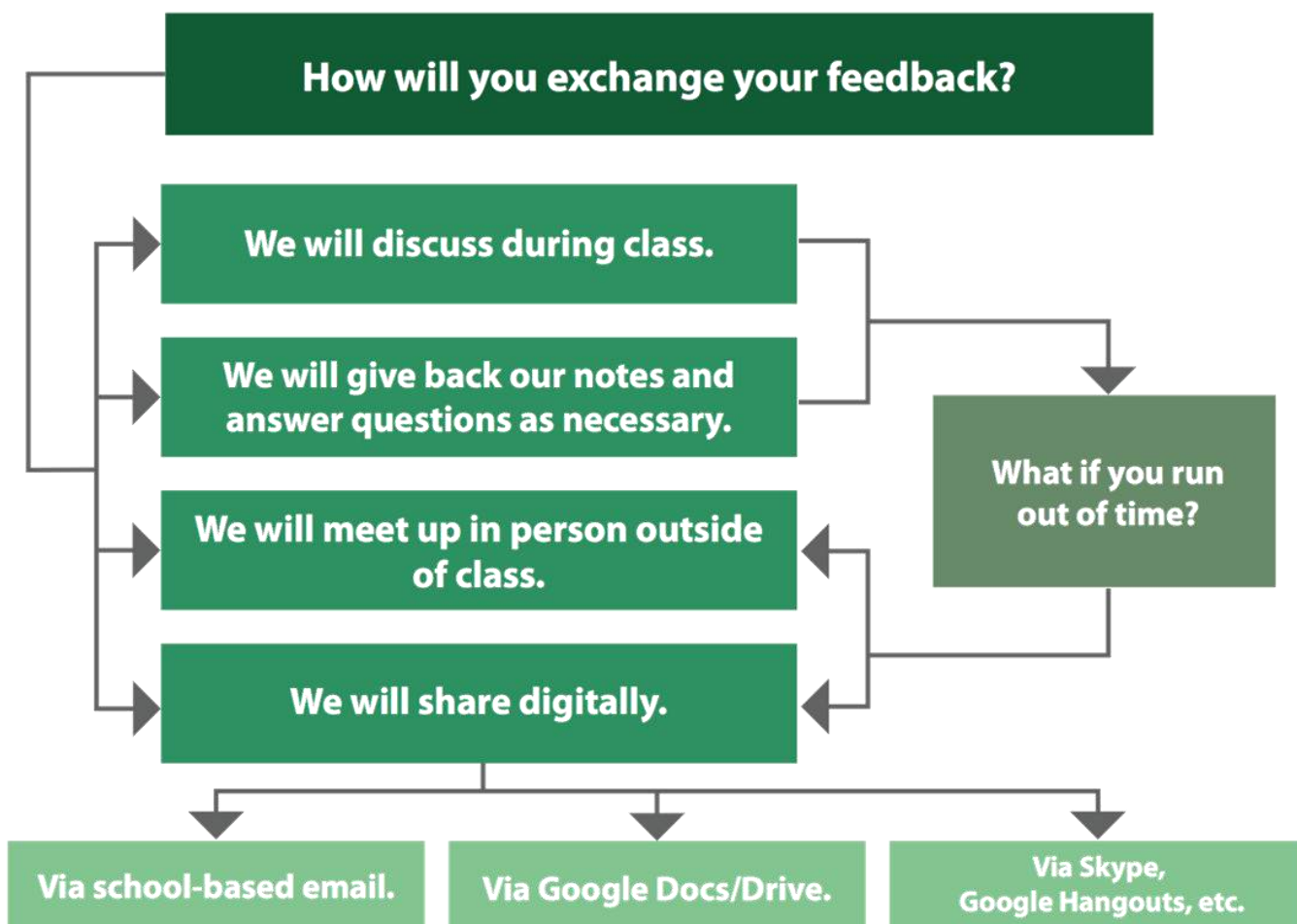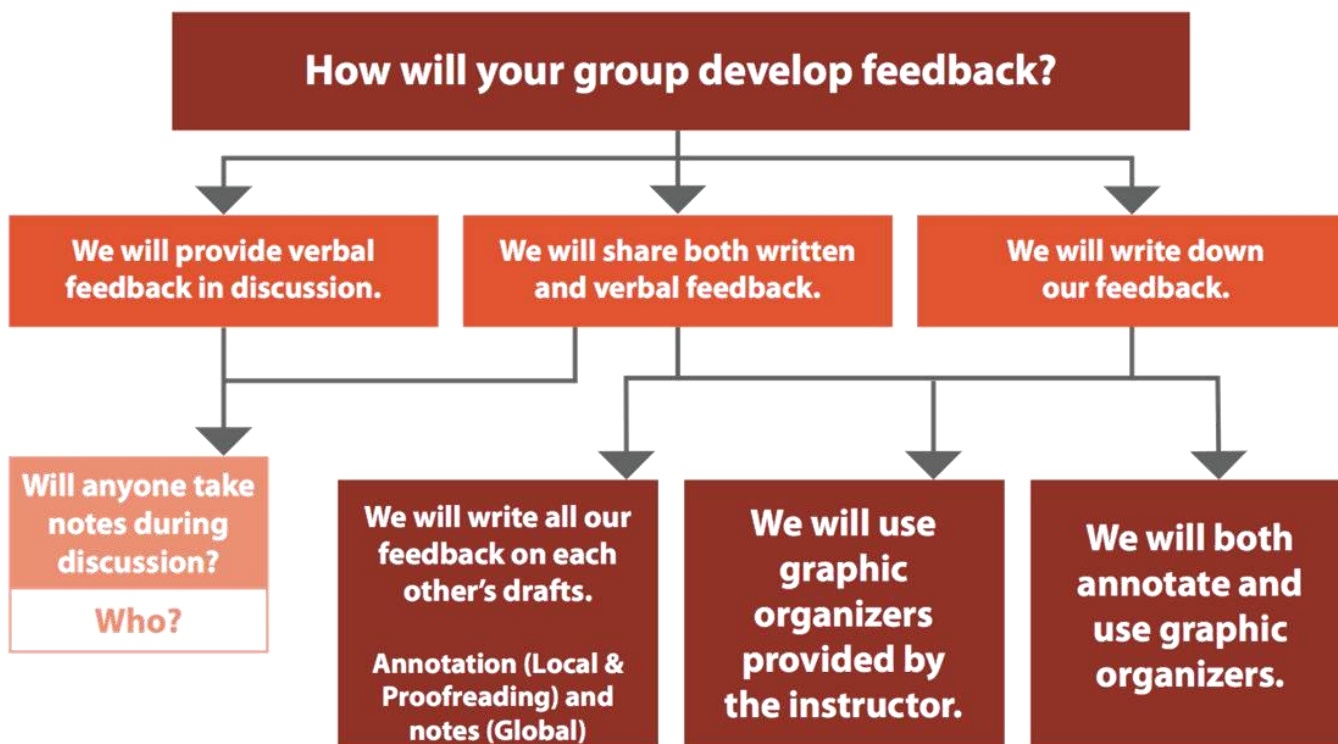
(b.) Discuss for 3-5 minutes: What do each of you need for this Peer Workshop to be effective?

FROM EACH OTHER?   **FROM THE INSTRUCTOR?**   **FROM YOURSELVES?**   **FROM YOUR ENVIRONMENT?**

Record responses on a separate sheet of paper.

(2) Procedures for your Workshop

How will you read each draft?

We will read drafts one at a time.

We will read all the drafts independently before exchanging feedback.

Out loud.

On our own.

We will each take a copy of all the drafts and work independently until we are finished.

We will rotate one copy of each draft so everyone's annotations are on the same copy.

We will exchange feedback after reading each draft.

We will exchange feedback after we've reviewed everything, at the end.

How will your group develop feedback?

We will provide verbal feedback in discussion.

We will share both written and verbal feedback.

We will write down our feedback.

Will anyone take notes during discussion?

Who?

We will write all our feedback on each other's drafts.

Annotation (Local & Proofreading) and notes (Global)

We will use graphic organizers provided by the instructor.

We will both annotate and use graphic organizers.

How will you exchange your feedback?

We will discuss during class.

We will give back our notes and answer questions as necessary.

We will meet up in person outside of class.

What if you run out of time?

We will share digitally.

Via school-based email.

Via Google Docs/Drive.

Via Skype, Google Hangouts, etc.

Global Revision Activity for a Narrative Essay

This assignment challenges you to try new approaches to a draft you've already written. Although you will be "rewriting" in this exercise, you are not abandoning your earlier draft: this exercise is generative, meaning it is designed to help you produce new details, ideas, or surprising bits of language that you might integrate into your project.

First, choose a part of your draft that (a) you really like but think could be better, or (b) just isn't working for you. This excerpt should be no fewer than 100 words and can include your entire essay, if you want.

Then, complete your choice of one prompt from the list below: apply the instruction to the excerpt to create new content. <u>Read over your original once, but do not refer back to it after you start writing. Your goal here is to deviate from the first version, not reproduce it.</u> The idea here is to produce something new about your topic through constraint; you are reimagining your excerpt on a global scale.

After completing one prompt, go back to the original and try at least one more, <u>or</u> apply a different prompt to your new work.

1. Change genres: For example, if your excerpt is written in typical essay form, try writing it as poetry, or dialogue from a play/movie, or a radio advertisement.
2. Zoom in: Focus on one image, color, idea, or word from your excerpt and zoom way in. Meditate on this one thing with as much detail as possible.
3. Zoom out: Step back from the excerpt and contextualize it with background information, concurrent events, information about relationship or feelings.
4. Change point-of-view: Try a new vantage point for your story by changing pronouns and perspective. For instance, if your excerpt is in first-person (I/me), switch to second- (you) or third-person (he/she/they).
5. Change setting: Resituate your excerpt in a different place, or time.
6. Change your audience: Rewrite the excerpt anticipating the expectations of a different reader than you first intended. For example, if the original excerpt is in the same speaking voice you would use with your friends, write as if your strictest teacher or the president or your grandmother is reading it. If you've written in an "academic" voice, try writing for your closest friend—use slang, swear words, casual language, whatever.
7. Add another voice: Instead of just the speaker of the essay narrating, add a listener. This listener can agree, disagree, question, heckle, sympathize, apologize, or respond in any other way you can imagine. (See "the nay-sayer's voice" in an earlier section.)
8. Change timeline (narrative sequence): Instead of moving chronologically forward, rearrange the events to bounce around.

9. Change tense: Narrate from a different vantage point by changing the grammar. For example, instead of writing in past tense, write in present or future tense.
10. Change tone: Reimagine your writing in a different emotional register. For instance, if your writing is predominantly nostalgic, try a bitter tone. If you seem regretful, try to write as if you were proud.

Reverse Outlining

Have you ever written an outline before writing a draft? It can be a useful pre-writing strategy, but it doesn't work for all writers. If you're like me, you prefer to brain-dump a bunch of ideas on the paper, then come back to organize and refocus during the revision process. One strategy that can help you here is reverse outlining.

Divide a blank piece of paper into three columns, as demonstrated below. Number each paragraph of your draft, and write an equal numbered list down the left column of your blank piece of paper. Write "Idea" at the top of the middle column and "Purpose" at the top of the right column.

¶	Idea (What is the ¶ saying?)	Purpose (What is the ¶ doing?)
1 2 3 4…		

Now, wade back through your essay, identifying what each paragraph is saying and what each paragraph is doing. Choose a few key words or phrases for each column to record on your sheet of paper.

- Try to use consistent language throughout the reverse outline so you can see where your paragraphs are saying or doing similar things.
- A paragraph might have too many different ideas or too many different functions for you to concisely identify. This could be a sign that you need to divide that paragraph up.

Here's a student's model reverse outline

¶	Idea (What is the ¶ saying?)	Purpose (What is the ¶ doing?)

1	Theatre is an important part of education and childhood development	Setting up and providing thesis statement
2	There have been many changes in recent history to public education in the United States	Providing context for thesis
3	Theatre programs in public schools have been on the decline over the past two decades	Providing context and giving urgency to the topic
4	a) Theatre has social/emotional benefits b) Theatre has academic benefits	Supporting and explaining thesis
5	a) Acknowledge argument in favor of standardized testing b) STEAM curriculum incorporates arts education into other academic subjects	Disarming audience, proposing a solution to underfunded arts programs
6	Socioeconomic inequality is also an obstacle to theatre education	Acknowledging broader scope of topic
7	Looking forward at public education reform, we should incorporate theatre into public education	Call to action, backing up and restating thesis

Reverse outline by Jacob Alexander, Portland Community College, 2018.

But wait—there's more!

Once you have identified the idea(s) and purpose(s) of each paragraph, you can start revising according to your observations. From the completed reverse outline, create a <u>new</u> outline with a different sequence, organization, focus, or balance. You can reorganize by

- combining or dividing paragraphs,
- re-arranging ideas, and
- adding or subtracting content.

Reverse outlining can also be helpful in identifying gaps and redundancies: now that you have a new outline, do any of your ideas seem too brief? Do you need more evidence for a certain argument? Do you see ideas repeated more than necessary?

After completing the reverse outline above, the student proposed this new organization:

Proposed changes based on reverse outline:
1
4a
4b
Combine 2 and 5a
Combine 3 and 6
5b
Write new paragraph on other solutions
7

by Jacob Alexander, Portland Community College, 2018.

You might note that this strategy can also be applied on the sentence and section level. Additionally, if you are a kinesthetic or visual learner, you might cut your paper into smaller pieces that you can physically manipulate.

Be sure to read aloud after reverse outlining to look for abrupt transitions.

You can see a simplified version of this technique demonstrated in this video.

Local Revision Activity:

Cutting Fluff

When it's late at night, the deadline is approaching, and we've simply run out of things to say… we turn to **fluff**. Fluff refers to language which doesn't do work for you—language that simply takes up space or sits flat on the page, rather than working economically and impactfully. Whether or not you've used it deliberately, all authors have been guilty of fluffy writing at one time or another.

Fluff happens for a lot of reasons.

- Of course, reaching a word- or page-count is the most common motivation.
- Introductions and conclusions are often fluffy because the author can't find a way into or out of the subject, or because the author doesn't know what their exact subject will be.

- Sometimes, the presence of fluff is an indication that the author doesn't know enough about the subject or that their scope is too broad.
- Other times, fluffy language is deployed in an effort to sound "smarter" or "fancier" or "more academic"—which is an understandable pitfall for developing writers.

These circumstances, plus others, encourage us to use language that's not as effective, authentic, or economical. Fluff happens in a lot of ways; here are a few I've noticed:

Thesaurus Syndrome	A writer uses inappropriately complex language (often because of the right-click → Synonyms function) to achieve a different tone. The more complex language might be used inaccurately or sound inauthentic because the author isn't as familiar with it.
Roundabout phrasing	Rather than making a direct statement ("That man is a fool."), the author uses couching language or beats around the bush ("If one takes into account each event, each decision, it would not be unwise for one to suggest that that man's behaviors are what some would call foolish.")
Abstraction or generalities	If the author hasn't quite figured out what they want to say or has a too broad of a scope, they might discuss an issue very generally without committing to specific, engaging details.
Digression	An author might get off topic, accidentally or deliberately, creating extraneous, irrelevant, or unconnected language.
Ornamentation or flowery language	Similarly to Thesaurus Syndrome, often referred to as "purple prose," an author might choose words that sound pretty or smart, but aren't necessarily the right words for their ideas.
Wordy sentences	Even if the sentences an author creates are grammatically correct, they might be wordier than necessary.

Of course, there's a very fine line between detail and fluff. Avoiding fluff doesn't mean always using the fewest words possible. Instead, you should occasionally ask yourself in the revision process, *How is this part contributing to the whole? Is this somehow building toward a bigger purpose?* If the answer is no, then you need to revise.

The goal should not necessarily be "Don't write fluff," but rather "Learn to get rid of fluff in revision." In light of our focus on process, you are allowed to write fluff in the drafting period, so long as you learn to "prune" during revisions. (I use the word "prune" as an analogy for

caring for a plant: just as you must cut the dead leaves off for the plant's health and growth, you will need to cut fluff so your writing can thrive.)

Here are a few strategies:
- Read out loud,
- Ask yourself what a sentence is <u>doing</u>, rhetorically,
- Combine like sentences, phrases, or ideas,
- Use signposts, like topic-transition sentences (for yourself during revision and for your reader in the final draft), and
- Be specific—stay cognizant of your scope (globally) and the detail of your writing (locally).

To practice revising for fluff, workshop the following excerpt by yourself or with a partner. Your goal is <u>not</u> to cut back to the smallest number of words, but rather to prune out what you consider to be fluff and leave what you consider to be detail. You should be able to explain the choices you make.

> There was a time long before today when an event occurred involving a young woman who was known to the world as Goldilocks. On the particular day at hand, Goldilocks made a spontaneous decision to wander through the forest, the trees growing up high above her flowing blonde pigtails. Some time after she commenced her voyage, but not after too long, she saw sitting on the horizon a small residency. Goldilocks rapped her knuckles on the door, but alas, no one answered the door. Therefore, Goldilocks decided that it would be a good idea to enter the unattended house, so she entered it. Atop the average-sized table in the kitchen of the house, there were three bowls of porridge, which is similar to oatmeal. Porridge is a very common dish in Europe; in fact, the Queen of England is well-known for enjoying at least one daily bowl of porridge per day. Goldilocks, not unlike the Queen of England, enjoys eating porridge for its nutritional value. On this day, she was feeling quite hungry and wanted to eat. She decided that she should taste one of the three bowls of porridge, from which steam was rising indicating its temperature. But, because she apparently couldn't tell, she imbibed a spoonful of the porridge and vocalized the fact that the porridge was of too high a temperature for her to masticate and consume: "This porridge is too hot!"

Engaged Reading Strategies

From *[EmpoWord: A Student-Centered Anthology & Handbook for College Writers](#)* by Shane Abrams

There are a lot of ways to become a better writer, but the best way I know is to read a lot. Why? Not only does attentive reading help you understand grammar and mechanics more intuitively, but it also allows you to develop your personal voice and critical worldviews more deliberately. By encountering a diversity of styles, voices, and perspectives, you are likely to identify the ideas and techniques that resonate with you; while your voice is distinctly *yours*, it is also a unique synthesis of all the other voices you've been exposed to.

But it is important to acknowledge that the *way* we read matters. At some point in your academic career, you've probably encountered the terms "**active reading**" or "**critical reading**." But what exactly does active reading entail?

It begins with an acknowledgment that reading, like writing, is a process: active reading is complex, iterative, and recursive, consisting of a variety of different cognitive actions. Furthermore, we must recognize that the reading process can be approached many different ways, based on our backgrounds, strengths, and purposes.

However, many people don't realize that there's more than one way to read; our early training as readers fosters a very narrow vision of critical literacy. For many generations in many cultures across the world, developing reading ability has generally trended toward efficiency and comprehension of main ideas. Your family, teachers, and other folks who taught you to read trained you to read in particular ways. Most often, novice readers are encouraged to ignore detail and nuance in the name of focus: details are distracting. Those readers also tend to project their assumptions on a text. This practice, while useful for global understanding of a text, is only *one* way to approach reading; by itself, it does not constitute "engaged reading."

In her landmark article on close reading, Jane Gallop explains that ignoring details while reading is effective, but also problematic:

> *When the reader concentrates on the familiar, she is reassured that what she already knows is sufficient in relation to this new book. Focusing on the surprising, on the other*

hand, would mean giving up the comfort of the familiar, of the already known for the sake of learning, of encountering something new, something she didn't already know.

In fact, this all has to do with learning. Learning is very difficult; it takes a lot of effort. It is of course much easier if once we learn something we can apply what we have learned again and again. It is much more difficult if every time we confront something new, we have to learn something new.

Reading what one expects to find means finding what one already knows. Learning, on the other hand, means coming to know something one did not know before. Projecting is the opposite of learning. As long as we project onto a text, we cannot learn from it, we can only find what we already know. Close reading is thus a technique to make us learn, to make us see what we don't already know, rather than transforming the new into the old (Gallop 11).

To be engaged readers, we must avoid projecting our preconceived notions onto a text. To achieve deep, complex understanding, we must consciously attend to a text using a variety of strategies.

The following strategies are implemented by all kinds of critical readers; some readers even use a combination of these strategies. Like the writing process, though, active reading looks different for everyone. These strategies work really well for some people, but not for others: I encourage you to experiment with them, as well as others not covered here, to figure out what *your* ideal critical reading process looks like.

Annotation

Annotation is the most common and one of the most useful engaged reading strategies. You might know it better as "marking up" a text. Annotating a reading is visual evidence to your teacher that you read something—but more importantly, it allows you to focus on the text itself by asking questions and making notes to yourself to spark your memory later.

Take a look at the sample annotation on the next page. Note that the reader here is doing several different things:

Underlining important words, phrases, and sentences.
Many studies have shown that underlining or highlighting alone does not improve comprehension or recall; however, limited underlining can draw your eye back to curious phrases as you re-read, discuss, or analyze a text.

Writing marginal notes.
Even though you can't fit complex ideas in the margins, you can:
- use keywords to spark your memory,
- track your reactions,
- remind yourself where an important argument is,
- define unfamiliar words,
- draw illustrations to think through an image or idea visually, or
- make connections to other texts.

In addition to taking notes directly on the text itself, you might also write a brief summary with any white space left on the page. As we learned earlier, summarizing will help you process information, ensure that you understand what you've read, and make choices about which elements of the text to focus on.

Annotating an Argument

Most "kits" that you find in novelty stores give you materials and instructions about how to construct an object: a model plane, a bicycle, a dollhouse. This kit asks you to *deconstruct* one of our readings, identifying its thesis, breaking down its argument, and calling attention to the ways it supports its ideas. Dissecting a text is no easy task, and this assignment is designed to help you understand the logic and rhetoric behind what you just read.

Print out a clean copy of the text and annotate it as follows:

1. **With a black pen, <u>underline</u> the writer's thesis**. If you think the thesis occurs over several sentences, underline all of them. If you think the text has an implicit (present but unstated) thesis, underline the section that comes closest to being the thesis and *rewrite* it as a thesis in the margins of the paper.
2. **With a different color pen, <u>underline</u> the "steps" of the argument. In the margins of the paper, paraphrase those steps and say whether or not you agree with them.** To figure out the steps of the argument, ask: What was the author's thesis? What ideas did they *need* to talk about to support that thesis? Where and how does each paragraph discuss those ideas? Do you agree with those ideas?
3. **With a different color pen, put [brackets] around any key terms or difficult concepts that the author uses, and define those terms in the margins of the paper.**
4. **With a different color pen, describe the writer's *persona* at the top of the first page.** What kind of person is "speaking" the essay? What kind of expertise do they have? What kind of vocabulary do they use? How do they treat their intended audiences, or what do they assume about you, the reader?
5. **Using a highlighter, identify any rhetorical appeals (logos, pathos, ethos). In the margins, explain *how* the passage works as an appeal.** Ask: *What* is the passage asking you to buy into? *How* does it prompt me to reason (logos), feel (pathos), or believe (ethos)?
6. **At the end of the text, and in any color pen, write any questions or comments or questions *you* have for the author.** What strikes you as interesting/odd/infuriating/ insightful about the argument? Why? What do you think the author has yet to discuss, either unconsciously or purposely?

Annotating a Short Story or Memoir

This activity was developed by Brian Gazaille, University of Oregon, 2018. Reproduced with permission of the author.

Print out a clean copy of the text and annotate it as follows:

1. In one color, chart the story's **plot**. Identify these elements in the margins of the text by writing the appropriate term next to the corresponding part[s] of the story. (Alternatively, draw a chart on a separate piece of paper.) Your plot chart must include the following terms: **exposition, rising action, crisis, climax, falling action, dénouement**.

2. At the top of the first page, identify the story's **point of view** as fully as possible. (Who is telling the story? What kind of narration is given?) In the margins, identify any sections of text in which the narrator's position/intrusion becomes significant.

3. Identify your story's **protagonist** and highlight sections of text that supply **character description or motivation**, labeling them in the margins. In a different color, do the same for the **antagonist(s)** of the story.

4. Highlight (in a different color) sections of the text that describe the story's **setting**. Remember, this can include place, time, weather, and atmosphere. Briefly discuss the significance of the setting, where appropriate.

5. With a different color, identify key uses of figurative language—**metaphors**, **similes**, and **personifications**—by [bracketing] that section of text and writing the appropriate term.

6. In the margins, identify two distinctive **lexicons** ("word themes" or kinds of vocabulary) at work in your story. Highlight (with new colors) instances of those lexicons.

7. Annotate the story with any comments or questions *you* have. What strikes you as interesting? Odd? Why? What makes you want to talk back? Does any part of the text remind you of something else you've read or seen? Why?

SQ3R

This is far and away the most underrated engaged reading strategy I know: the few students I've had who know about it swear by it.

The SQ3R (or SQRRR) strategy has five steps:

Survey (or **S**kim): Get a general idea of the text to prime your brain for new information. Look over the entire text, keeping an eye out for bolded terms, section headings, the "key" thesis or argument, and other elements that jump out at you. An efficient and effective way to skim is by looking at the *first* and *last* sentences of each paragraph.

Question: After a quick overview, bring yourself into curiosity mode by developing a few questions about the text. Developing questions is a good way to keep yourself engaged, and it will guide your reading as you proceed.

- What do you anticipate about the ideas contained in the text?
- What sort of biases or preoccupations do you think the text will reflect?

Before reading

Read: Next, you should read the text closely and thoroughly, using other engaged reading strategies you've learned.

- Annotate the text: underline/highlight important passages and make notes to yourself in the margins.
- Record vocabulary words you don't recognize.
- Pause every few paragraphs to check in with yourself and make sure you're confident about what you just read.
- Take notes on a separate page as you see fit.

Recite: As you're reading, take small breaks to talk to yourself aloud about the ideas and information you're processing. I know this seems childish, but self-talk is actually really important and really effective. (It's only as adolescents that we develop this aversion to talking to ourselves because it's frowned upon socially.) If you feel uncomfortable talking to yourself, try to find a willing second party—a friend, roommate, classmate, significant other, family member, etc.—who will listen. If you have a classmate with the same reading assignment, practice this strategy collaboratively!

While reading

Review: When you're finished reading, spend a few minutes "wading" back through the text: not diving back in and re-reading, but getting ankle-deep to refresh yourself. Reflect on the ideas the text considered, information that surprised you, the questions that remain unanswered or new questions you have, and the text's potential use-value. The Cornell note-taking system recommends that you write a brief summary, but you can also free-write or talk through the main points that you remember. If you're working with a classmate, try verbally summarizing.

After reading

Double-Column Notes

This note-taking strategy seems very simple at first pass, but will help keep you organized as you interact with a reading.

Notes & Quotes	Questions & Reactions

Divide a clean sheet of paper into two columns; on the left, make a heading for "Notes and Quotes," and on the right, "Questions and Reactions." As you read and re-read, jot down important ideas and words from the text on the left, and record your intellectual and emotional reactions on the right. Be sure to ask prodding questions of the text along the way, too!

By utilizing both columns, you are reminding yourself to stay close to the text (left side) while also evaluating how that text acts on you (right side). This method strengthens the connection you build with a reading.

Increasing Reading Efficiency

Although reading speed is not the most important part of reading, we often find ourselves with too much to read and too little time. Especially when you're working on an inquiry-based research project, you'll encounter more texts than you could possibly have time to read thoroughly. Here are a few quick tips:

Encountering an Article in a Hurry:

1. Some articles, especially scholarly articles, have abstracts. An abstract is typically an overview of the discussion, interests, and findings of an article; it's a lot like a summary. Using the abstract, you can get a rough idea of the contents of an article and determine whether it's worth reading more closely.

2. Some articles will have a conclusion set off at the end of the article. Often, these conclusions will summarize the text and its main priorities. You can read the conclusion before reading the rest of the article to see if its final destination is compatible with yours.

3. If you're working on a computer with search-enabled article PDFs, webpages, or documents, use the "Find" function (Ctrl + F on a PC and ⌘ + F on a Mac) to locate keywords. It's possible that you know what you're looking for: use technology to get you there faster.

Encountering a Book in a Hurry:

Although print books are more difficult to speed-read, they are very valuable resources for a variety of reading and writing situations. To get a broad idea of a book's contents, try the following steps:

1. Check the Table of Contents and the Index. At the front and back of the book, respectively, these resources provide more key terms, ideas, and topics that may or may not seem relevant to your study.

2. If you've found something of interest in the Table of Contents and/or Index, turn to the chapter/section of interest. Read the first paragraph, the (approximate) middle two to three paragraphs, and the last paragraph. Anything catch your eye? (If not, it may be worth moving on.)

3. If the book has an introduction, read it: many books will develop their focus and conceptual frameworks in this section, allowing you to determine whether the text will be valuable for your purposes.

4. Finally, check out this video that has both practical tips to increase reading speed and conceptual reminders about the learning opportunities that reading creates.

Metacognition

From *[EmpoWord: A Student-Centered Anthology & Handbook for College Writers](#)* by Shane Abrams

Glaciers are known for their magnificently slow movement. To the naked eye, they appear to be giant sheets of ice; however, when observed over long periods of time, we can tell that they are actually rivers made of ice.

Figure 1 & 2 "[Glaciers of Glacier Bay National Park](#)."
National Park Service, U.S. Department of the Interior,
12 March 2018,

Despite their pace, though, glaciers are immensely powerful. You couldn't notice in the span of your own lifetime, but glaciers carve out deep valleys (like the one to the right) and grind the earth down to bedrock. Massive changes to the landscape and ecosystem take place over hundreds of thousands of years, making them difficult to observe from a human vantage point.

However, humans too are always changing, even within our brief lifetimes. No matter how stable our sense of self, we are constantly in a state of flux, perpetually changing as a result of our experiences and our context. Like with glaciers, we can observe change with the benefit of time; on the other hand, we might not perceive the specific ways in which we grow on a daily basis. When change is gradual, it is easy to overlook.

Particularly after challenging learning experiences, like those embraced by this textbook, it is crucial that you reflect on the impact those challenges had on your knowledge or skillsets, your worldviews, and your relationships.

Throughout your studies, I encourage you to occasionally pause to evaluate your progress, set new goals, and cement your recent learning. If nothing else, take 10 minutes once a month to free-write about where you were, where you are, and where you hope to be.

You may recognize some of these ideas from previous sections: indeed, what I'm talking about is the rhetorical gesture of reflection. Reflection is "looking back in order to look forward," a way of peering back through time to draw insight from an experience that will support you (and your audience) as you move into the future.

I would like to apply this concept in a different context, though: instead of reflecting on an experience that you have narrated, as you may have in Section 1, you will reflect on the progress you've made as a critical consumer and producer of rhetoric through a **metacognitive** reflection.

Simply put, metacognition means "thinking about thinking." For our purposes, though, metacognition means thinking about how thinking evolves. Reflection on your growth as a writer requires you to evaluate how your cognitive and rhetorical approaches have changed.

In this context, your metacognitive reflection can evaluate two distinct components of your learning:

- **Concepts that have impacted you:** New ideas or approaches to rhetoric or writing that have impacted the way you write, read, think, or understanding of the world.

  o Ex: Radical Noticing, Inquiry-Based Research

- **Skills that have impacted you:** Specific actions or techniques you can apply to your writing, reading, thinking, or understanding of the world.

  o Ex: Reverse Outlining, Imagery Inventory

Of course, because we are "looking back in order to look *forward*," the concepts and skills that you identify should support a discussion of how those concepts and skills will impact your future with rhetoric, writing, the writing process, or thinking processes. Your progress to this point is important, but it should enable even more progress in the future.

Metacognitive Activities

There are a variety of ways to practice metacognition. The following activities will help you generate ideas for a metacognitive reflection. Additionally, though, a highly productive means of evaluating growth is to look back through work from earlier in your learning experience. Drafts, assignments, and notes documented your skills and understanding at a certain point in time, preserving an earlier version of you to contrast with your current position and abilities, like artifacts in a museum. In addition to the following activities, you should compare your current knowledge and skills to your previous efforts.

Writing Home from Camp

For this activity, you should write a letter to someone who is not affiliated with your learning community: a friend or family member who has nothing to do with your class or study of writing. Because they haven't been in this course with you, imagine they don't know anything about what we've studied.

Your purpose in the letter is to summarize your learning for an audience unfamiliar with the guiding concepts or skills encountered in your writing class. Try to boil down your class procedures, your own accomplishments, important ideas, memorable experiences, and so on.

Metacognitive Interview

With one or two partners, you will conduct an interview to generate ideas for your metacognitive reflection. You can also complete this activity independently, but there are a number of advantages to working collaboratively: your partner(s) may have ideas that you hadn't thought of; you may find it easier to think out loud than on paper; and you will realize that many of your challenges have been shared.

During this exercise, one person should interview another, writing down answers while the interviewee speaks aloud. Although the interviewer can ask clarifying questions, the interviewee should talk most.
For each question, the interviewee should speak for 1-2 minutes. Then, for after 1-2 minutes, switch roles and respond to the same question. Alternate the role of interviewer and interviewee for each question such that every member gets 1-2 minutes to respond while the other member(s) takes notes.

After completing all of the questions, independently free-write for five minutes. You can make note of recurring themes, identify surprising ideas, and fill in responses that you didn't think of at the time.

- What accomplishments are you proud of from this term—in this class, another class, or your non-academic life?
- What activities, assignments, or experiences from this course have been most memorable for you? Most important?
- What has surprised you this term—in a good way or a bad way?
- Which people in your learning community have been most helpful, supportive, or respectful?
- Has your perspective on writing, research, revision, (self-)education, or critical thinking changed this term? How so?
- What advice would you give to the beginning-of-the-term version of yourself?

Sample Reflective Texts by Student Authors

Model Metacognitive Reflection 1

I somehow ended up putting off taking this class until the very end of my college career. Thus, coming into it I figured that it would be a breeze because I'd already spent the past four years writing and refining my skills. What I quickly realized is that these skills have become extremely narrow; specifically focused in psychological research papers. Going through this class has truly equipped me with the skills to be a better, more organized, and more diverse writer.

I feel that the idea generation and revision exercises that we did were most beneficial to my growth as a writer. Generally, when I have a paper that I have to write, I anxiously attempt to come up with things that I could write about in my head. I also organize said ideas into papers in my head; rarely conceptualizing them on paper. Instead I just come up with an idea in my head, think about how I'm going to write it, then I sit down and dive straight into the writing. Taking the time to really generate various ideas and free write about them not only made me realize how much I have to write about, but also helped me to choose the best topic for the paper that I had to write. I'm sure that there have been many times in the past when I have simply written a paper on the first idea that came to my mind when I likely could have written a better paper on something else if I really took the time to flesh different ideas out.

Sharing my thoughts, ideas, and writings with my peers and with you have been a truly rewarding experience. I realized through this process that I frequently assume my ideas aren't my comfort zone in this class and forced myself to present the ideas that I really wanted to talk about, even though I felt they weren't all that interesting. What I came to experience is that people were really interested in what I had to say and the topics in which I chose to speak about were both important and interesting. This class has made me realize how truly vulnerable the writing process is.

This class has equipped me with the skills to listen to my head and my heart when it comes to what I want to write about, but to also take time to generate multiple ideas. Further, I have realized the important of both personal and peer revision in the writing process. I've learned the importance of stepping away from a paper that you've been staring at for hours and that people generally admire vulnerability in writing.

Model Metacognitive Reflection 2

I entered class this term having written virtually nothing but short correspondence or technical documents for years. While I may have a decent grasp of grammar, reading anything I wrote was a slog. This class has helped me identify specific problems to improve my own writing and redefine writing as a worthwhile process and study tool rather than just a product. It has also helped me see ulterior motives of a piece of writing to better judge a source or see intended manipulation.

This focus on communication and revision over perfection was an awakening for me. As I've been writing structured documents for years, I've been focusing on structure and grammatical correctness over creating interesting content or brainstorming and exploring new ideas. Our class discussions and the article "Shitty First Drafts" have taught me that writing is a process, not a product. The act of putting pen to paper and letting ideas flow out has value in itself, and while those ideas can be organized later for a product they should first be allowed to wander and be played with.

Another technique I first encountered in this class was that of the annotated bibliography. Initially this seemed only like extra work that may prove useful to a reader or a grader. After diving further into my own research however, it was an invaluable reference to organize my sources and guide the research itself. Not only did it provide a paraphrased library of my research, it also shined light on patterns in my sources that I would not have noticed otherwise. I've already started keeping my own paraphrased notes along with sources in other classes, and storing my sources together to maintain a personal library.

People also say my writing is dry, but I could never pin down the problem they were driving at. This class was my first exposure to the terms logos, ethos, and pathos, and being able to name and identify different styles of argumentation helped me realize that I almost exclusively use logos in my own writing. Awareness of these styles let me contrast my own writing with how extensively used paths and ethos are in most nonfiction writing found in books and news articles. I've noticed how providing example stories or posing questions can keep readers engaged while

meaningfully introducing sources in the text, rather than as a parenthetical aside, improves the flow of writing and helps statements land with more authority.

As for narrative writing, I found the Global Revision Exercise for the first essay particularly interesting. To take a piece of writing and intentionally force a different voice or perspective on it showed how I can take improve a boring part of my paper by using a unique voice or style. This could be useful for expanding on reflective sections to evoke a particular feeling in the reader, or in conjunction with the Image Building Exercise to pull the reader into a specific moment.

This class was a requirement for me from which I didn't expect to gain much. English classes I have taken in the past focused on formulaic writing and grammar or vague literary analysis, and I expected more of the same. Ultimately, I was pleasantly surprised by the techniques covered which are immediately applicable in other classes and more concrete analysis of rhetoric which made the vague ideas touched on before reach a more tangible clarity.

Additional Recommended Resources

"Students' Right to Their Own Language" from NCTE's Conference on College Composition and Communication

 "Revising Drafts" by the Writing Center at University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

"I need you to say "I": Why First Person Is Important in College Writing" by Kate McKinney Maddalena

 "Annoying Ways People Use Sources" by Kyle D. Stedman

Thou Shall Not Commit Logical Fallacies

 "Shitty First Drafts" by Anne Lamott from *Bird by Bird: Some Instructions on Writing and Life*, Anchor, pp 21-27.

"Argument as Emergence, Rhetoric as Love" by Jim W. Corder

"The Ethics of Reading: Close Encounters" by Jane Gallop
from *Journal of Curriculum Theorizing*, volume 16, issue 3, 2000, pp. 7-17.

Purdue Online Writing Lab (OWL)
- Home: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/
- MLA Style & Citation: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/11/
- APA Style & Citation: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/10/
  Chicago/Turabian Style & Citation: https://owl.english.purdue.edu/owl/section/2/12/

A Pocket Style Manual (7th edition, 2016), edited by Diana Hacker and Nancy Sommers

North Carolina State University Citation Builder

Citation Management Software

Overview Video about using software to help
manage your citations.

Two free options:
     Zotero
     Mendeley

Glossary

Term	Definition
analysis	the cognitive process and/or rhetorical mode of studying constituent parts to demonstrate an interpretation of a larger whole.
annotated bibliography	a research tool that organizes citations with a brief paragraph for each source examined.
annotation	engaged reading strategy by which a reader marks up a text with their notes, questions, new vocabulary, ideas, and emphases.
argument	a rhetorical mode in which different perspectives on a common issue are negotiated. See Aristotelian and Rogerian arguments.
Aristotelian argument	a mode of argument by which a writer attempts to convince their audience that one perspective is accurate.
audience	the intended consumers for a piece of rhetoric. *Every* text has at least one audience; sometimes, that audience is directly addressed, and other times we have to infer.
authorial intent	the inferred or speculated intention of a writer. Must be overlooked in the process of text wrestling analysis.
believer	a posture from which to read; reader makes efforts to appreciate, understand, and agree with the text they encounter.
block quote	a direct quote of more than four lines which is reformatted according to stylistic guidelines.
bootstrapping	the process of finding new sources using hyperlinked subject tags in the search results of a database.
call-to-action	a persuasive writer's directive to their audience; usually located toward the end of a text. Compare with purpose.
characterization	the process by which an author builds characters; can be accomplished directly or indirectly.
citation mining	the process of using a text's citations, bibliography, or notes to track down other similar or related sources.
claim of evaluation	an argument determining relative value (i.e., better, best, worse, worst). Requires informed judgment based on evidence and a consistent metric.

claim of phenomenon	an argument exploring a measurable but arguable happening. Typically more straightforward than other claims, but should still be arguable and worth discussion.
claim of policy	an argument that proposes a plan of action to address an issue. Articulates a stance that requires action, often informed by understanding of both phenomenon and evaluation. Often uses the word "should." See call-to-action.
close reading	a technique of reading that focuses attention on features of the text to construct an interpretation. (This is in contrast to interpretive methods that rely on research, historical context, biography, or speculation.)
complaint tradition	the recurring social phenomenon in which a generation complains about the way things have changed since their earlier years. Coined by Leonard Greenbaum.
confirmation bias	a cognitive bias by which a person seeks only ideas which confirm their existing worldview, thus convincing themselves that that worldview is universal and/or truthful.
connotation	the associated meanings of a word, phrase, or idea beyond its 'dictionary' definition; the complex, subjective, and dynamic meanings of a word, phrase, or idea the shift based on interpretive position. Contrast with denotation.
constraint-based writing	a writing technique by which an author tries to follow a rule or set of rules in order to create more experimental or surprising content, popularized by the Oulipo school of writers.
CRAAP Test	a technique for evaluating the credibility and use-value of a source; researcher considers the **C**urrency, **R**elevance, **A**ccuracy, **A**uthority, and **P**urpose of the source to determine if it is trustworthy and useful.
credibility	the degree to which a text—its content, its author, and/or its publisher—is trustworthy and accurate.
critical/active reading	also referred to in this text as "engaged reading," a set of strategies and concepts to interrupt projection and focus on a text. See Appendix B: Engaged Reading Strategies.
defamiliarization	a method of reading, writing, and thinking that emphasizes the interruption of automatization. Established as "остранение" ("estrangement") by Viktor Shklovsky, defamiliarization attempts to turn the everyday into the strange, eye-catching, or dramatic.
denotation	the dictionary definition of a word, phrase, or idea; the standard and objective meaning of a word, phrase, or idea which, theoretically, does not vary based on interpretive position. Contrast with connotation.

description	a rhetorical mode that emphasizes eye-catching, specific, and vivid portrayal of a subject. Often integrates imagery and thick description to this end.
dialogue	a communication between two or more people. Can include any mode of communication, including speech, texting, e-mail, Facebook post, body language, etc.
direct quote	the verbatim use of another author's words. Can be used as evidence to support your claim, or as language to analyze/close-read to demonstrate an interpretation or insight.
diegetic gap	from "diegesis," the temporal distance between a first-person narrator narrating and the same person acting in the plot events. I.e., the space between author-as-author and author-as-character.
doubter	a posture from which to read; reader makes efforts to challenge, critique, or undermine the text they encounter.
dynamic character	a character who noticeably changes within the scope of a narrative, typically as a result of the plot events and/or other characters. Contrast with static character.
epiphany	a character's sudden realization of a personal or universal truth. See dynamic character.
essay	a medium, typically nonfiction, by which an author can achieve a variety of purposes. Popularized by Michel de Montaigne as a method of discovery of knowledge: in the original French, "essay" is a verb that means "to try; to test; to explore; to attempt to understand."
ethnography	a study of a particular culture, subculture, or group of people. Uses thick description to explore a place and its associated culture.
ethos	a rhetorical appeal based on authority, credibility, or expertise.
evidence	a part or combination of parts that lends support or proof to an arguable topic, idea, or interpretation.
figurative language	language which implies a meaning that is not to be taken literally. Common examples include metaphor, simile, personification, onomatopoeia, and hyperbole.
flat character	a character who is minimally detailed, only briefly sketched or named. Generally less central to the events and relationships portrayed in a narrative. Contrast with round character.
fluff	uneconomical writing: filler language or unnecessarily wordy phrasing. Although fluff occurs in a variety of ways, it can be generally defined as words, phrases, sentences, or paragraphs that do not work hard to help you achieve your rhetorical purpose.

genre	a specific category, subcategory, style, form, or medium (or combination of the above) of rhetoric. A genre may have a "generic imperative," which is an expectation or set of expectations an audience holds for a particular genre of rhetoric; the foundational assumptions that particular genres carry.
imagery	sensory language; literal or figurative language that appeals to an audience's imagined sense of sight, sound, smell, touch, or taste.
inquiry-based research	research and research writing that is motivated by questions, not by answers.
interpretation	the process of consuming rhetoric to create meaning. "An interpretation" refers to a specific meaning we build as we encounter a text, focusing on certain ideas, language, or patterns.
interpretive position	the unique position from which each of us interprets a text— necessarily different for all people at any given time, and often different for the same person at different times in their life. Impacted by your purpose, posture, lens, and background.
iterative	literally, a repetition within a process. The writing process is iterative because it is non-linear and because an author often has to repeat, revisit, or reapproach different steps along the way. Analysis is iterative because it requires repeated critical encounters with a text.
kairos	the setting (time and place) or atmosphere in which an argument is actionable or ideal. Consider alongside "occasion."
lens	a metaphor for the conceptual framework a reader applies to an analysis. A "lens" brings certain elements into focus, allowing the reader to attend to specific parts of a text to develop an interpretation.
logical fallacy	a line of logical reasoning which follows a pattern of that makes an error in its basic structure. For example, *Kanye West is on TV; Animal Planet is on TV. Therefore, Kanye West is on Animal Planet.*
logos	a rhetorical appeal to logical reasoning.
medium	the channel, technology, or form through which rhetoric is constructed and communicated. Different rhetorical situations value different media, and different media value different kinds of rhetoric.
metacognition	literally, "thinking about thinking." May also include how thinking evolves and reflection on growth.
mode	the style and techniques employed by of a piece of rhetoric to achieve its purpose. Different rhetorical situations value different

	modes, and different modes value different kinds of rhetoric. Compare to genre.
mood	the emotional dimension which a reader experiences while encountering a text. Compare with tone.
motif	a recurring image or phrase that helps convey a theme. Similar to a symbol, but the relationship between symbol and symbolized is more one-to-one than between motif and theme.
multimedia / multigenre	a term describing a text that combines more than one media and/or more than one genre (e.g., an essay with embedded images; a portfolio with essays, poetry, and comic strips; a mixtape with song reviews).
multipartial	a neologism from 'impartial,' refers to occupying and appreciating a variety of perspectives rather than pretending to have no perspective. Rather than unbiased or neutral, multipartial writers are balanced, acknowledging and respecting many different ideas.
narration	a rhetorical mode involving the construction and relation of stories. Typically integrates description as a technique.
narrative pacing	the speed with which a story progresses through plot events. Can be influenced by reflective and descriptive writing.
narrative scope	the boundaries of a narrative in time, space, perspective, and focus.
narrative sequence	the order of events included in a narrative.
the naysayer's voice	a voice that disagrees with the writer or speaker included within the text itself. Can be literal or imaginary. Helps author respond to criticism, transition between ideas, and manage argumentation.
occasion	the sociohistorical circumstances that prompt the production of a piece of rhetoric, determined by personal experiences, current events, language, and culture. Every text has an occasion.
ongoing conversation	an analogy for the network of discourse surrounding a topic, issue, or idea. Adopted from Kenneth Burke.
paraphrase	author reiterates a main idea, argument, or detail of a text in their own words without drastically altering the length of the passage(s) they paraphrase. Contrast with summary.
pathos	a rhetorical appeal to emotion.
pattern	a notable sequence; structure or shape; recurring image, word, or phrase found in a piece of rhetoric.
plot	the events included within the scope of a narrative.

point-of-view	the perspective from which a story is told, determining both grammar (pronouns) and perspective (speaker's awareness of events, thoughts, and circumstances).
primacy effect	a psychological effect experienced by most audiences: the opening statements of a text are more memorable than much of the content because they leave a 'first impression' in the audience's memory. See recency effect.
process	a complex and multifaceted sequence that results in a product. As applied in "writing process," non-linear and iterative. Contrast with product.
product	the end result of a creative process. Often shows little evidence of the process that created it.
projection	an automatized method of reading and encountering the world by which a person allows their current assumptions to determine the content and nature of their encounters. Contradicts genuine learning. See confirmation bias. Adopted from Jane Gallop.
purpose	the intended result of a piece of rhetoric. Can be stated using an infinitive verb phrase ("to entertain," "to persuade," "to explain"). Every text has at least one purpose, sometimes declared explicitly, and other times implied or hidden.
recency effect	a psychological effect experienced by most audiences: the concluding statements of a text are more memorable than much of the content because they are more recent in the audience's memory. See primacy effect.
reference	a connection a text makes to another text. Can be explicit or implicit; might include allusion, allegory, quotation, or parody. Referencing text adopts some characteristics of the referenced text.
reflection	a rhetorical gesture by which an author looks back, through the diegetic gap, to demonstrate knowledge or understanding gained from the subject on which they are reflecting. May also include consideration of the impact of that past subject on the author's future—"Looking back in order to look forward."

research question/path of inquiry	a question, series of questions, or inquisitive topic that guides an inquiry-based research project.
response	a mode of writing that values the reader's experience of and reactions to a text. Should also unpack what parts of the text contribute to that experience in an effort to practice analytical thinking.
revision	the iterative process of changing a piece of writing. Literally, re-vision: seeing your writing with "fresh eyes" in order to improve it. Includes changes on Global, Local, and Proofreading levels. Changes might include: • rewriting (trying again, perhaps from a different angle or with a different focus) • adding (new information, new ideas, new evidence) • subtracting (unrelated ideas, redundant information, fluff) • rearranging (finding more effective vectors or sequences of organization) • switching out (changing words or phrases, substituting different evidence) • mechanical clean-up (standardizing punctuation, grammar, or formatting)
rhetoric	a combination of textual strategies designed* to do something to someone. In other words, 'rhetoric' refers to language, video, images, or other symbols (or some combination of these) that informs, entertains, persuades, compels, or otherwise impacts an audience. * Note: whether or not a text is *deliberately* designed to achieve a purpose, it will still have an impact. See authorial intent.
rhetorical appeal	a means by which a writer or speaker connects with their audience to achieve their purpose. Most commonly refers to *logos*, *pathos*, and *ethos*.
rhetorical situation	the circumstances in which rhetoric is produced, understood using the constituent elements of subject, occasion, audience, and purpose. Each element of the rhetorical situation carries assumptions and imperatives about the kind of rhetoric that will be

	well received. Rhetorical situation will also influence mode and medium.
Rogerian argument	a mode of argument by which an author seeks compromise by bringing different perspectives on an issue into conversation. Acknowledges that no one perspective is absolutely and exclusively 'right'; values disagreement in order to make moral, political, and practical decisions.
round character	a character who is thoroughly characterized and dimensional, detailed with attentive description of their traits and behaviors. Contrast with flat character.
signpost	a phrase or sentence that directs your reader. It can help you make connections, guide your reader's interpretation, ease transitions, and re-orient you to your thesis. Also known as a "signal phrase."
SQ3R	an engaged reading strategy to improve comprehension and interrupt projection. **S**urvey, **Q**uestion, **R**ead, **R**ecite, **R**eview.
stakes	the potential value or consequence of an exploration or argument; what stands to be gained from investigation of a subject or advocacy for a position. Consider also "stakeholders," the people or institutions that stand to gain from the outcome of an investigation or argument.
static character	a character who remains the same throughout the narrative. Contrast with dynamic character.
subject	the topic, focus, argument, or idea explored in a text.
summary	a rhetorical mode in which an author reiterates the main ideas, arguments, and details of a text in their own words, condensing a longer text into a smaller version. Contrast with paraphrase.
syllogism	a line of logical reasoning similar to the transitive property (If a=b and b=c, then a=c). For example, *All humans need oxygen; Kanye West is a human. Therefore, Kanye West needs oxygen.*
symbol	an artifact (usually something concrete) that stands in for (represents) something else (often something abstract).
synthesis	a cognitive and rhetorical process by which an author brings together parts of a larger whole to create a unique new product. Examples of synthesis might include an analytical essay, found poetry, or a mashup/remix.
text	any artifact through which a message is communicated. Can be written or spoken; digital, printed, or undocumented; video, image, or language. Every text is rhetorical in nature. See rhetoric.
text wrestling	a rhetorical mode in which an author analyzes a text using close reading, then presents an interpretation supported by evidence from the text.

thesis (statement)	a 1-3 sentence statement outlining the main insight(s), argument(s), or concern(s) of an essay; not necessary in every rhetorical situation; typically found at the beginning of an essay, though sometimes embedded later in the paper. Also referred to as a "So what?" statement.
thick description	economical and deliberate language which attempts to capture complex subjects (like cultures, people, or environments) in written or spoken language. Coined by anthropologists Clifford Geertz and Gilbert Ryle.
tone	the emotional register of the text. Compare with mood.
use-value	the degree to which a text is usable for your specific project. A source is not inherently good or bad, but rather useful or not useful. Use-value is influenced by many factors, including credibility. See credibility and CRAAP Test.

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