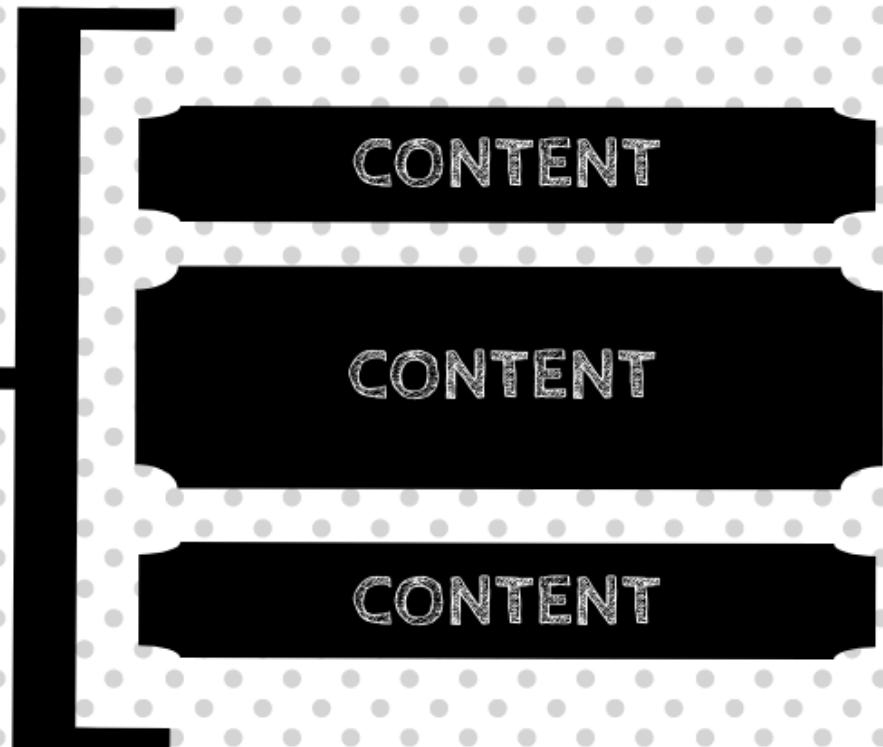


# WRITING UNLEASHED

CONTENT & STRUCTURE

STRUCTURE



## WRITING UNLEASHED: CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

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This version was created in the Summer of 2020. Cover image, header dots, and circle cartoon people were all found on [Piktochart.com](https://piktochart.com).



# FOREWARD

Welcome to *Writing Unleashed: Content and Structure*, designed for use as a textbook in first-year college composition programs, written as a brief guide for students, jam-packed with diverse voices, and engineered for fun.

## Hello Teachers:

The backstory is pretty simple and obvious: A few of us in my department were tired of not finding a textbook that covered what we wanted in a very brief way. In addition to not finding a book with the “right kind” of information, we were also concerned with price. So, after much thought, and after getting an email that our campus was offering mini-grants to fund special projects, we jumped into the open educational (OER) arena. In the summer of 2016, we created *Writing Unleashed*.

Cut to the Summer of 2020, and Sybil (one of the three authors of the original *Writing Unleashed*) decides to tweak the original textbook. And that’s the glory of open educational resources – they are fluid and can be remixed and revised. Yay!

## Hello Students:

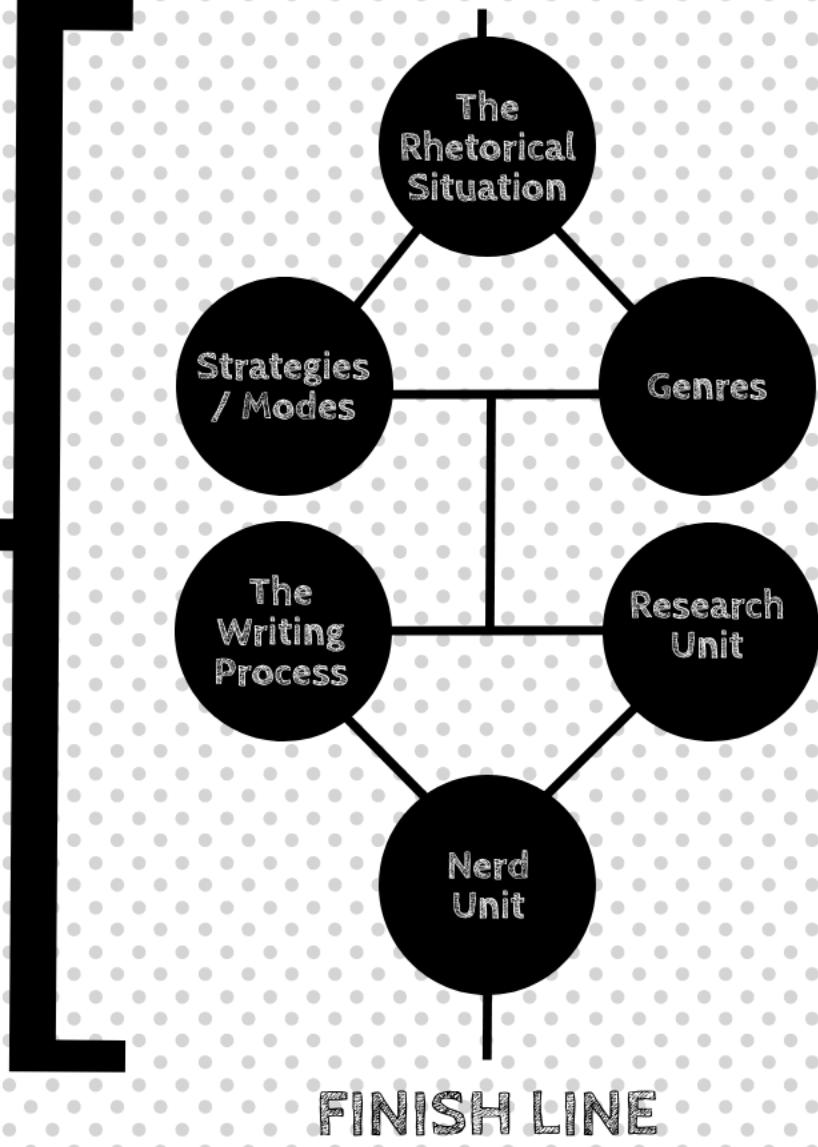
The backstory is that the teacher who put this textbook together wanted flexibility for herself and less costs for her students. She’s hoping you’ll keep this textbook as “free” as possible, and just have it electronically on your devices (save it in Kindle or Dropbox.com or Google Drive, etc.); you can choose – yes, you have choices too! – to head to a copy center on your campus or in your town, and print off this bugger and have it physically with you... we’re hoping to keep that sort of cost down, as well, by keeping the textbook brief.

As you read this textbook, you’ll see that teachers – they might even be your own! – have written certain chapters. We did this so you could see their own writing “in action.” After all, if we’re going to teach you how to improve your writing, we should probably showcase our own, right?

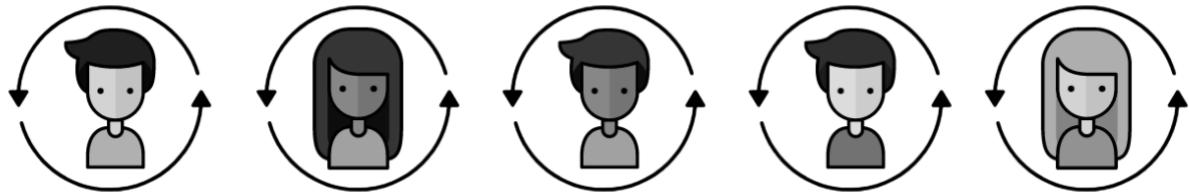
# WHAT'S IN THIS BOOK?

the structure of this textbook

## THE STARTING POINT



Why is this textbook set up this way? Well, when you're assigned a piece of writing, you will want to figure out what the rhetorical situation is. From there, you'll decide on using a strategy or genre to complete the writing. Once that decision is made, you may need to review the writing process and/or dive into some research. The nerd unit is just the cherry on top of everything; you might want to use that unit as a double-check to your grammar, etc. (similar to using the Grammarly or Hemingway apps).



# THE STARTING POINT

So, yes, you've already taken English classes. Yes, with all the years of English classes you've had, you probably should be able to write a novel right now without any help. But our language is strange. It doesn't make sense all the time. So, you're here to dive into the pool of "practice makes perfect." Teachers – especially English teachers – want you to look spectacular on paper.



# INTRODUCTION

This chapter brought to you by Sybil Priebe and parts of a Wikibook (found in footnotes).

## Basic Assumptions and Potential Complications<sup>1</sup>

Before you begin to learn about a subject, it is natural to make assumptions about it. It is important not to act on these assumptions unless you can prove that they are correct. One assumption you might have is that you do not need this course, but you would be incorrect.

## EDUCATIONAL PURPOSE VS. PRACTICAL PURPOSE

When you are at school, your teachers expect you to show that you are learning. In order to best demonstrate that, you prepare reports, papers, projects and take exams. Few teachers will give you the benefit of the doubt that you know something without proving it. This is why writing in school serves an **educational purpose**. You are expected to write about everything you know, and if you leave something out, your teacher is going to assume that you don't know it.

However, writing something at work serves a completely different purpose. Your readers are coworkers and clientele who don't know as much as you do about the things you are writing about and look to your writing as a guide. This is called writing for a **practical purpose**. Because your readers are trying to reach their own practical goals, they expect your writing to be clear, concise, and to the point. By including essential information only, you are helping your readers find out what they need without getting frustrated, bored, or overwhelmed.

## WRITING FOR WORK VS. WRITING FOR SCHOOL

The main assumption that most people have about writing on the job or at a workplace is that it is like writing for a class: You start with a thesis, perfect it, build structural sentences, eliminate first person viewpoint, add an intro, body, and conclusion, and so on. What isn't taught in some schools is that writing memos, proposals, business letters, and instructions is different than writing an academic essay. When writing at work, you do not build up to your main point – you get to it immediately. Your boss isn't grading you on how well you wrote your business memo, they're looking for pertinent

<sup>1</sup> "Professional and Technical Writing/Rhetoric/Assumptions." *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. 2 Nov 2017, 15:49 UTC. 10 Oct 2019, 18:04 <[https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Professional\\_and\\_Technical\\_Writing/Rhetoric/Assumptions&oldid=3322569](https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Professional_and_Technical_Writing/Rhetoric/Assumptions&oldid=3322569)>. Licensed CC-BY-SA.

information without filler and ‘fluff’. So, here’s one reason you need the class: You need practice writing in various genres.

## **RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN PEOPLE**

Writing in school is often much more direct than writing for a business. When you write a paper, you typically only have one communicative relationship: The one between you and your professor. Since this is the only social situation you encounter with your assignment, you don’t experience as much of a variety of relationships as you do with (technical) writing. When you look at your writing at work, you realize that you are connecting with many different people. There is the relationship between employee and employer, between supplier and customer, and between coworkers. You may often be competing with other people, or you may be working alongside them on a project. And now here’s another reason for this required course: Practice writing to various audiences.

## **TEAMWORK**

Many schools are starting to encourage writing in groups to get a sense of the teamwork that you will experience in the workplace. Collaboration at the office is common; even if you aren’t part of a team, you might still consult coworkers and readers. You may also submit drafts that are constantly being revised. This might be a goal in this English course: Practice writing in a team.

## **CHANGE AND CULTURE AND TECHNOLOGY**

Another assumption you may have about writing is that it almost never changes. But if you look at how we write and where we write – in a technological space filled with email and text messages – you may realize that because technology is always changing, how to write to/with others will always be changing. That is why before you can become a successful writer, you must learn about your organization’s style and about the social and political factors of your writing.

Technology is huge in writing because many writers are responsible for creating guides, instructions, policies and procedures, training materials, and so on. Since we have entered a digital age, we are becoming more dependent on machines to assist us and the variety of these machines changes every month. Since one of the main goals for writing is to anticipate any questions or problems that arise, it can be very difficult for a writer to adjust to shifting tastes.

Writing is not a constant. Each company has its own way of promoting itself, from a liberal and casual style to a conservative and formal style. You will need to adjust your writing based on how the company wants you to represent it.

## **REDOS IN THE WORLD OF ACADEMIA**

Try to remember that when you write a report in the workplace, that memo can be changed after it is sent. This gives you the option to resubmit almost anything if you don’t think you did a good job with the first submission. This option is rarely offered in school

– typically, once you submit a paper, there are no redos. Your professor may ignore your efforts. Your boss, on the other hand, will probably expect revisions. **Resubmission is important in business because business is always changing.** The lesson here is that not only do you need practice writing in various genres, but one should learn how to revise, too.

## CROSS-CULTURAL COMMUNICATION

One of the major assumptions that many people who begin writing have is that the standard for their company in their city or on their campus is the standard that should be in use all around the world. In fact, this is a huge mistake to make. Even if these assumptions are unconscious, they are still insulting. Writing things that are short and sweet may not seem professional, but keep in mind that you are writing for a select audience who is looking for familiar words and doesn't have the patience to appreciate your grasp on the English language.

One of the most important things to keep in mind when writing for a different audience than you're used to is to **never assume anything**. If you reread something from another perspective and think, "Maybe my audience wouldn't get this," it's probably true.

Writers should never think that their writing does not need to be edited.

By learning to edit your own writing, you are conceding that it is not perfect.

By doing this, you prove that you are trying to make the audience understand your message.

## Guidelines for Creating Your Own Voice<sup>2</sup>

How does one mesh their unique style of language with professionalism? Most teachers of writing would appreciate any number of combinations of individuality and technicality. And in the workplace, you observe the stylistic convention of your profession and your employer's organization, while simultaneously expressing your individuality, make reading easy for your audience and impacting them while they are reading.

Consider the following guidelines in light of the way they will affect your readers' view of your communication's individuality, usability/technicality, and persuasiveness. Based on what readers see, they draw conclusions about you and your attitudes that can enhance or distract from the persuasiveness of your communications. Your ability to craft and control your voice is essential to your success at writing.

### GUIDELINE 1: FIND OUT WHAT IS EXPECTED

An effective voice is one that matches your reader's sense of what is appropriate. However, you have the option to choose who your audience is by topic, word choice, and

<sup>2</sup> "Professional and Technical Writing/Rhetoric/Author/Style." *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. 8 May 2017, 01:04 UTC. 10 Oct 2019, 17:39 <[https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Professional\\_and\\_Technical\\_Writing/Rhetoric/Author/Style&oldid=3215241](https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Professional_and_Technical_Writing/Rhetoric/Author/Style&oldid=3215241)>. Licensed CC-BY-SA.

formality. You have to have a tone and style that is pertinent to your readers. The voice needs to be clear as to who it is directed towards.

How formal do my readers think my writing should be?

A formal style of writing uses correct word usage, sentence structure, formal phrasing, and appropriate language. Always be conscious of who your audience is when determining your writing style. There are many instances to use a formal language. Speeches, services, eulogy, and papers. These are good examples of how no matter the age of the audience, a formal document may work best. Some examples when one would use informal language would be writing letter to friends or in your journal.

Sometimes informal writing may seem more sincere since it sends more emotions.

### **How much “distance” do my readers expect me to establish between them?**

In personal style, you appear close to your readers because you use personal pronouns and address readers directly. How conversational the piece is may also convey this message. In an impersonal style you distance yourself from your readers by avoiding personal pronouns and by talking about yourself and your readers in the third person. The style you choose depends on the purpose of the writing and the audience.

### **Factors that influence the readers’ expectations about style:**

- Your professional relationship with the readers.
- Your purpose.
- Your subject.
- Your personality.
- Customs in your employers’ organization.
- Customs in your field, profession, or discipline.

## **GUIDELINE 2: CONSIDER THE ROLES YOUR VOICE CREATES FOR YOUR READERS AND YOURSELF**

When you choose the voice with which you will address your readers, you define a role for yourself. As a manager of a department, you could adopt the voice of a stern taskmaster or an open-minded leader. The voice you choose also implies a role for your readers. Their response to the role given to them can significantly influence your communication’s overall effectiveness. If you choose the voice of a leader who respects your readers, they will probably accept their role as a valued colleague. If you choose the voice of a superior, they may resent their implied role as error-prone inferiors and resist the substance of your message.

By using the appropriate voice in your communications, you can increase your ability to elicit the attitudes and actions you want to inspire.

This is known as the: “It’s not what you say, it’s how you say it” idea.

## **GUIDELINE 3: HOW YOUR ATTITUDE TOWARD YOUR SUBJECT WILL AFFECT YOUR READERS**

In addition to communicating attitudes about yourself and your readers, your voice communicates an attitude toward your subject. Feelings are contagious. If you write about your subject enthusiastically, your readers may catch and exhibit your enthusiasm. If you seem indifferent, they may adopt the same attitude. Make sure you believe what you say or pretend like you believe it. If you talk down to people or belittle them, you will lose their loyalty and willingness to follow your lead. If you use a pretentious voice when writing to superiors, you will probably make them angry because they may feel that you are undermining their authority.

## **GUIDELINE 4: SAY THINGS IN YOUR OWN WORDS**

No matter what style of voice you choose, be sure to retain your own thoughts in your writing. This can be achieved even in formal writing. When you are using a formal style, the objective is not to silence your own voice; it's to let your style sound like you, writing in a formal situation.

To check whether you are using your own voice, try reading your drafts aloud. Where the phrasing seems awkward or the words are difficult for you to speak, you may have adopted someone else's voice. Reading your drafts aloud will also help you spot other problems with voice, such as sarcasm or condescension.

## **GUIDELINE 5: ADAPT YOUR VOICE TO YOUR READERS' CULTURAL BACKGROUND**

In the United States and Europe, employees often use an informal voice and address their readers by their first names. In Japan, writers commonly use a formal style and address their readers by their titles and last names. If a U.S. writer used a familiar, informal voice in a letter, memo, or e-mail, Japanese readers might feel that the writer has not properly respected them. On the other hand, Japanese writers may seem distant and difficult to relate to if they use the formality that is common in their own cultures when writing to U.S. readers. In either case, if the readers judge that the writer hasn't taken the trouble to learn about or doesn't care about their culture they may be offended. Directness is another aspect of voice. When writing to people in other cultures, try to learn and use the voice that is customary there. If possible, ask for advice from people who are from your reader's culture or who are knowledgeable about it.

## **GUIDELINE 6: ETHICS GUIDELINE – AVOID STEREOTYPES**

Stereotypes are very deeply embedded in many cultures. Most of us are prone to use them occasionally especially when conversing informally. As a result, when we use more colloquial and conversational language to develop our distinctive voice for our workplace writing, we may inadvertently employ stereotypes. Unfortunately, even inadvertent uses

of stereotypes have serious consequences for individuals and groups. People who are viewed in terms of stereotypes lose their ability to be treated as individual human beings. If they belong to a group that is unfavorably stereotyped, they may find it nearly impossible to get others to take their talents, ideas and feelings seriously. The range of groups disadvantaged by stereotyping is quite extensive. People can be stereotyped because of their race, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, weight, physical handicap, occupation and ethnicity. In some workplaces, manual laborers, union members, clerical workers, and others are the victims of stereotyping by people in white-collar positions.

**There is absolutely no tolerance for stereotypes in professional writing.** Anything you write will be worthless to most audiences if you include any type of stereotypes. Using stereotypes, even accidentally, will seriously damage your reputation with your readers and may even cause your professional relationship to end. So, be very aware of any stereotypes that may exist especially when writing cross-culturally.

## FAQ When Thinking About Audience<sup>3</sup>

---

- Who is the actual audience for this text and how do you know?
- Who is the invoked audience for the text and where do you see evidence for this in the text?
- What knowledge, beliefs, and positions does the audience bring to the subject?
- What does the audience know or not know about the subject?
- What does the audience need or expect from the writer and text?
- When, where, and how will the audience encounter the text and how has the text—and its content—responded to this?
- What roles or personas (e.g., insider/outsider or expert/novice) does the writer create for the audience? Where are these personas presented in the text and why?
- How should/has the audience influenced the development of the text?



### ASSIGNMENTS OR QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- What is your voice?
- What is your cultural background?
- What stereotypes do you fall into?

<sup>3</sup> Questions taken from a longer piece by: Jory, Justin. "A Word About Audience." *Open English at Salt Lake Community College*. 01 Aug 2016. <https://openenglishatslcc.pressbooks.com/chapter/audience/> Open English @ SLCC by SLCC English Department is licensed under CC-BY-NC, except where otherwise noted.



# RHETORICAL SITUATION

## “The WHAT Situation?<sup>4</sup>”

This is a typical response from students when first introduced to the concept of the rhetorical situation.

The thing is, most of us intuitively understand rhetorical situations we face every day, but we give them little thought.

Consider this. You [the author] need to ask your parents [the audience] for money [the purpose]. It's the third time this semester you've asked, and it's right before the holidays [the context]. Should you communicate with a text, phone call, email, or Facebook message, and should it be funny, serious, or heartfelt [text]?

This is a rhetorical situation.

Whenever we decide to write—whether it's a tweet, an essay for history class, or a text message to your parents asking for money – we face a rhetorical situation or set of elements that help shape the choices we make as writers.

The rhetorical situation consists of:

- **Author:** The writer of the communication
- **Audience:** The receiver of the communication
- **Purpose:** The goal of the communication
- **Context:** The surrounding setting, time, culture, and social discussions on the topic
- **Text:** The genre, organization, and style of the communication
  - Genre is the form or shape<sup>5</sup>.
  - Writing strategies such as narration, description, or compare/contrast help develop and organize the content<sup>6</sup>.
  - Style is created through elements such as tone, diction, and syntax<sup>7</sup>.

The rhetorical situation has evolved from the influential Greek philosopher Aristotle's ideas on how rhetoric, using language effectively, functions.

<sup>4</sup> Anderson, Dana. “Rhetorical Situation.” Writing Unleashed, Version 1. NDSCS; 2016.

<sup>5</sup> More information in the Content and Structure Unit.

<sup>6</sup> More information in the Content and Structure Unit.

<sup>7</sup> More information in the Nerd Unit.

Often, we give little thought to, or automatically process, the rhetorical situation. However, effective writers carefully consider these elements and choose an approach to better communicate their ideas.

Returning to the scenario, you decide that the best way to convince your parents to send you money is through an honest email that explains why you are short on money. You choose this genre because you know that your parents will read it at home after work and prefer email to texts. You also thoughtfully write in a style that doesn't sound demanding but provide clear reasons why you need the money. How could they say no to that?

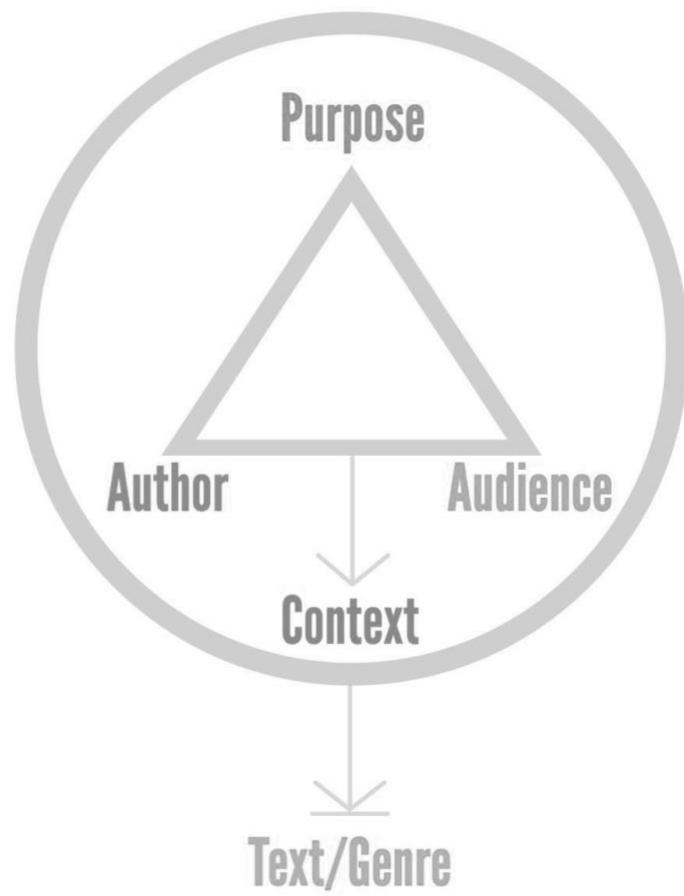
That's the power of understanding and analyzing what shapes the rhetorical situation. It helps you create audience-centered communication in the genre and style best suited to achieve your purpose. The rhetorical situation has evolved from the influential Greek philosopher Aristotle's<sup>8</sup> ideas on how rhetoric, using language effectively, functions.

Often, we give little thought to, or automatically process, the rhetorical situation. However, effective writers carefully consider these elements and choose an approach to better communicate their ideas.

Returning to the scenario above, you decide that the best way to convince your parents to send you money is through an honest email that explains why you are short on money. You choose this genre because you know that your parents will read it at home after work and prefer email to texts. You also thoughtfully write in a style that doesn't sound demanding but provide clear reasons why you need the money. How could they say no to that?

That's the power of understanding and analyzing what shapes the rhetorical situation. It helps you create audience-centered communication in the genre and style best suited to achieve your purpose.

<sup>8</sup> Aristotle is a problematic character in all this since he's linked to the start of racism; please disregard that part of him when it comes to this content.



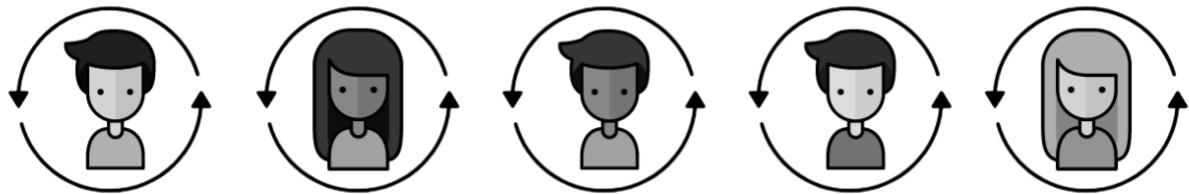
This visual was created by Dana Anderson using Piktochart.com. This has been placed in greyscale for easier printing.

The Rhetorical Situation asks students to consider all of the above when they begin to write something.



**ASSIGNMENTS AND QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

- Ask yourself, when given a project, what is the assignment's purpose? What is its audience? What is the context of this project? What will the end product/text/genre look like?



# CONTENT AND STRUCTURE

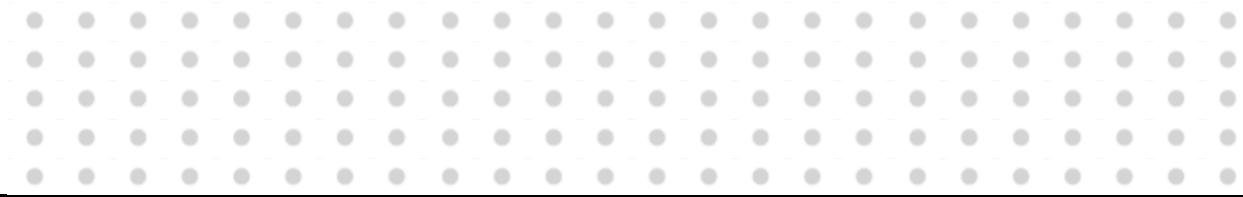


# STRATEGIES AND MODES

You're ready to write. You've fired up your laptop, created a new page, and are ready to roll. But, after staring at the blinking cursor for a few minutes, you have no idea where to begin. No need to panic. Now is the time to consider the rhetorical situation – the purpose, audience, author, context, and text – and select a writing strategy to help develop and organize your work. Maybe you want to use narration to tell a story or description to use details in explaining how something works. This next set of chapters will explore how these strategies and others can help make your writing clear and effective.

As you read, ask yourself what sort of **structure** you've seen these strategies (or modes) used in. What kinds of **content** have you seen when it comes to these strategies (or modes)? Do you see a strict or flexible structure used? Do you see creative content or technical content used?

*Note: Strategies are fluid guidelines that can change or combine according to the goals of your writing.*



# NARRATION

This chapter is brought to you by Dana Anderson<sup>9</sup>.

Once upon a time there was...  
Every day,...  
One day...  
Because of that,...  
Because of that,...  
Until finally, ...

Look familiar? We've grown up listening to and reading stories that follow this format. But storytelling isn't limited to children's fairytales and fiction novels. Storytelling, or narration, is a powerful composition strategy that can connect and engage an audience. Filmmaker Andrew Stanton<sup>10</sup> (Toy Story and WALL-E) believes that "Stories can cross the barriers of time—past, present, and future—and allow us to experience the similarities between ourselves and through others, real and imagined."<sup>11</sup> These connections help make the audience care. And when an audience cares, or is invested in your story, that's powerful.

## Why Narration?

As writers, we use narration for many purposes and in varying situations. Most often, when people think of narration, they associate it with fiction or novels—storytelling for entertainment. Yes, this is true, but narration can also be very effective in other writing. We may choose to recount a historical event through a first-person narrative. Or we may even use a compelling story to persuade an audience to take action.

How and when you use narration depends primarily on your purpose.

## Narrative Elements

No matter the purpose or situation, there are common features to narrative writing:

### **EVENT:**

What happened? Who was involved? The event or series of events drives your story.

<sup>9</sup> Anderson, Dana. "Narration." *Writing Unleashed*, Version 1. NDSCS; 2016.

<sup>10</sup> Stanton, Andrew. "The Clues to a Great Story." TED2012, Feb. 2012, *TED*, [www.ted.com/talks/andrewstantontheclues to a great story?language=en](http://www.ted.com/talks/andrewstantontheclues to a great story?language=en).

## **SETTING:**

When and where did it happen? Create and build the story world. This helps to establish context for the story.

## **DESCRIPTIVE DETAILS:**

What makes the story come alive? Use vivid words, sensory details, and figurative language to build a dominant impression. Try to show, not tell (See *Description* chapter).

## **CONSISTENT POINT OF VIEW:**

Who's telling the story? Narratives are often told in first person or third person. It's important to choose the appropriate point of view because your entire story is filtered through this perspective and lens.

- First Person: I, we
- Second Person: you, your
- Third Person: he, she, it, they
- Omniscient Third Person: all-knowing

## **CLEAR ORGANIZATION:**

How does the story unfold? The story should flow and have a clear sense order. But remember, not all stories start at the beginning. Many stories include flashbacks and flash forwards. Use transitions (finally, next, later, earlier, three days later, as the season changed from fall to winter, a week passed) to clearly guide your audience through the story.

## **POINT:**

Why does the story matter? Before you even begin composing the story, it's essential to determine the significance of the event and the purpose of sharing the story. Ask yourself: *Why am I sharing this story?*

## **DIALOGUE:**

Dialogue is another way to bring life to your narrative. Dialogue is conversation or people speaking in your story. Engaging dialogue goes beyond what is simply being said to include description of non-verbal communication (facial expressions, body movement, changes in tone and speed of speech) and characterization. The way people speak and interact while talking reveals much about them and the situation. Writing natural sounding dialogue is not easy. Effective dialogue must serve more than one purpose – it should:

- Drive the plot forward,
- Reveal information about the characters, and
- Build tension or introduce conflict.

Dialogue is a great way to show, rather than tell.

## BASIC DIALOGUE RULES

1. Use a comma between the dialogue and the tag line.
  - a. “I want to go to the beach,” she said.
2. End punctuation goes inside the quotation marks.
  - a. He asked, “Where’s the champagne?”
3. When a tag line interrupts a sentence, it should be set off by commas.
  - a. “That is,” Wesley said, “that neither you nor me is her boy.”
4. Every time you switch to a different speaker, start a new paragraph.
  - a. Even if the speaker says only one word, with no accompanying attribution or action, it is a separate paragraph.
5. Start a new paragraph when you wish to draw the reader’s attention to a different character, even if that character doesn’t actually speak.
6. For internal dialogue, *italics* are appropriate.

## SAMPLE DIALOGUE

“So, what was it really like?” I asked.

“I’ve told you. It was amazing.”

I shifted to my side so I could look at her. “You have to give me more than that,” I insisted, “and not the mom and dad version.”

Liv mirrored my move to her side and propped up her head with her arm. Her blue eyes searched my greens, looking for the right words. “I shouldn’t—”

We broke our gaze as we heard our mom call for us. Once again, I didn’t get the truth.

## EXAMPLE: “THE MAN OF THE HOUSE” BY IVERY LUE BAYNHAM<sup>11</sup>

### *The Beginning*

Her name is Anita. She is no more than nine years of age. Yet her experiences and comprehensions are wise beyond her years. As tears drip down her caramel complexioned cheeks, she holds him. A limp lifeless body, crumpled and broken by the same man who has just defiled her youth and innocence. The young boy in her arms calls himself her protector, the *man* of the house who will make things right. He believes in God and they have both been taught the glories and the benevolent love God has for his children. In Sunday school, they would learn all the Greatness of the Lord. How Jesus overcame odds that seemed impossible. They would sing songs like “Nothing is too big or too small for

<sup>11</sup> The Man of the House by Ivery Lue Baynham is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 4.0 International license. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/legalcode>

God to move," and read scriptures that state things like, "With God on your side no weapon formed against you can prosper." Her little brother who now lies in her arms unconscious has obviously taken their parent's word, the word of their Grandmother, the word of their aunts, uncles, pastors, and deacons to heart. He thought and believed in God so whole heartedly that he confronted Momma's boyfriend when he heard his sister saying, "No. Stop it nobody is supposed to touch that."

Her tears begin to stir the little stick-shaped boy in her arms, only two years younger than herself. She draws him closer as he wakes. She is crying for his pain and not her own. She loves him. Not because he is her only little brother, not because he has seen what she endures so they are the only ones that know Momma's boyfriend's little secret. She loves and admires her little brother because he has a courage that she, at times like this, wishes he did not. She admires his heart and his reckless abandon for himself for his love of others. She knows that he is only trying to be the *Man that Sista'* (their Grandmother) and Little Momma (their great-grandmother) taught him to be. She is not crying for herself; she is crying for his pain. Not the busted lips or bloody nose, no those wounds heal all too quickly. See she knows her little brother. She knows his heart and his will. She is crying for how he will blame himself for not being able to stop the men who take her innocence and sense of safety again and again. Her tears are for his self-hatred. Her baby brother will inevitably place disdain upon himself for having a penis and the destructive way that his lack of power will eventually corrupt his thoughts until it saturates his heart. She knows that his innocence has been forever tainted not unlike her own. She cries because although his body is stirred by her tears her baby brother is no more. He has died there in her arms and what will awaken will never be the wide-eyed, loving, little red-head she called Ivery. Her little brother is stirring as the moisture flows from her face to his. This is the last time she will ever hold him again. This is the last time he will ever be vulnerable to anyone including her whom he would give his own life to save. The baby is no more.

*Manhood* is a harsh world of pain and sacrifice he will come to know well. He sees her tears, her eyes are closed, she is trembling with hurt and shame. His eyes well but he doesn't cry. In that moment, he has made a vow to his sister.

He will never let anyone hurt her again. He will never fail his family again. He swears to himself that he will find a way to protect his sisters and mother. His pain becomes a deep rage that will not be fulfilled. He has become what she fears the most. A *man*...

○

#### *Loss; Broken Perception of Masculinity*

Tina, my eldest sister, call makes it through between my calling and texting. She's somber in tone, her voice lifeless and devoid of any emotion. As if she has been completely and totally drained of any further emotional output. There is a long silence after my "What's wrong?" no time for hello. I am shoving this violation of my life into the hidden place within my heart that all the unexplainable and uncontrollable things go. I do this because I am needed. In my life this is the epitome of what *Manhood* is about; absorbing pain.

I am being called because I can help; I have the power that we as *men* call upon to rectify wrongs and injustices. I have ANGER. Anger and RAGE are the tools used by *men* to even scores. Get people back who have wronged you or those you love. I am prepared because like anyone who knows how to be a *Man* will tell you, preparation is the key to success. As an African-American male, I am always prepared. Throughout my life there has always been so many things to be angry about. I was taught that a real *man* is ever ready and stable. I wonder now in hindsight how does a “REAL” man prepare for loss? How does this perception of a *Man* actually fare when living in the real world?

My eldest sister begins to weep slowly, silently at first, until this too is drained from her being. As the *man*, she has leaned on for three decades now I brace myself to consume the sorrow of her heart. This is how I will uplift her. My sister who is my elder, yet my gender has made me her rock and corner stone. The *man* of the house. Silence. She tries to collect herself to speak. “Ivery, she’s dead. A, Anita, Ivery, Anita is dead. She’s dead!” I no longer feel like her rock. The Man in me falters. The little boy who has been locked away behind years of emotional scar tissue begins to tremble.

My armor has lost its ability to induce fear. I was waiting for the target to direct my ever-ready rage. The dogs are no longer scratching at the door of my heart awaiting their next victim. There is silence. A cold wind is filling my lungs, yet the room is hot enough for my pores to continue to release beads of sweat, in the attempt to lower my body heat. I feel numb. There is an unfamiliar moisture beginning its way from my eye to my check and down my face. These are tears. The only foe I have never defeated. The only advisory that my anger and rage shy away from. I am face to face with Loss. I am hurt. My world has stopped.

○

*Pain is the one thing that every individual on this planet will have in common with any other person. Pain is a Universal experience that has no regard for age, ethnicity or social status and tax brackets. Pain is pain.*

○

### *The Power of Perception*

As an African American male growing up in the inner city, I was taught strength by my Great-grandmother and my grandmother. My family has always been featured in our city’s newspaper every few decades or so. We have always uniquely had at least five

generations of living relatives. This exceptional wealth of knowledge unexpectedly creates unconscious benefits as well as unconscious weaknesses. These are called Sticomas. Having the availability of not only my great-grandmother but my grandmother’s wisdom and guidance has always been a crucial part of my upbringing. Oddly my Masculinity has been based on women. The experiences that those women had with men, be they joyous or painful. Seeing these women continue to open their hearts and become vulnerable repeatedly to men, led me to hold women in a regard I have yet to be able to explain.

There is an unspoken, unnamed strength that the women in my family carry. Not just my relatives, all women have this inner strength. Women are held in such a high regard perhaps because the elder men of my culture/family are dead.

Don't get me wrong, I have uncles that would take me from time to time. Nothing as consistent as the teachings from these women. Of what my manhood was and should be. Shootings, drugs, crime, and prison statistically destroy more Men in the community that I grew up in than any forces of nature. Strangely, when I think back on my youth, I cannot honestly remember a single male from my city dying of what would be considered natural causes.

Being a devoted Baptist family, I was taught to trust in the Lord and that God has a divine plan for us all. The only requirement to have a long life, so I thought, was to be obedient. We learned to use the lessons of strength, justice, the universal law of love that I was taught, and to help one another. I learned from having two older sisters how to speak from the heart to a woman. I was taught that being a rock was what manhood was all about: to constantly grow and improve. To talk about feelings but never show any. "Real men don't cry" or "Man up boy, we don't have any punks in this family." Can't forget my favorite "Stop crying like a girl or I'll give you something to cry about!" These are just a few jewels of advice passed down about being a man, by the women of my family. Nobody likes to lose. I more than others, because Life is supposed to be filled with winners. Like most other little boys, I was constantly taught to win. I wanted to have some form of control in my life. This kind of thinking was instilled in me at a young age because I was the "man of my home" (fatherless household with two older sisters and no brothers). I was the rock, the dependable one in times of crisis and need. This was my identity that I worked diligently to maintain, cultivate and grow within me. I gained a very important reputation based on causing others to fear me. To be able to inflict pain became the greatest tool I ever learned as a child. In the world of men fear is control. To be able to instill fear in the hearts of adults became paramount to keep my sisters and mother safe. In my youth having such adult responsibilities helped me to be successful at every task I had set my sights on. I won, I was unbreakable, I would bend but never break. I could hurt others with a vicious conviction. I was *the man*.

I never included my own biological father as he was never truly present in my life. Nor have I ever counted any of the wasted sacks of skin that my mother dated who called themselves men. This unique situation opened the door to many misunderstandings on what it is to be a man. As well as what type of relationship women desire from the men in their lives. My sister Anita and I managed to get into adulthood without overwhelming resentment. There became an element of fear I felt from her, that I then didn't understand. It was a barrier that defined the bond between the rebel spirit that was my sister Anita and I.

Anita and I moved to Minneapolis from Indiana in the mid 90's which drew us closer as siblings. In my adolescence there was a time when we only fought like cats and dogs, some of the most vicious physical combat I have ever experienced in my life. A time that I knew she loved me, but in our teen years anyone who met us would wonder why we were constantly trying to kill one another. Being the only two kids in school with the country twang of our Indiana accents, to being left to defend one another from the city of Minneapolis with its ever present evils. We forged a new connection. Through the time away from our home city, Anita and I not only bonded but we grew as individuals. My

sister would become my biggest fan and the inspiration behind much of the change in my life. Responsible for the open vulnerability you are reading at this very moment.

Anita, who supported my secret desires to write and draw as a child, would later in life be the one who would teach me by example. She taught me, I could break the stereotype of thug and gangster. She nurtured my feminine side. Always affirming in me to put my emotions into my lyrics and writing. It felt as though she loved me again and I was her brother once again. Anita, who always believed that I had something to offer the world and pushed me to make better choices. Because to her I had potential to be the “Man” our family needed. A new kind of Man. One she could trust, and other women would trust as well. My trophies for wrestling and martial arts meant nil if anything to her, she would support my music, spoken-word poetry and writing. She cared nothing at all about the praise I received for being the “*man*” many had taught me I needed to be. In hindsight I see how the man I had become in my teens caused her disappointment, pain and fear. It was as if she knew me better than I knew myself at times. It makes sense considering I am the only little brother she ever had. She became my best friend, supporter and fan of my work. Be it written, spoken word or a hip-hop performance she was always front and center cheering me on to do more with my life than to settle for the perception of a Black male. She always supported my creativity, or the “girl in me” as she sometimes put it.

I had just turned thirty and was very much excited about my life. I felt like I was winning at the game of life. I was in complete assurance and comfort in the course my life was heading. I was actually the *MAN*. All the critical stats for the Perception of Masculinity were in place; I had my car, my apartment, great career, family starting to come together, and I was sporadically performing my music. I thought to myself one bright Sunday morning, life is good, God is good, I made it. I was very much full of the false self I had presented to everyone. The Ego-based self that is centered on the things of my life rather than the relationships that make life worth living. My perception of my Masculinity and Manhood had become about what I had. I lost sight of the relationships that create memories. So, covered in my emotional scars I had become immune to emotions, besides, I am a man. I can control mine. So full of myself I was confident that I had become invincible. “The *MAN* indeed.” I had experienced many losses in life already. Yet, because I had economic success, I overlooked those vital experiences. We may not, at times be aware of some of our losses, or we may not have realized what we experienced were actually losses. Loss is not the enemy; not facing its existence is the enemy of emotional development.

Full of my grandiose manhood I announced to my girlfriend “We are going to church! God is good, and we are blessed.” Just at that very moment I received a phone call. I recognized the number as my mother’s, so I quickly answered expecting good news on my perfect day. All I can hear were guttural screams and sobs, no words, the tears and screams the only communications her brain allowing her to give me.

The connection is lost. I sit confused, “What the fuck was that?” before I can stand my phone is ringing again, this is the voice of my eldest sister Tina. I answer, more of the screaming, no words, and only deep sobs and labored breathing. The connection is lost.

At this point I am up and dressed, the “MAN” instinct I was taught is now reverting to anger and impatience. I try to call both back, but lines are busy and this feeling in my gut is eating me alive. It is a feeling I swore off in my youth, so long ago I barely remember it. For me, this means that every time I wanted to be held or to feel loved, I had to hide my tears. Or I would be ridiculed by those I adored and loved, I had to become hard and callused to be a man, right?

Yet I am not, and have never been, the cold-hearted gang banger or drug dealer the media and society have made me out to be. I am the little boy who sat with his sisters and cried because they were hurt. “He” has always been there still but buried deep and stashed away in my heart with everything else that would make me look weak. “He” is always scratching the surface, attempting to escape the darkness that I have imprisoned him in to be the man I am trained to be. I grew scars in my soul to become a man in my heart. The “MAN”, with no expression of emotion other than anger leaves me in a state of inquiry. I am so totally lost. I feel something, it is very real, and it is also very familiar, because it is little Ivery. The little boy in his sister’s arms in so much pain that his sister cries for him. He is crying because I will not, I cannot, we are no longer the same person. I am a man and I was taught “he” is a sissy, a punk and that is why he remains locked away.

“He” is the embarrassment of my manhood, or at least what I have been taught it means to be a man. “He” is the reminder of my weakness, which I swore would never happen again! Yet “he” is here. Now very present, and his pain is stronger than my will.

I have often been told, and it saddens me to admit that I have said, “Real men don’t cry” and as the thought of the limits that this phrase puts on a young man roam my mind. I wonder how I can be a man while honoring the boy trapped in my heart who only wants to have his sister hold him one last time before she is gone forever.

In my age and growth, I have come to express things differently than I used to. I have come to understand the true strength of masculinity is in vulnerability. The willingness to be bare and open with those I meet. Yet this too is often misunderstood. In a song I recorded entitled “When hearts turn cold” I state, “Real G’s don’t cry, but that’s a lie. Look at me G don’t you see the tears in my eyes?” This line perfectly captures the turn of my life, the direction that men in the community and on the campus where I attend college will inevitably need to travel toward.

The question I ask myself, is how can I encourage the men in my neighborhood and on campus to be men of valor and honor? How can I lead them by example while letting go of the codes of masculinity that our communities feed us? The women in our homes, neighborhoods, and in our schools, expect from us? The answers to these questions remain unclear even now, so I use my tears to fill my pen and create poetry, lyrics and works like these.

These truths are the heart behind my conversation and the way I speak. These lessons are taught through the pain of survival. I have changed my perception of others by changing

the perception of myself to me. The perception of what it is to be a *MAN*. From the Man of the house.



**ASSIGNMENTS OR QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

- Compose a piece of writing, using the narration ideas in this chapter, with a lot of dialogue.
- (Insert other assignments or questions here, created by student or teacher.)



# DESCRIPTION

This chapter is brought to you by Dana Anderson<sup>12</sup>.

## Creating Rich Experiences with Words

Filmmakers make their movie worlds come alive through images, motion, sound, and special effects. Writers need to think like filmmakers and make their story worlds come alive through description.

Rich description allows readers to imaginatively experience the subject by providing details that describe what something looks like and even how it sounds, smells, feels, and tastes. These **sensory details** give readers a rich experience, much like a movie.

### SAMPLE SENSORY DESCRIPTIONS

Sense	Example(s).
Sight	The sea of golden wheat swayed, almost danced in the breeze. The majestic Glacier Park lodge sat proudly at the end of the long-manicured lawn. I gazed at the endless night sky afire with glittering stars.
Sound	The heavy door creaked open revealing a dim interior. In the distance, the fireworks sizzled and boomed, announcing another year. The ominous beat of helicopter blades cutting through the air put us all on edge.
Taste	She sipped the bitter coffee wishing for cream. As the boy bit into the crisp Granny Smith apple, his face puckered at the unexpected tartness. A metallic tang filled my mouth as blood began to pool under my tongue.
Touch	I shivered uncontrollably even though I was zipped in my down sleeping bag. With every step, my pack rubbed my hips and shoulders raw, leaving sores screaming for me to stop. Tessa's soft fur felt like silk against my skin.

<sup>12</sup> Anderson, Dana. "Description." *Writing Unleashed*, Version 1. NDSCS; 2016.

Smell	<p>As we walked into the bakery, my senses were assaulted with sweet confections—buttery caramel, rich chocolate, yeasty dough, and burnt sugar.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>I felt a tickle of dust at the back of my throat as I walked down the aisles of musty books.</li> </ol>
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## When to Use Description

Descriptive writing isn't only used in narrative writing, but across many genres and fields. Technicians must include descriptive details when composing work orders. Nurses keep detailed reports when providing patient care. Police officers rely on description to clearly and accurately document incidents. Food critics write reviews rich with details of the cuisine and ambiance of restaurants. The list goes on. Descriptive writing can help strengthen the presentation of your ideas by helping the audience experience the subject.



### EXAMPLE:<sup>13</sup>

In recent years, many of St. Cloud's residents have congregated to Waite Park's stores and businesses for entertainment. However, people who focus their attention entirely on the Crossroads Mall or the Parkwood 18 theater are depriving themselves of the fun and tradition of downtown St. Cloud. The downtown bars, stores, and restaurants provide a rich experience that is unlike all others in Minnesota.

For those who seek quiet conversations and steaming-hot drinks to start off your day, downtown St. Cloud can provide them with cozy coffee houses like the Meeting Grounds. Inside, groups of friends unwind with frosted coffee cakes, and individuals with books and newspapers recline with a new mug of cappuccino. As the sun rises in the back of the Meeting Grounds, visitors inhale the aroma of coffee beans and melting chocolate, and it becomes easier for them to take a few extra minutes before leaving for work.

As those workdays dip into evenings, hungry downtown patrons, with their stomachs growling in unison, march to any one of the many eateries. Mexican Village spreads the aroma of spices and peppers rolled into a tortilla wrap with thick cuts of beef down the street. However, not to be outdone, House of Pizza strolls out its smell of pepperoni that tickles the nose, but then sends a message to the mouth that says, "Come this way." A wind gust brushes through the downtown area carrying the Green Mill's calzone aroma, which leaves those hungry patrons without an easy answer.

With their stomachs filled, downtown patrons wander down the street to the retail shops. Some of the customers step into the Electric Fetus where the drums beat like avalanches, and the songbirds are in flight with microphones pressed against their lips. Further north,

<sup>13</sup> "Rhetoric and Composition/Description." *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. 6 Oct 2014, 10:20 UTC. 25 May 2016, 04:23 <[https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Rhetoric\\_and\\_Composition/Description&oldid=2710551](https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Rhetoric_and_Composition/Description&oldid=2710551)>. Licensed CC-BY-SA.

another sound rattles through each person's eardrum: the flipping of smooth pages from Books Revisited, where used literature is sold, stacked, then discovered by bookworms digging through each level. Books may be flipped, and songs may blare, but shoes scuff the tile floor of Herberger's—a two-story department store where jewelry and clothing are yanked from the rack just as quickly as they are hung on.

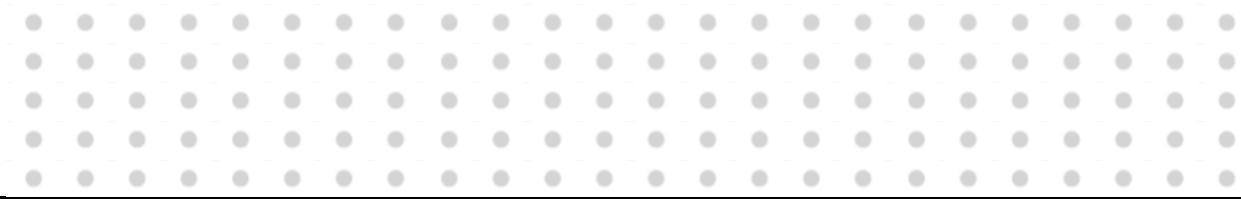
The sun sets and the moon rises, but that just means that St. Cloud's downtown bars will be overflowing with cheek-stretching smiles, wall-shaking music, and lip-licking beverages. The Tavern on Germain rapidly serves drinks such as Vodka Sours and Captain Cokes to customers sitting at their table. Along with the constant guzzling, he/she can go next door for live music ranging from the acoustic-guitar stringing of Leonard Mills to the horn-blaring excitement of Test Tube and the Tuba Players.

Whether their hands are sorting through thin page of paperback books, or their mouths are chewing on the gooey cottage cheese of lasagna, downtown patrons are always on the go to the next hot spot. As the customers reach the end of the downtown St. Cloud district, most are ready to turn around and visit all the stops again. St. Cloud is bustling with retailers that will cause anyone's eyes to take a second glimpse.



**ASSIGNMENTS OR QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

(Insert ideas from students or teacher here.)



# ILLUSTRATION

This chapter is brought to you by Dana Anderson<sup>14</sup>.

When trying to explain something, have you ever found yourself saying: “Here’s an example” or “For instance”? We often use examples to help explain complex or abstract ideas, or even to make our writing more vivid and memorable. These examples may be stories, facts, lists, or samples. This is a writing tool known as illustration or exemplification.

## Representative of the Whole

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We use examples to help us understand by giving us a piece of information that is representative of the whole. In other words, the example you chose must be typical of the entire idea.

For example, you’ve been asked to write an essay about pop culture and social influence. You chose to write about how the music industry has influenced American culture. To do this, you decided to use **examples**. You reference Billboard’s “Greatest Artists of All Time” list<sup>15</sup> and select the top five artists:

1. The Beatles,
2. Madonna,
3. Elton John,
4. Elvis Presley, and
5. Mariah Carey.

Then, you **illustrate** how these five artists have influenced American culture. You chose to use these five artists as a representative slice of the entire music industry.

## When to Use Illustration

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Illustration is a helpful writing strategy that can be used in almost any type of writing. Here are a few examples (see, I’m using the strategy right here!) of illustration in action:

- History Essay: List of most significant documents in U.S. history.
- Cover Letter: Examples of relevant work experiences.
- Twitter: A fact about lefties on Left Handers Day.

<sup>14</sup> Anderson, Dana. “Illustration.” *Writing Unleashed*, Version 1. NDSCS; 2016.

<sup>15</sup> “Greatest of All Time Hot 100 Artists.” *Billboard*, [www.billboard.com/charts/greatest-hot-100-artists](http://www.billboard.com/charts/greatest-hot-100-artists).

- Magazine Article: A compelling personal story of abuse is used to illustrate the dangers of domestic violence.

Remember, one good example is often worth more than a list of lengthy explanations.



## EXAMPLE: “FADS THAT NEVER WENT OUT OF STYLE”

Fads, by definition, are short-lived trends that garner the attention of a lot of people. One day it's in; the next day it's out. Fads prevail temporarily, but certain clothing items, hairstyles, and even traditional toys and games that began as fleeting fads are considered classics.

Each season, fashion designers establish trends, while retailers cash in on the wildly popular fads. As seasons change, so do the trends. The “it” item fades away, forgotten. However, classic clothing essentials like the basic black tee, the perfect pair of jeans, and the little black dress stand the test of time. Each began as a fad but have transformed into chic wardrobe staples.

Much like fashion, trends in hairstyles are cyclical. Hair stylists aim to create modern and fashionable looks, often resulting in hairstyle fads. The Mohawk, mullet, perm, and bowl cut are hairstyle fads that many hope will never be in vogue again. But the ponytail, sleek bob, and the classic taper are trend-proof hairstyles that will never go out of style.

Fads can also be found in the toy and gaming industry. Each year, toy and game manufacturers vie to be the top Christmas toy. This once-a-year bonanza has fueled outrageous sales of toys such as Teddy Ruxpin, Tomagochi, and Furby. After the holiday hype, many of these toys are forgotten. There are toys, however, that experienced breakout sales one holiday season and continue to be hot sellers. The Rubik's Cube and Barbie doll began as hot Christmas toys and can still be found in toy stores today.

With new garments, hairstyles, and toys and games being made every day, trends and fads will come and go. But much like the little black dress, the ponytail, and Barbie doll, a few select fads will transition from fad to classic.



### ASSIGNMENTS OR QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

(Insert ideas from students or instructor here.)



# ARGUMENT<sup>16</sup>

## Why Argue?<sup>17</sup>

We don't always argue to win. Yes, you read that correctly. Argumentation isn't always about being "right." We argue to express opinions and explore new ideas. When writing an argument, your goal is to convince an audience that your opinions and ideas are worth consideration and discussion.

When instructors use the word "argument," they're talking about defending a certain point of view through writing or speech. Usually called a "claim" or a "thesis," this point of view is concerned with an issue that doesn't have a clear right or wrong answer (e.g., four and two make six). Also, this argument should not only be concerned with personal opinion (e.g., I really like carrots). Instead, an argument might tackle issues like abortion, capital punishment, stem cell research, or gun control. **However, what distinguishes an argument from a descriptive essay or "report" is that the argument must take a stance; if you're merely summarizing "both sides" of an issue or pointing out the "pros and cons," you're not really writing an argument.** "Stricter gun control laws will likely result in a decrease in gun-related violence" is an argument. Note that people can and will disagree with this argument, which is precisely why so many instructors find this type of assignment so useful – these assignments make you think!

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

Instead, you need to adequately support your claim by finding:

- facts
- statistics
- quotations from recognized authorities, and
- other types of evidence

<sup>16</sup> This chapter's contents come from the original chapter on Argument in the first edition of *Writing Unleashed*.

<sup>17</sup> "What is an Argument?" *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. Last edited 27 Nov 14. Accessed 10 May 17.

[https://en.m.wikibooks.org/wiki/Rhetoric\\_and\\_Composition/Argument\\_Text](https://en.m.wikibooks.org/wiki/Rhetoric_and_Composition/Argument_Text) is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-ShareAlike License.

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

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

## What is an Argument?

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Billboards, television advertisements, documentaries, political campaign messages, and even bumper stickers are often arguments – these are messages trying to convince an audience to do something. But be aware that an academic argument is different. An academic argument requires a clear structure and use of outside evidence.

### KEY FEATURES OF AN ARGUMENT

- **Clear Structure:** Includes a claim, reasons/evidence, counterargument, and conclusion.
- **Claim:** Your arguable point (most often presented as your thesis statement).
- **Reasons & Evidence:** Strong reasons and materials that support your claim.
- **Consideration of other Positions:** Acknowledge and refute possible counterarguments.
- **Persuasive Appeals:** Use of appeals to emotion, character, and logic.
- Organizing an Argument

The great thing about the argument structure is its amazingly versatility. Once you become familiar with this basic structure of the argumentative essay, you will be able to clearly argue about almost anything! Next up is information all about the basic structure...

## The Structure of an Argument<sup>18</sup>

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If you are asked to write an argument, there is a basic argument structure. Use this outline to help create an organized argument:

- **Introduction:** Begin with an attention-getting introduction. Establish the need to explore this topic. Thesis Statement: What's your claim?
- Brief background on issue (optional).
- **Reasons & Evidence:** First reason for your position (with supporting evidence)
- Second reason for your position (with supporting evidence)
- Additional reasons (optional)
- **Counterargument:** What's the other side of the issue? Explain why your view is better than others.
- **Conclusion:** Summarize the argument. Make clear what you want the audience to think or do.

<sup>18</sup> "What is an Argument?" *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. Last edited 27 Nov 14. Accessed 10 May 17. [https://en.m.wikibooks.org/wiki/Rhetoric\\_and\\_Composition/Argument](https://en.m.wikibooks.org/wiki/Rhetoric_and_Composition/Argument). Text is available under the CC-BY-SA.

## Structuring Arguments: Common Organizational Pattern

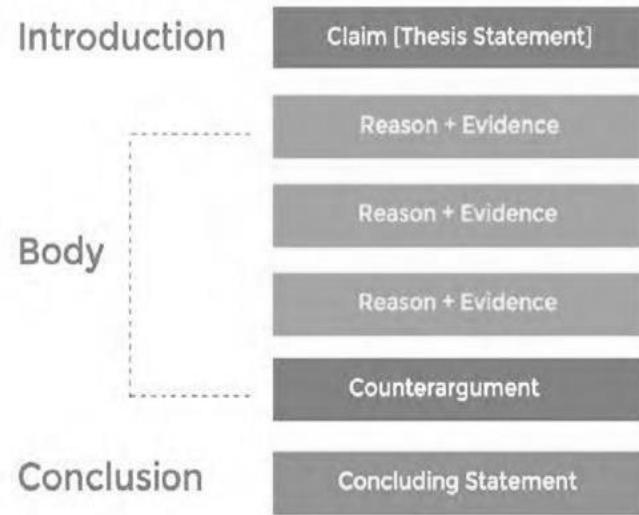


Image used in previous OER textbook, *Writing Unleashed*, the non-argumentative one. This has been placed in greyscale for easier printing.

### INTRODUCTION:

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

Once you have introduced your general subject, it's time to state your claim. Your claim will serve as the thesis for your essay. Make sure that you use clear and precise language. Your reader needs to understand exactly where you stand on the issue. The clarity of your claim affects your readers' understanding of your views. Also, it's a good idea to highlight what you plan to cover. Highlights allow your reader to know what direction you will be taking with your argument.

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

### BODY PARAGRAPHS:

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

## DEVELOPING YOUR ARGUMENT:

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

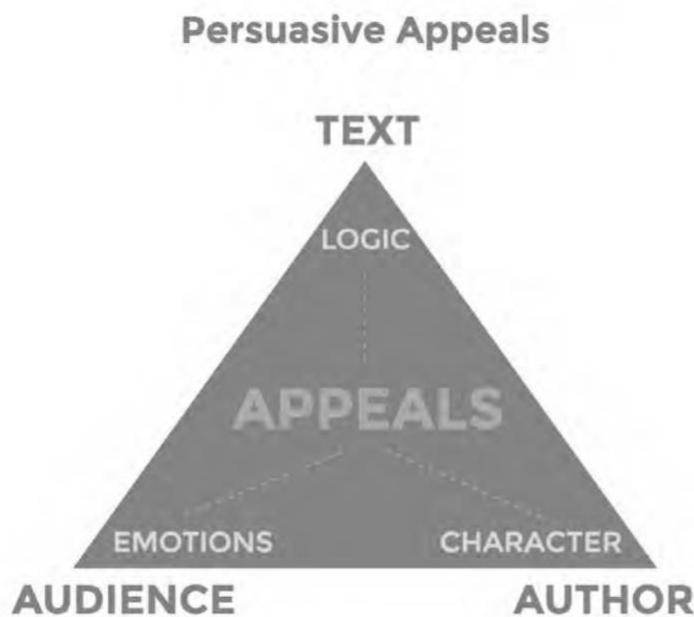
## How to Be Persuasive?

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Building an argument isn't easy, and building a **convincing** argument is even more difficult. You may have a clear claim, solid reasons and evidence, and even refute the main counterargument, but your audience may not be convinced. Maybe they don't care about the topic. Maybe they don't find you credible. Or, maybe they find your evidence weak.

Here are the identified three means of persuasion:

- Logos: Use of evidence and reason to support the claim.
- Pathos: Appeals to the audience's emotions and values.
- Ethos: An author leverages trustworthiness and character.



This visual was created by Dana Anderson using Piktochart.com. This has been placed in greyscale for easier printing.

To build a convincing and perhaps influential argument, you need to not only have a structurally sound argument (claim, reasons, evidence, counterargument, conclusion), but you also need to leverage appeals to persuade your audience.

Arguments are complex and difficult to master. But understanding how to build and critically read arguments is essential in understanding and shaping our lives.

## **STRENGTHENING YOUR ARGUMENT<sup>19</sup>**

It is important to clearly state and support your position. However, it is just as important to present all of the information that you've gathered in an objective manner. Using language that is demeaning or non-objective will undermine the strength of your argument. This destroys your credibility and will reduce your audience on the spot. For example, a student writing an argument about why a particular football team has a good chance of "going all the way" is making a strategic error by stating that "anyone who doesn't think that the Minnesota Vikings deserve to win the Super Bowl is a total idiot." Not only has the writer risked alienating any number of her readers, she has also made her argument seem shallow and poorly researched. In addition, she has committed a third mistake: making a sweeping generalization that cannot be supported.

## **OBJECTIVE LANGUAGE**

Some instructors tell you to avoid using "I" and "My" (subjective) statements in your argument. You should only use "I" or "My" if you are an expert in your field (on a given topic). Instead choose more objective language to get your point across.

Consider the following:

I believe that the United States Government is failing to meet the needs of today's average college student through the under-funding of need-based grants, increasingly restrictive financial aid eligibility requirements, and a lack of flexible student loan options.

"Great," your reader thinks, "Everyone's entitled to their opinion."

Now let's look at this sentence again, but without the "I" at the beginning. Does the same sentence become a strong statement of fact without your "I" tacked to the front?

The United States Government is failing to meet the needs of today's average college student through the underfunding of need-based grants, increasingly restrictive financial aid eligibility requirements, and a lack of flexible student loan options.

"Wow," your reader thinks, "that really sounds like a problem."

A small change like the removal of your "I"s and "my"s can make all the difference in how a reader perceives your argument – as such, it's always good to proofread your rough draft and look for places where you could use objective rather than subjective language.

<sup>19</sup> "What is an Argument?" *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. Last edited 27 Nov 14. Accessed 10 May 17. <https://en.m.wikibooks.org/wiki/RhetoricandComposition/Argument>. Licensed CC-BY-SA.

# A Note About Audience When Arguing

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Many topics that are written about in college are very controversial. When approaching a topic, it is critical that you think about all of the implications that your argument makes. If, for example, you are writing a paper on abortion, you need to think about your audience. There will certainly be people in each of your classes that have some sort of relationship to this topic that may be different than yours. While you shouldn't let others' feelings sway your argument, you should approach each topic with a neutral mind and stay away from personal attacks. Keep your mind open to the implications of the opposition and formulate a logical stance considering the binaries equally. People may be offended by something you say, but if you have taken the time to think about the ideas that go into your paper, you should have no problem defending it.

## QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN ARGUING<sup>20</sup>

- How would your relatives react to the argument? Would they understand the terminology you are using? Does that matter?
- How would your friends react to the argument? Would they understand the terminology you are using? Does that matter?
- How would you explain your argument or research to a teenager vs someone who is in their 70s? Is there a difference?
- If you are aware that your classmates are more liberal or more conservative in their political standing, does that determine how you will argue your topic? Or does that even matter?
- If you are aware that your instructor is more liberal or conservative than you are, does that determine how you will argue your topic? Or does that even matter?
- If you were to people-watch at a mall or other space where many people gather, who in the crowd would be your ideal audience and why? Who is not your ideal audience member? Why?

## Counterargument<sup>21</sup>

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Speaking of audience, there are three main strategies for addressing counterargument:

- **Acknowledgement:** This acknowledges the importance of a particular alternative perspective but argues that it is irrelevant to the writer's thesis/topic. When using this strategy, the writer agrees that the alternative perspective is important, but shows how it is outside of their focus.
- **Accommodation:** This acknowledges the validity of a potential objection to the writer's thesis and how on the surface the objection and thesis might seem contradictory. When using this strategy, the writer goes on to argue that, however, the ideal expressed in the objection is actually consistent with the writer's own goals if one digs deeper into the issue.

<sup>20</sup> Questions taken from a longer piece by: Jory, Justin. "A Word About Audience." *Open English at Salt Lake Community College*. 01 Aug 2016. <https://openenglishatslcc.pressbooks.com/chapter/audience/> Open English @ SLCC by SLCC English Department is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 International License, except where otherwise noted.

<sup>21</sup> Taken from a longer piece by: Beatty, Jim. "Counterargument." *Open English at Salt Lake Community College*. 01 Aug 2016. <https://openenglishatslcc.pressbooks.com/chapter/counterargument/> Open English @ SLCC by SLCC English Department is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-Noncommercial 4.0 International License, except where otherwise noted.

- **Refutation:** This acknowledges that a contrary perspective is reasonable and understandable. It does not attack differing points of view. When using this strategy, the writer responds with strong, research-based evidence showing how that other perspective is incorrect or unfounded.

## EXAMPLES

Let's see how these three strategies could work in practice by considering the thesis statement "Utah public schools need to invest more money in arts education."

- **Acknowledgement:** One possible objection to the thesis could be: "Athletics are also an important part of students' educational experience." The writer could acknowledge that athletics are indeed important, but no more important than the arts. A responsible school budget should be able to include both.
- **Accommodation:** Another possible objection to this thesis could be: "Students need a strong foundation in STEM subjects in order to get into college and get a good career." The writer could acknowledge that STEM education is indeed crucial to students' education. They could go on to argue, however, that arts education helps students be stronger in STEM classes through teaching creative problem solving. So, if someone values STEM education, they need to value the arts as well.
- **Refutation:** The most common objection to education budget proposals is that there is simply not enough money. Given limited resources, schools have to prioritize where money is spent. In terms of research required, refutation takes the most work of these three methods. To argue that schools do have enough resources to support arts education, the writer would need to look at current budget allocations. They could Google "Salt Lake City school district budget" to find a current budget report. In this report, they would find that the total budget for administrative roles in the 2014–15 school year totaled \$10,443,596 (Roberts and Kearsley<sup>22</sup>). Then they could argue that through administrative reforms, a small portion of this money could be freed up to make a big difference in funding arts education.

### EXAMPLE: "CAN GRAFFITI EVER BE CONSIDERED ART?"<sup>23</sup>

Graffiti is not simply acts of vandalism, but a true artistic form because of personal expression, aesthetic qualities, and movements of style.

Graffiti, like traditional artistic forms such as sculpture, is art because it allows artists to express ideas through an outside medium.

<sup>22</sup> Roberts, Janet M. and Alan T. Kearsley. "Annual Budget Fiscal Year 2014-2015." Salt Lake City School District. <http://www.slcschools.org/departments/budgeting/documents/1415-Budget.pdf>. Accessed 3 December 2017. Taken from a longer piece by: Beatty, Jim. "Counterargument." Open English at Salt Lake Community College. 01 Aug 2016.

<sup>23</sup> Example used in previous OER textbook, *Writing Unleashed*.

Graffiti must be considered an art form based on judgement of aesthetic qualities. Art professor George C. Stowers argues that "larger pieces require planning and imagination and contain artistic elements like color and composition" ("Graffiti").

Like all artistic forms, Graffiti has evolved, experiencing significant movements or periods.

Often, graffiti is seen as only criminal vandalism, but this is not always the case. The artistic merits of graffiti—expression, aesthetics, and movements—cannot be denied; Graffiti is art.

#### Works Cited

"Graffiti: Art through Vandalism." Graffiti: Art through Vandalism. N.p., n.d. Web. 29 Sept. 2015.



#### ASSIGNMENTS OR QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- Compose an argument that answers the following: Do grades in any course reflect who you are as a student or how much you have learned? Think on any college or high school course you've taken – did that letter grade reflect what you learned? Why or why not? Do letter grades represent a student's ability or intelligence? Your answers to these questions will become an argument. At a minimum, include the following:
  - Some sort of structure: intro, body, conclusion
  - An argumentative thesis
  - Three pieces of evidence that back your thesis
  - One quality source integrated into the text and cited correctly at the end



# MORE STRATEGIES AND MODES

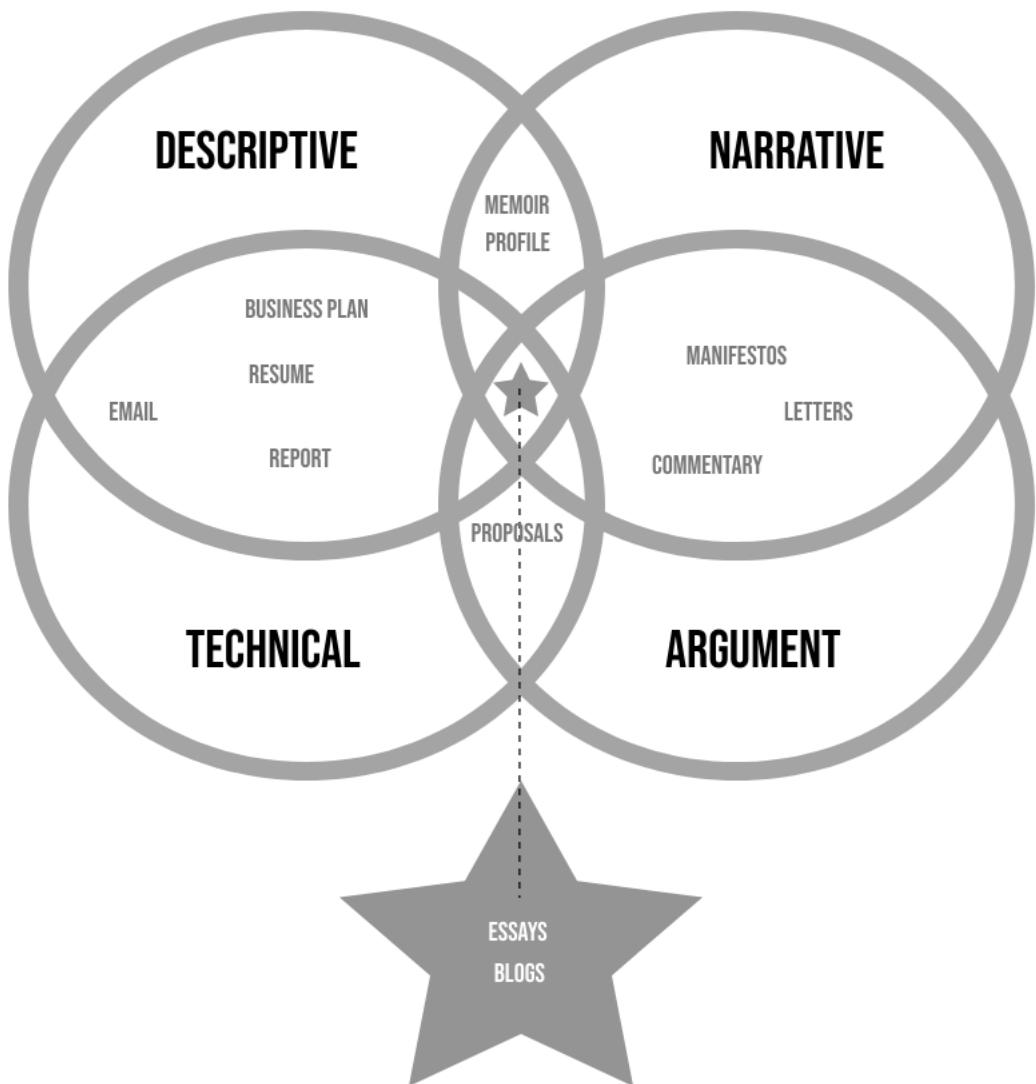
Informative/Expository  
Imaginative/Creative  
Technical  
Definition  
Cause and Effect

Process Analysis  
Exemplification  
Compare and Contrast  
Classification and Division

BLACK: STRATEGIES/MODES

GREY: GENRES

PLEASE NOTE: THESE STRATEGIES, MODES, AND GENRES ARE FLUID AND FLEXIBLE. THEY ARE NOT SET IN STONE.



Venn diagram created by Sybil Priebe using Piktochart.com. This has been placed into greyscale for easier printing.

Yes, there are intersections between strategies, modes, and genres.



# GENRES

If strategies (or modes) are the umbrellas of writing, then genres are the varied people who exist under those umbrellas. A creative essay could be personified as a hippie under that umbrella; perhaps, she likes to use photos and poetry along with her narration. The story of a girl who flips her car while eating a Twix bar – a memoir – would be me (Sybil), and that story will use narration as well as description. Strategies, modes, and genres intertwine, just like people - we are not one perfect personality; neither is writing.

As you read, ask yourself what sort of **structure** you've seen these genres used in. What kinds of **content** have you seen when it comes to these genres? Do you see a strict or flexible structure used? Do you see creative content or technical content used?

The following genres are listed and explained in alphabetical order.



# ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

This chapter is brought to you by Sybil Priebe and heavily edited bits from this Wikibook<sup>24</sup>.

The annotated bibliography is the first step to writing a successful research paper. It is beneficial for students as well as instructors. By completing an annotated bibliography, students will begin their research long before the actual research paper is due, so they are not scrambling at the last minute to find sources.

## Definition:

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An annotation is a brief summary of a book, article, chart, visual, video or other publication. The purpose of an annotation is to describe the work in such a way that the reader can decide whether or not to read the work itself. An annotated bibliography helps the reader understand the particular usefulness of each item. The ideal annotated bibliography shows the relationships among individual items and may compare their strengths or shortcomings.

## Step-By-Step Approach to Annotating:

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The following approach to annotating will help you to use your reading time to best advantage.

- Familiarize yourself with the contents of the book or article. Examining the table of contents, the foreword, and the introduction can be helpful.
- Read as much of the book or article (or watch the video/listen to the podcast) as is necessary to understand its content.
- Outline or make notes of the information you think should be incorporated in the annotation.
- Write a paragraph that covers the spirit of the book or article without undue emphasis on any one or more particular points.
- Individualize annotations in a bibliography; avoid using the same words and repetitive phrasing.
- Write in complete sentences.

<sup>24</sup> "Rhetoric and Composition/Teacher's Handbook/Teaching Annotated Bibliography." *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. 10 Aug 2016, 20:05 UTC. 10 Sep 2019, 20:24  
<<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=RhetoricandComposition/Teacher%27sHandbook/TeachingAnnotatedBibliography&oldid=3104990>>.

- The most effective annotation is tightly written with succinct and descriptive wording. Annotations are short notes and are normally no more than 150 words. Brevity and clarity are the goals.
- Grab the attention of the reader at the beginning of the annotation.



## EXAMPLE:

### Annotated Bibliography<sup>25</sup>

Howard, Ted, and Jeremy Rifkin. *Who Should Play God?* New York: Dell 1977. This book "lifts the cloak of secrecy from genetic experiments" and explores, among other things, "who is performing the research and who profits from it" (12). It's clearly anti-genetic engineering; its chapter titles give a good idea of the direction and flavor of the book, for example, "Eugenics," "Eliminating 'Bad' Genes," "Bio-Futures," "Scientists and Corporation." This book looks as if it is an appropriate source for the social arguments from the political left wing.

Taylor, Monica and Mal Leicester. *Ethics, Ethnicity and Education*. Bristol, PA: Taylor and Francis, 1992. This book is an important and inherently controversial collection of papers that discusses the major moral issues in multicultural school education. Topics discussed include the ethical aspects of the *separate* schools debate, strategies for establishing a democratic school and preparing teachers to be more moral educators, and consideration of the values implicitly antiracist/multicultural education.

Pederson, Jane Marie. *Between Memory and Reality: Family and Community in Rural Wisconsin, 1870-1970*. Madison, WI: University of WI Press, 1992. Pederson examines the development of two rural Wisconsin communities during the post-frontier years. She demonstrates the effects of the cultures brought to these communities by immigrants and migrants on the distinctive ways these towns responded to change in the twentieth century.

<sup>25</sup> The print handout was revised and then redesigned for the Web by Thomas Tate for *The Write Place*, St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud, Minnesota, and may be copied for educational purposes only. If you copy this document, please include our copyright notice and the name of the writer. URL: <http://leo.stcloudstate.edu/research/MLA.html> © 2000 The Write Place.



**ASSIGNMENTS OR QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

- Create an annotated bibliography capturing the summaries of three sources related to your field of study. ([Click](#) here for an example.) At a minimum, including the following criteria: three alphabetical sources, three quality summaries, and three detailed citations.



# BLOGS

Definition: A journal-style web site that lists the posts backwards with a timestamp. Some blogs are collaborative, and some are kept up by one individual.

Blogs are the newest genre on the scene, and they are used in teaching, the corporate world, the land of politics; they might be utilized to showcase daily outfits in a fashion blog or recipes in a cooking blog or share inspirational stories in a blog about parenthood; if a person has a passion, and wants to openly journal about it, he/she should consider starting a blog.

Blogs are easy to create. All it takes is one idea. Anyone can do it.

## How Do Blogs Work?<sup>26</sup>

Blogs are created via blog hosting websites such as Blogger, WordPress, or Edublogs. Typically, a user registers a username and password, picks a blog title and URL, and then can immediately begin his or her first post, or entry.

A post can include a combination of writing, photos, videos, links, and other embedded materials. Once the post is ready, the author can instantly publish it to the blog. Other people are then able to view the post (depending on settings--a blogger can choose to make his or her blog private, public, or shared with certain people).

Readers can subscribe to the blog and receive updates in their e-mail or RSS reader. Posts can be shared via social networking tools such as Facebook, Twitter, and Tumblr. Bloggers can also enable commenting, which means readers can write responses to blog posts that will appear along with the post for other readers to see.

All it takes is one click to post or respond to another person's blog.

## CATEGORIES<sup>27</sup>

<sup>26</sup> "User-Generated Content in Education/Blogs." *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. 2 Apr 2018, 12:02 UTC. 7 May 2019, 19:15 <[https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=User-Generated\\_Content\\_in\\_Education/Blogs&oldid=3399437](https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=User-Generated_Content_in_Education/Blogs&oldid=3399437)>. Licensed CC-BY-SA.

<sup>27</sup> "Social Web/Blogs." *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. 17 Dec 2014, 14:26 UTC. 8 May 2019, 19:17 <[https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Social\\_Web/Blogs&oldid=2748518](https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Social_Web/Blogs&oldid=2748518)>. Licensed CC-BY-SA.

In addition to Class Blogs or Teacher Blogs – mentioned previously – here are other specific sorts of blogs:

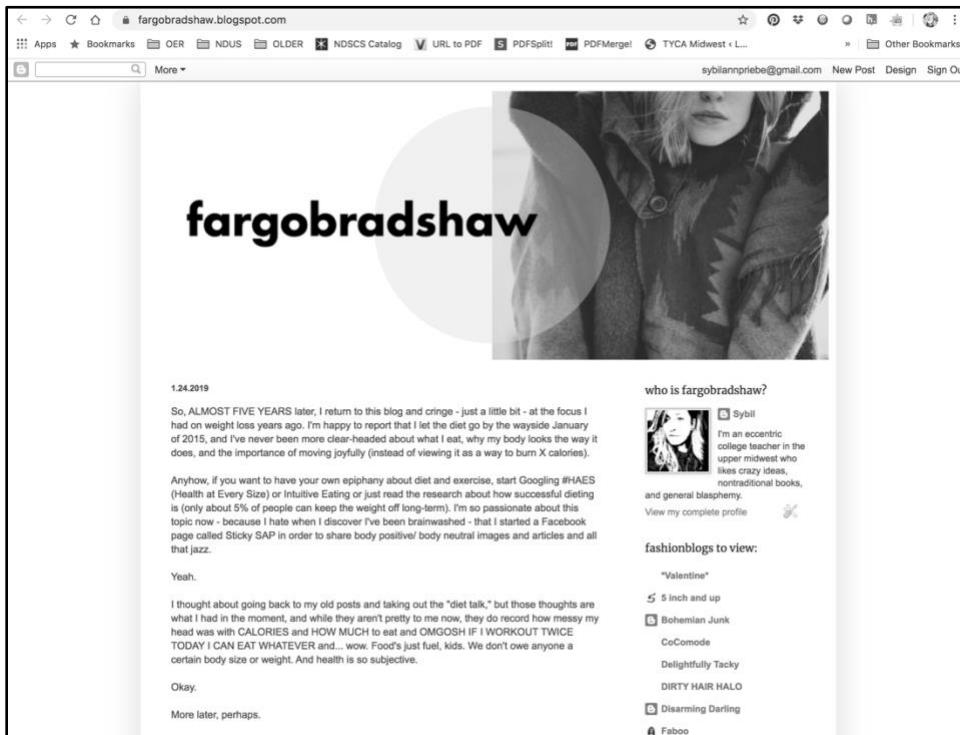
- **Political Blogs:** These blogs are often tied to a large media or news corporation, such as "The Caucus" (affiliated with *The New York Times*), "CNN Political Ticker", and the *National Review's* "The Corner."
- **Gossip Blogs:** These blogs can greatly be attributed to the popularity of Perez Hilton, a celebrity and entertainment media gossip blogger. His blog posts contain tabloid photographs of celebrities, accompanied by captions and comments. Web traffic to the often controversial and raunchy Perez Hilton site skyrocketed in 2005, prompting similar gossip blogs, such as TMZ.com, Jezebel, and the Superficial, to gain popularity.
- **Food Blogs:** These blogs allow foodies and aspiring chefs alike to share recipes, cooking techniques, and food porn, for others to enjoy. Food blogs serve as a sort of online cookbook for followers, often containing restaurant critiques, product reviews, and step-by-step photography for recipes.
- **Fashion Blogs:** These blogs became their own larger than life sub-community following the explosive growth of the blogosphere. Besides fashion news blogs, street style blogs have also become exceedingly popular. Many Bloggers consider updating their blog a full-time job. These style mavens are able to earn considerable livings through advertising, selling their photos and even providing their services as photographers, stylists, and guest designers.
- **Health Blogs:** These blogs cover health topics, events and/or related content of the health industry and the general community. They can cover diverse health related concerns such as nutrition and diet, fitness, weight control, diseases, disease management, societal trends affecting health, analysis about health, business of health and health research.

## **MICROBLOGS**

Microblogs are a relatively new phenomenon and are a special form of blogging. The most famous microblog is Twitter, but also alternatives like Tumblr or Google Buzz exist. The main idea behind a microblog is to restrict the size of a message to 140 characters. This comes from its original connection to texting (SMS). In today's society with its general tendency toward information overflow this is a welcome trend. This is also why it is very popular with mobile devices.

Microblogging is essentially a broadcast medium, meaning you write a message, which then will be broadcast to all your followers. It is not unusual that you also follow your followers. It can not only be used to exchange textual messages, but also links, images and videos.

## EXAMPLE:



**fargobradshaw**

1.24.2019

So, ALMOST FIVE YEARS later, I return to this blog and cringe - just a little bit - at the focus I had on weight loss years ago. I'm happy to report that I let the diet go by the wayside January of 2015, and I've never been more clear-headed about what I eat, why my body looks the way it does, and the importance of moving joyfully (instead of viewing it as a way to burn X calories).

Anyhow, if you want to have your own epiphany about diet and exercise, start Googling #HAES (Health at Every Size) or Intuitive Eating or just read the research about how successful dieting is (only about 5% of people can keep the weight off long-term). I'm so passionate about this topic now - because I hate when I discover I've been brainwashed - that I started a Facebook page called Sticky SAP in order to share body positive/ body neutral images and articles and all that jazz.

Yeah.

I thought about going back to my old posts and taking out the "diet talk," but those thoughts are what I had in the moment, and while they aren't pretty to me now, they do record how messy my head was with CALORIES and HOW MUCH to eat and OMGGOSH IF I WORKOUT TWICE TODAY I CAN EAT WHATEVER and... wow. Food's just fuel, kids. We don't owe anyone a certain body size or weight. And health is so subjective.

Okay.

More later, perhaps.

who is fargobradshaw?

 Syll  
I'm an eccentric college teacher in the upper midwest who likes crazy ideas, nontraditional books, and general blasphemy.  
View my complete profile

fashionblogs to view:

- \*Valentine\*
- 5 inch and up
- Bohemian Junk
- CoComode
- Delightfully Tacky
- DIRTY HAIR HALO
- Disarming Darling
- Faboo



### ASSIGNMENTS AND QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- Create five blog entries revolving around your life. ([Click here](#) for an example.) At a minimum, include the following criteria: Five quality entries of content and five accompanied pieces of info: charts, memes, images.



# BUSINESS PLANS

## Where Does One Start in Building a Business Plan?

Creating a business plan<sup>28</sup> will help you achieve your entrepreneurial goals. A clear and compelling business plan provides you with a guide for building a successful enterprise focused on achieving your personal and financial goals. It can also help persuade others, including banks, to invest in what you are creating.

**Define your company.** A business plan won't be useful until you're certain what your company exists for. What will you accomplish for others? What products and services will you produce or provide? Write down all the specific needs your company will satisfy. Potential investors need to know that your business will be meaningful and marketable to people who can use your product or service. Concentrate on the external needs your company will meet.

**Choose a winning strategy.** Once you've established the competitive advantage your business offers, you will be able to select the best strategy to reach your goal. How will you distinguish your product or service from others? Although there are millions of types of businesses, there are actually only a few basic strategies that can be applied to make any enterprise successful. The first step in selecting an effective strategy is to identify a competitive advantage for your product or service.

**Design your company.** Consider how you will hire and organize your workforce. By the time you've reached this stage of thinking about your potential business concept, you'll probably have a good idea of the number of people you'll need and the skills they'll require to get your enterprise up and running.

**Consider the practical issues of running a business.** Think about your role as leader or boss of the business. As you think about hiring personnel and organizing your workforce, you must also confront your desire and ability to be a good boss. Decide how you will handle your employees' entitlements. For example, salaries and wages, their insurance and retirement benefits, as well as analyzing the extent of your knowledge of tax related issues.

## THINGS TO CONSIDER:

<sup>28</sup> "How to Write a Business Plan" was co-authored by wikiHow Staff. 29 March 2019. <https://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Business-Plan>. CC-BY-NC-SA.

- 1) Analyze the potential markets for your business. Consider the following areas of inquiry:
  - Is there a viable market for the product or service you want to sell?
  - How old are your potential customers?
  - What do they do for a living?
  - Is your product or service attractive to a particular ethnic or economic population?
  - Will only wealthy people be able to afford it?
  - Does your ideal customer live in a certain type of neighborhood or area?
- 1) Establish the size of your potential market. From there, you can analyze demographic information more specifically:
  - How many car mechanics are in need of soap in any given community?
  - How many children in the United States are currently under the age of eight?
  - How much soap will they use in a month or a year?
  - How many other soap manufacturers already have a share of the market?
  - How big are your potential competitors?
- 1) Identify your company's initial needs. What will you require to get started? Whether you want to buy an existing company with 300 employees or start your own by adding an extra phone line to your home office desk, you need to make a list of the materials you'll need. Some may be tangible, such as five hundred file folders and a large cabinet in which to store them all. Other requirements may be intangible, such as time to create a product design or to do market research on potential customers.
- 2) Prepare product samples. Do you need to hire an engineer to draw up accurate manufacturing designs? Should you patent your invention? Will you need to investigate federal safety standards for the product?
- 3) Research possible locations for your business. Call a real estate broker and look at actual retail spaces in the neighborhood where you'd like to open your restaurant. Make a chart of the most expensive and least expensive sites by location and square footage. Then estimate how much space you require and how much money you'll need to allow for rent.
- 4) Determine your start-up cost. Make a list of all the tangible and intangible resources you need to get your business going. The total estimated price of all of these items will become your start-up cost whether you're buying highly sophisticated computers or simply installing a new telephone line on your desk. If there's any item in your estimates that seems unreasonably high, research other alternatives. But keep in mind that it's better to include every element you truly need along with a reasonable estimate of the cost of each item, so you don't run out of money or default on your loans. Be honest and conservative in your estimates, but also be optimistic.

## **TIPS:**

- Don't aim for the best of everything at the beginning. You can forgo the expensive trimmings of an office of a more well-established company and stick to the basics

at the beginning. Get what is affordable, works and is actually needed and don't buy frills.

- Put yourself in the shoes of potential investors. Ask yourself, "If I were going to invest X amount of dollars into a concept or idea, or even a product, what would I want to know?" Gather as much helpful and credible information as you can. Depending on your product, you may need to search long and hard for relevant information.
- Identify potential investors.

Don't lose heart if you discover some, or even all, of your ideas have been adequately covered by the market. Don't ignore this reality; instead, work with it. Can you still do a better job or provide a better widget than your competitors? In many cases, it's likely that you can provided you know the market well and how to add value in ways your competitors are not doing. In other cases, it may be a case of focusing more narrowly or more broadly than your competitors are doing.

## Steps to Writing the Business Plan

Organize all the relevant information about your business. Begin creating section headings and putting the appropriate information under the appropriate headings. Effectively separating your business' unique approach to each of these headings will organize your plan in a way investors find useful:

1. Title Page and Table of Contents
2. Executive Summary\*, in which you summarize your vision for the company
3. General Company Description, in which you provide an overview of your company and the service it provides to its market
4. Products and Services, in which you describe, in detail, your unique product or service
5. Marketing Plan, in which you describe how you'll bring your product to its consumers
6. Operational Plan, in which you describe how the business will be operated on a day-to-day basis
7. Management and Organization, in which you describe the structure of your organization and the philosophy that governs it
8. Financial Plan, in which you illustrate your working model for finances and your need from investors

\*The executive summary is basically your big appeal to investors, or really anyone who reads your business plan, that should summarize and articulate what it is that's great about your business model and product. It should be less about the nitty-gritty details of operations and more about your grand vision for the company and where it is headed.

## APPENDIX & FINANCIAL DATA

Your resume will be included in the separate appendix of exhibits at the end of the plan, so this is not the place to list every job you've ever had or the fact that you were an art history major in college. But don't overlook the impact of some part of your background that might even seem unrelated to your new venture. Focus on group experiences, leadership opportunities, and successes at all levels.

Present and explain your financial data. How will you convince others to invest in your endeavor? By having clear, transparent and realistic financial information that shows you know what you're talking about and that you're not hiding anything.



## **EXAMPLE: “KITCHEN GRABS.”**

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

The need for fast, easy, fuss-free and delicious meals continue. Kitchen Grabs is a healthy alternative to fast meals.

### **PRODUCT AND SERVICE**

Kitchen Grabs are pre-packed meals prepared daily made available in restaurants and online. The meal selection will vary per day designed by a dedicated nutritionist working with our passionate cooks to ensure that each meal approximates the dietary nutritional requirements of the average adult. The meals come in fixed sizes and portions, that is to say, no supersizing!

The meal selection will be made available online only on the previous day. Fresh ingredients go into each delectable dish. Upon posting, customers can pre-order for meals to be consumed the following day.

Kitchen Grabs' restaurant, a chic and homey diner-style setup, charmingly sits on the corner of Delaney Ave. and 2nd East St., nestled in the ever-active business district of Houston. Walk-ins are welcome. Residents and workers from the surrounding buildings can order online ([www.kitchengrabs.com](http://www.kitchengrabs.com)) or through phone (4-KGRABS or 454-7227) and their meals will be delivered hot and surely delicious.

### **MARKET ANALYSIS**

Business advisers say that the food industry is saturated, and any new entrant faces huge obstacles. For us at Kitchen Grabs, these obstacles are giants – the established fast food chains and the vending machines. Yet we cower not. We sincerely believe in our meals. Further, we strongly believe that healthy and delicious meals will never run out of patrons. In fact, customer satisfaction concerns us way more.

Our target market are adults, male and female, from 16 years old and above, residing and/or working within a radius of 8 blocks from the restaurant. They are generally subject to rigorous activities (physical and mental) and need sustenance to properly perform

their tasks. Their activities take up most of their waking hours, more like, working hours. A quick meal will always be a welcome help.

#### SALES AND MARKETING STRATEGY

Prior to the setup of the restaurant, Kitchen Grabs was an online cafeteria. We initially served the hungry workers of several companies in Houston's business district and they wanted more. Whenever we participated in trade fairs, the top question was whether we have a 'real' store; a funny question but an incessant one eventually urging us to construct our first restaurant. We will continue to attend bazaars and trade fairs spreading the word on health and available options, particularly our meals. For the next year, we intend to harness social media further.

In the next coming month, we shall be launching a new project: Toque Tours. Every week, our team will serve an international-inspired meal. Leading the project are Greek, Vietnamese and Mediterranean cuisines, touted as the world's healthiest cuisines.

#### OPERATIONS AND MANAGEMENT

The company was founded by a brother and sister tandem, Neil and Collette Viola. She studied nutrition while he trained yuppie clients. His random advice requests turned into serious discussions on health, fitness, and the inconvenience of healthy options. These became the foundation of Kitchen Grabs. Four years later, the Viola siblings still discuss how to make choosing health easier, though this time with more minds involved. Part of the team now is Dr. Linda McKann a health and nutrition consultant, George Willis with sales and operations, and Millie Dawson in finance. There is also Mama Edna Viola for taste and overall quality testing.

#### FINANCE

Two years into operations, Kitchen Grabs has broken even. However, as expansion was necessitated particularly the construction of the restaurant, the company secured bank loans to augment revenue. As business continues to grow, the company will be needing additional delivery riders and equipment for better service in the amount of \$25,000.

Appendix A computes the return of investment given the projections. Business projections predict a larger demand, an exciting new chapter for the owners and staff alike.



#### ASSIGNMENTS OR QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- Create a Business Plan based on a company you'd like to own in the future. At a minimum, include the following criteria:
  - Executive Summary, in which you summarize your vision for the company
  - General Company Description, in which you provide an overview of your company and the service it provides to its market

- Products and Services, in which you describe, in detail, your unique product or service
- Marketing Plan, in which you describe how you'll bring your product to its consumers
- Operational Plan, in which you describe how the business will be operated on a day-to-day basis
- Management and Organization, in which you describe the structure of your organization and the philosophy that governs it
- Financial Plan, in which you illustrate your working model for finances and your need from investors



# COMMENTARIES

## Basic Definition of a Commentary:

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“It is an expression of opinions or offering of explanations about an event or situation.”

At some point in your life, you might have to write a commentary<sup>29</sup> or, in other words, verbally or textually criticize someone’s work or a situation. Yes, whether you’re a teacher, editor, student, or amateur critic, knowing how to constructively analyze someone’s work is a useful skill. There isn’t a magical formula for writing a commentary. The commentary you write depends upon what you’re reviewing, why you’re giving feedback, and what you think about the work. No matter what you’re working on, having a clear goal and strong writing will help make your commentary successful.

**Define your thesis.** In many high school and college courses you will be asked to write a literary commentary. This assignment requires you to evaluate a piece of literature, most often a novel, poem, or play. The key part of a successful commentary is a strong, clear thesis statement.

- Maybe you are writing a commentary on *Great Expectations*. Your thesis could be, “Not only is Dickens’ tale engaging, it is also an insightful commentary on the differences between social classes in industrial Britain.”

**Introduce your topic.** An introductory paragraph will help you to remain focused on the key points as you write. For example, include an introduction where you provide the context for the work and state your thesis, followed by analysis of the strengths, weaknesses, themes, etc. Then wrap up with a short conclusion of the importance of the topic.

- You might start by saying, “*Great Expectations* is full of imagery that makes the reader feel as if they are in 19<sup>th</sup> century England with Pip. Dickens’ novel about class, ambition, and love sheds important light on the social divides of the time.”
- You could then list the themes that you will discuss in the body of your commentary.

**Use specific examples to support your thesis.** State an issue or theme you’ve identified, show where you’ve found it in the work, then explain what effect the issue or theme has on the work. You might feel that Miss Havisham’s obsession with lost love is an important theme in *Great Expectations*.

<sup>29</sup> “How to Write a Commentary.” Co-authored by Alexander Peterman, MA, Education. Updated: April 23, 2019 <https://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Commentary>. Under an CC-BY-NC-SA License, wikiHow’s text content is free to modify, republish and share.

- An excellent specific example to illustrate this theme is pointing out that the character remains in her wedding dress, despite being jilted decades before.

**Connect your examples back to the theme.** When you use specific examples, make sure that you clearly illustrate how it connects back to the larger theme. You are using Miss Havisham's wedding dress as an example of the grief that comes with a lost love. Your reader will appreciate you clearly explaining why that is important.

- You might write something like, "Miss Havisham is an example of the theme that love can sometimes go terribly wrong. This is also an important theme when examining the relationship between Pip and Estella."
- Make sure to use smooth transitions. When you move to a new example, use a good transition word or phrase. Some examples are "similarly", "conversely", and "again".

**Write a strong conclusion.** Your conclusion is the piece that will tie the rest of your commentary together. You might want to include a summary of your argument. You should also indicate why the piece of text that you read is important.

**Cite your sources.** If you used information from other sources, cite them according the guidelines for the assignment or publication. For instance, any quotes should be cited. Make a separate "Works Cited" section at the bottom of the commentary for this information.



## EXAMPLE: ME AS A FUTURE PARENT BY MAKAI B.<sup>30</sup>

Life is never easy. But our parents make it seem as easy. And that's why most of us look up to them because they make a big impact on her life. So when you grow up are you gonna be like your parent? I'll tell you what I think about this question.

Growing up we are told to look up to our parents. They are role models so the question was asked "Will I become one of my parents in the future?" and I answered yes. The reason why I will turn it to one of my parents because my parents are kind of loving people. They are always wanted your time to volunteer their time. They're always there to listen to you. My parent's career is different from mine because I'm going to the medical field. Where my dad does odds and ends jobs, Whereas my mom does have a degree in nursing so I guess it's kind of the same. I will raise my family differently because I want to go on more family trips whereas my family didn't due to personal issues. In psychology, children develop learned behavior and it starts from childhood so I believe I will follow the same path but a little bit more curves, but not so many detours

In conclusion, Most people don't want to end up following their parents and some do, but I believe every individual has their own path. It doesn't matter how you were raised it only matters how you finish your life and are you proud of what you doing.

<sup>30</sup> Thank you Makai, a student from the spring 2020 semester.

Parents are there to set us an example of what life is capable of. No matter the bends or the detours. What matters is family and if you stayed together you can go through anything.



**ASSIGNMENTS OR QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

- When it comes to the future: Are Americans getting smarter, or the opposite? How do you know either way? At the minimum, include the following criteria:
  - Some sort of structure: intro, body, conclusion
  - An argumentative thesis
  - Three pieces of evidence that back your thesis



# EMAIL

This chapter is brought to you by Sybil Priebe and edited pieces of this Wikibook<sup>31</sup>.

Email is the remediated version of the letter. We're still supposed to use a greeting and a closing; we're supposed to be brief, and, yes, there are "return addresses" involved, just as there are attachments like there used to be enclosures.

Email is the new letter. I'm repeating that because it's not the new or old text message. It's not Snapchat. It's not Facebook. It's still supposed to be – especially if the intended audience is a teacher or boss – a professional form of communication.

So, basically, some of the same principles that we learn about writing letters can be used when learning about how to write an email message. Think for a few seconds about your audience. Then think for a few more seconds. Make sure to capitalize the person's name, use correct punctuation, and spell words correctly. Adding a closing is a bonus!

## A Deeper Dive

Historically, email was an informal way of communicating to other workers. Email straddles the line between informal communication and formal business interaction. Communicating via email can be difficult to deal with in a business setting because of the inability to tell emotion or tone of typed text. Caution must be used when writing emails in a professional business setting.

Keep in mind the following tips when composing an email.

- Limit email use in the workplace to business-specific information and topics.
- Review email for legal implications, because any and all written documents in a business environment can be used in court.
- Use professional language and tone.
- Pay attention to your audience and consider their background when writing.

## Audience: Intended vs. Unintended

Every document that is created is normally crafted to someone specifically. This someone would be your intended audience, for your writing style, and content will be tailored to

<sup>31</sup> "Professional and Technical Writing/Business Communications/E-Mail." *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. 22 May 2016, 20:17 UTC. 25 May 2016, 18:49 <<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=ProfessionalandTechnicalWriting/BusinessCommunications/E-Mail&oldid=3084147>>.

their appeal. Email messages, unlike some other business documents, are not restricted to just one person, or intended audience.

All aspects of your business documents should take into consideration everyone that could potentially read it. By ensuring this, you will save yourself and even possibly save your job.

As mentioned above, you never know who will be reading your documentation, so if an unintended reader who is not authorized to read or use your document, decides to use it, they could be putting themselves and others in significant danger.

## Ending a Communication

Research has shown that the reader is able to remember things said at the end of communication more than in any other part of communication. In order to properly end communication, it is important to follow the guidelines presented below.

1. Repeat your main point. Make sure to emphasize your main point in your conclusion. It allows the reader to think about the main point one last time.
2. Summarize your key points. Although this guideline is similar to the one above, when you summarize, you are ensuring that your audience understands your entire communication.
3. Refer to a goal stated earlier in your communication. It is common to state a goal in the beginning of communication. Referring to your goal at the end of communication sharpens the focus of your communication.
4. Focus on a key feeling. In some communications, it may be important to encourage your reader. Therefore, focusing on a feeling will help focus your reader.
5. Tell your readers how to get more information. Acknowledging they may need future communication assistance will encourage your reader.
6. Nicely tell your readers what to do next. Giving guidance will help lead your reader in the direction you want.
7. Follow applicable social conventions. Examples of this are letters ending with an expression of thanks, and a statement that it has been enjoyable working with the reader.

## EXAMPLE: “BAD” EMAIL MESSAGE

i did use a source, i had it in my work cited page at the end of my paper. And your right i did not flat out or clearly say i was arguing that i was your stereotypical jock but ithought throughout my paper i was pretty clear listing all the reasons as to why i was jock and pointed out how i matched many of the stereotypes that are most commonly given to jocks. Then in my conclusion i wanted to leave my reading with something to think about so i said how i felt that even though i am your stereotypical jock that does not

define who i am as a person entirely. I really only earned 50 points out of 100 for that paper? I would like to know why you feel this way?



## EXAMPLE: PROFESSIONAL EMAIL MESSAGE

Dear Sybil Priebe,

I finally understand what exactly you wanted in P4 with quotations. I guess for some reason that never clicked earlier. I'm really upset with myself for not understanding this concept earlier. Especially since I put roughly 20 hours into this project and then "BAM", it was completely lost due to a backpack thief, leaving me exactly 12 hours of a day to completely start over from scratch.

I will correct this mistake in my paper for my own satisfaction. And I assume there is no such thing as correction credit other than my own satisfaction in knowing I did my best.

I do think there is a flaw in putting quotes around material though. I feel like everything I learn, in a sense comes from someone else, or has already been done before; therefore, should quotations should be put on everything we ever do or say? I'm not trying to be a smart ass. And I understand the difference between P4 quotation requirements (now) vs. it's all been done (quote it all). I'm just giving some food for thought.

-Tony M.



### ASSIGNMENTS AND QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- Write an email to the president of our college, letting him/her know the benefits and pitfalls of attending NDSCS. At the minimum, include the following criteria:
  - Some sort of structure: intro, body, conclusion
  - Three benefits/pitfalls
  - A professional tone



# ESSAYS

This chapter is brought to you by Sybil Priebe.

"I thought I was going to write fiction, but I fell backwards into non-fiction. It started when I got locked out of two apartments in one day and I told the story to some friends, one of whom worked in the 'Village Voice' and asked me to turn it into an essay."

— Sloane Crosley

"Essays<sup>32</sup> are brief, non-fiction compositions that describe, clarify, argue, or analyze a subject. Students might encounter essay assignments in any school subject and at any level of school, from a personal experience 'vacation' essay in middle school to a complex analysis of a scientific process in graduate school."

I've written essays about all sorts of topics. I've written an essay about whether shaved heads on women are attractive, I've written an essay about Chuck Klosterman being a god and theoretically having his own religion (serious, it's even in a BOOK), and I've written essays about everything in between.

My point is that the range of topics for the genre of ESSAY is varied beyond belief. Just as the topics for any given essay in any given writing class are varied, so are the lengths, the audiences, and the formats. You might have one instructor who tells you that the five-paragraph essay is the bomb.com and then the next instructor will say, "Be creative! Ditch that five-paragraph crap!"

## How to Write an Essay<sup>33</sup>

Traditionally<sup>34</sup>, the parts of an essay consist of three parts: the introductory paragraph or introduction, the body paragraphs, and the concluding paragraph. An essay does not need to be this simple, but it is a good starting point.

- The **introductory paragraph** accomplishes three purposes: it captures the reader's interest, it suggests the importance of the essay's topic, and it ends with a thesis.
- Each **body paragraph** begins with a topic sentence. If the thesis contains multiple points or assertions, each body paragraph should support or justify them, preferably in the order the assertions originally stated in the thesis. Thus, the topic

<sup>32</sup> Fleming, Grace. "What an Essay Is and How to Write One." ThoughtCo, Sep. 18, 2019, thoughtco.com/what-is-an-essay-p2-1856929.

<sup>33</sup> "How to Write an Essay/Parts." Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project. 22 Apr 2016, 07:12 UTC. 16 May 2016, 14:59 <https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=HowtoWriteanEssay/Parts&oldid=3073150>. Licensed CC-BY-SA.

<sup>34</sup> Feel free to write nontraditional essays!

sentence for the first body paragraph will refer to the first point in the thesis sentence and the topic sentence for the second body paragraph will refer to the second point in the thesis sentence.

- Every body paragraph uses specific details, such as anecdotes, comparisons and contrasts, definitions, examples, expert opinions, explanations, facts, and statistics to support and develop the claim that its topic sentence makes.
- The **concluding paragraph** usually restates the thesis and leaves the reader something about the topic to think about. If appropriate, it may do one of the following four items: issue a call to act, give a warning or piece of advice, predict the future, or evaluate the topic at hand.



## EXAMPLE: “LAS ESPINAS DE MI ROSA” BY M<sup>35</sup>

Imagine growing up in the United States, being exposed to many ethnic groups and cultures, coming together and getting along with no issue or problem at all. Wouldn’t that be amazing? If ALL races from many cultures came together and rose above with one another? Well here in this lovely country of The United States of America – shit like that does not fly by that easily. This is a snapshot of my story of being born on this soil of hatred, racism, sexism, in a misogynistic country. I hope to share this piece with you, the reader, the audience, whomever you are – please read and inhale what I am gifting to you. Writing this piece was an intense moment for me. My former professor at Minneapolis College asked me to write a piece about my run-ins with racism and hatred from others when I shared one of my stories from my past in class one time. It took a lot of courage and strength to write this, but I do hope this does give you an eye opener that racism is real and has been alive for centuries. I hope one day we do change this and put it to death and move on from it. No good comes from evil.

The first time that I am speaking of is my first encounter with racism. This is something I did not even know existed or heard of. This was something that did scar me for a very long, long time and my innocence was taken from me. Let me break it down for you what happened, this may shock and “wow” so just be aware. I was at a park, happily playing on the playground area and sliding the down slide over and over again, swinging back and forth as the air pushed me, each sway and a sun kiss each time I swayed forward. Just being a kid – with no worries or negative thoughts in the world *but something dark always interrupts the fairytale. This, the first time.*

I was playing on the playground and this girl that was my age approached me and asked if I wanted to play with her. I said yes because I was told to be nice and kind to those who are nice and kind toward me. I remember what she looked like and what she was wearing but her name is a blur to me. She was blonde, blue eyes like the water. I swear if you stared too long you might drown in them, pale and fair skin with a pink shirt and yellow

<sup>35</sup> Las Espinas de mi Rosa by M. is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution- NonCommercial-NoDerivs 4.0 International license.  
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/legalcode>

and polka dotted shorts. She was cute and a fearless young girl. We played and played, laughing out loud like this could be the best day ever, but it turned for the worse. Her grandfather was an older man with blonde and white hair, pasty and burnt skin color, and blue eyes like the little girl's but his eyes had red veins in them. Like he hadn't slept for days and days or was mad as Hell at someone. He was mad-- at *me*. He told his granddaughter "they" had to go because it was getting dangerous. She looked around and pulled back from him. I was looking around because I got uncomfortable with what was going on. It was sad seeing this girl dropping her face, and her smile disappearing. I was focusing on her and did not realize her grandfather pushed me away from her and called me names and spat on me.

I was numb. The girl began to cry and pushed her grandfather, which woke him up, realizing how badly he fucked up. I turned around and went to my Dad with spit and sadness drenched into my pores and soul. My father looked at me and wiped the spit off me and asked what happened and who was responsible. I kept my head down and did not want to talk but I found it in me to point at the old man. My father walked toward his direction. I remember my brothers running toward them. You could hear them arguing and yelling at each other. Next thing, my father pushed the old man over the playground and had his fist up but saw me looking at him and walked away. The little girl was crying and crying, and nothing made it right. The old man started to feel guilty and ashamed as the bystanders shook their heads at him and he looked at his granddaughter. That was the first time and day racism made its presence in my life. This is something that made me scared to talk to any other race other than my own but even my race was mean to me.

I lost faith in humankind at a young age and that should have not been the case. Kids learn from us. Kids can see what is going on and comprehend a little bit. Just a little bit could hurt that child for long time – like it did me and many others who experienced this act a young age. Many of you are wondering what happened afterwards. Well, we did not call the police, and the police did not show up. We simply left and did not go out for many weeks to parks, lakes, or malls. We simply avoided any area that White people were in. I would not talk to one or even look at them in the eye. I had a fear of them. I was scared to approach any kids or adults that were White. I struggled a lot in school, but I tried my hardest to not show it at home. My father felt powerless after the event. He started to withdraw from everyone that was not family or close friends. He simply did not like to talk to anyone unless he had to.

My father told me a story about when he first to the United States in the '80s, and that was it was different. People were calmer, nicer, more welcoming, and simply did not mistreat you by the color of your skin. It just did not happen at all.

I had a hard time believing it because of my experience with it. He stated that during the Reagan Administration, he felt welcomed here. He was excited to come here and get all the opportunities that he could and provide for himself and his family back home. My father's story was very similar to my mothers' as well. She too came here during that era. They stated they never faced racism at all until my experience. I felt like there was some root of evil that was birthed hundreds of years ago but is now making its appearance

again in this era. But it starts with one man, our “amazing leader” – Mr. Number 45 himself. I refuse to mention his name. It disgusts me to my very core.

When the 2016 Presidential Elections happened, it was saddening and shocking to see all the hatred, bigotry, homophobia, and racism be birthed again. It was sad to see where America was heading. We were going to a dead end – fast. Watching all the ridiculous and irrational candidates on both sides was funny and sad at the same time. I could not believe that these individuals could have a job that gave them power. The rest of the individuals were just as foolish as he was. 45’s facial expressions would get to me. I wonder how his family could stand the sight of him. I wonder how anyone can? I always questioned what was so great about this man? There was nothing amazing about him at all. He did not seem like he was a man that could lead a company because he was bankrupt. But how did we let him be in charge of our country? I was devastated with the outcome of the elections.

When this man was running, all presentations at each state were heart wrenching to watch. I could not believe that people were there to support him! I was sad to see children and women there. This man nationally and internationally said, “GRAB THEM BY THE PUSSY.” Like who the fuck says that shit? That is so nasty and not what a president would say. It’s not their demeanor. This man has children of his own – daughters. What would make it okay for someone that is going to lead a nation to be taken seriously like that? What would make it okay for a nation to think this is funny and stand behind him? What would make it okay for someone to say bigoted and racist things where the minority population is growing? HOW? Can someone please to explain to us?

This man called Hispanics “criminals, rapists, and thugs” and said Middle- Eastern people should be banned. Everything was being reversed that the Obama administration was trying to do or get done. We are being oppressed and challenged under this administration. I felt targeted even though I am from here. I was being asked by people if I was born from here or if I had DACA because I am a minority. I was disgusted with both genders belittling me because I was shade darker than them. I was tired of being called names or of having people ask me if I enlisted to become documented; it pissed me the fuck off. I was scared to go out because of the possibility of encountering one of these mad people. I did not even want to speak my foreign language because I did not want to be targeted anymore; I was scared to take my child with me. I was sad that she came in the era where racism comes in all ages and shades. I was scared of it. I did not want her to be exposed to it while being out in public with me. I mean who would? Who would want to have kids in this time? It is not a time to be alive. It is not a time where progress is being made. It is not. I never felt so ashamed to be in the skin color that I am until I came to this college. I always felt so targeted before I came here. This school was a safe haven for me. Like it probably was for many others. I love everything about being a minority. Being Latina. I am a rose in the making and will establish my roots deep in this world. For those of my own to carry it on.

45 will never silence me. He pushes me to be the hardest, strongest, and ambitious Latina. I promised my daughter that I will not let this man stereotype us and oppress us. I

will rise above it all. The stereotypes, the statistics, and those who are believing that we are just “greasers that take everyone’s jobs,” – that was something that I could not stand hearing because no one was taking anyone’s job. My people would work the shit jobs that require hard work and long days. I remember my parents working these jobs before they got better jobs that they have now. When you go on the streets of the Twin Cities and the surrounding suburbs of these cities, you see **mainly** Caucasian men or women on these streets begging for money instead of a job. This is a fact that we never address at all, but we can acknowledge Hispanics coming into this country “stealing jobs and doing crime” here on the news, or wherever else. I never felt we were stealing jobs or doing crime – *some of us do but not all of us do*. Therefore, I feel we should not be stereotyped by these stigmas at all. It is rude and arrogant to do.

I always worked hard since I was sixteen-years-old because I got tired of depending on my hard-working parents, and I wanted to see what it was like to work and go make my own money. When I was a junior in high school, you think of the future a lot because there’s pressure in America to know what you want to do with yourself by the start and end of your senior year. At the beginning of senior year, there was a staff waiting at this board where all seniors are supposed to go and write down where they were going after high school. I did not have anything until I was the last to put on there that I was going to the military. Oh yes, I went off to the military – how chaotic and insane of me, right? I legit thought that I was going to be a badass and saving this country from our “enemies” overseas but in reality, our enemies are on this land of ours. Do not get me wrong, it was an amazing experience because I learned about myself a lot and made a new family but there were some low and ugly parts of this world that I wish did not exist.

Let me fast forward you to the day that I met my new leader; he was pretty cool at first and seemed like he was going to care for me but as the years went on and on, he became more of a prick. An asshole. Of course, you cannot say a thing to your superiors because you are “*supposed*” to show respect to them, however, I do think you should give respect when it is earned. I mean isn’t that how things should be? But as the 2016 Presidential Elections came around, I did see a whole new side to this individual that I did not like at all. I started to not like going there; I felt uncomfortable there. The family that I did make had a different side to them that I thought would never exist. I did not like this reality of these people as they would state their opinions of 45’s speeches and how they *did* agree with him. I started to hear “I am not trying to offend you but.....” That saying would irk and make my blood boil quickly. Hearing that did make me change my ways and views on those that would say and make excuses about 45’s speeches, talks, and policies. Trust me-- seeing and hearing the way these people would talk about him like he was some God was disturbing. *“He really cares about the people.”* Oh yeah? What people? Here is the best one yet, *“he is going to take care of the military and refund us a lot of money. He is going to give us a raise and better bonuses.”* I know what you are feeling, you just want to say “wow” or just want to laugh. Trust me, I laughed so hard in these people’s faces. This was the nature that I was exposed to after this man was running for president and became president. I don’t even acknowledge him as the president because that is something that he is *far* away from. A president is supposed to be a leader, a rational person, and someone who cares for those that help and build more opportunities in their homeland.

The lovely individual that we are stuck with, is not; this man is filled with animosity, hatred, racism, and bigotry.

If I could go back and not enlist, I probably would if I knew what the future was going to hold. I wanted to go all out and prove to those that I could become someone, and that, I still am doing. Do not get me wrong. I did meet some amazing individuals along this process, and it did teach me a lot about myself in this journey.

Another path of this journey of being exposed to racism happened recently at Target. Imagine joking and laughing in Spanish and turning to hear someone say, "why can't people learn the language here?" Yes, that did happen to me. I still remember the old hag that said that to me. I was pretty disgusted and ashamed of the human race. I tell ya, I wanted to punch life and soul out of that waste of a life human being. A mother who had 3 kids with her watching this. They looked embarrassed and ashamed that their own birth giver said those wrenching words as they knew their mother fucked up at that moment right there. My mother, she is pretty old school and does not take shit from ANYONE. She was enraged and went to the lady and yelled at her where another elder woman, who witnessed this, stepped in and defended my mother. The woman told her she should be ashamed in herself as she is teaching her children how to hate and that is not good. The elder woman did handle this case pretty classy you should say. I would have never thought to hear someone step in and show someone their true ugly colors. As the older woman was defending my mother, the offender's husband came around the corner. He was confused and asked why his wife was being attacked. The older woman scolded him about his wife and the man looked embarrassed and grabbed the kids and left the store. Others looked at her in disgust as she just stood there in shame. The store manager came around the corner and asked her to leave. The lady asked and pleaded to finish her shopping and that she would not bother others; the manager refused and proceeded to tell her to leave and that they did not accept that type of behavior. The lady started to cry, stated that she was sorry, and left as we shook our heads at her. We hugged the old lady and thanked her for helping us out.

I felt so powerless in that moment. That my daughter was there to witness this animosity. I was pretty silent and quiet after that event. I was very serious. I did little communication with my mother afterwards. My mother knew I was so upset and did not want to talk. I had no intentions anyway. I had no reason why I needed to speak anymore. I was scared to be scorned by another person for embracing my first language by using it. I feel like I'm seeing this happen everywhere else. Others feel as scared as I do to embrace who I am. Where I come from, I am not 100% American to the White culture. I wonder to myself, what is an American? Because when you think of it, America belongs to the Natives and Mexicans before the colonizers took it from them.

This is just a piece of my story to you. I hope you take these small stories and learn from them. Learn to love your neighbor and appreciate them for who they are. This does go a long way as well. Being evil and filled with hatred does not benefit you in the long run. I learned a lot in these obstacles that I came across and overcame. I became very resilient

and open to those around me. Whether you are Black, Asian, White, etc. I appreciate you all and I hope you learn to spread love and good from one and another. I hope one day all groups will be able to reunite and become as one and will rise together.



**ASSIGNMENT OPTIONS:**

1. PURPLE SQUIRREL. Are you a purple squirrel? This term is being used to describe students who are able to do the technical skills of a job while utilizing soft skills like written and verbal communication, critical thinking and problem solving, customer service, conflict resolution, etc. Write a 500+ essay broken down into five paragraphs. The introductory paragraph should include a description of the job you'll attempt to acquire when you graduate from college. Each of the three body paragraphs should describe the skill you have (whether it's a technical skill or soft skill) or want to have when you enter the job force. Be specific and give evidence/examples. This question should be answered in your fifth paragraph, the conclusion: What sets you apart from other people who want that job?
2. CHANGE: What would you change about yourself? It's not just looks or circumstances, but who you are inside. Are there habits you want to break, hobbies you'd like to take up, or life changes you want to make? Introduce the person who you would like to be in the future.
3. FEAR. What do you fear? Fear is a powerful motivator, as are love and duty. Your fears shape parts of your life. Do you fear concrete things, such as spiders or public speaking? Do you fear abstract ideas, such as being alone or growing old? Explain what you fear and how that has affected your life.
4. If you were disabled how would your life be changed? Explain at least three different ways your life would be different.
5. How do you think the community you live in can benefit from your education when you graduate from this college? Explain three different ways your community could be changed.
6. How would your life be different had you been born into a different ethnicity/race/gender? Explain three different ways your life would be altered.
7. What are five qualities of a horrible relationship or friendship?



# LETTERS

This chapter is brought to you by Sybil Priebe.

## Paper Means More Than an Email.

I've written and sent my fair share of letters. Because I think paper means more than an email. It takes extra time to write up a letter and mail the sucker off. Businesses are aware of this.

### **LET ME TELL YOU A STORY:**

I have a Volkswagen, so I take it to a certain shop that specializes in imports. A few years back, they told me I needed a new oil pan because threads had come out of my current one, causing it to leak. I frowned and wondered to myself how that could happen when I hadn't touched the oil pan. Never. The only person who could've caused threads to come out would be someone who would've over-torqued it, right? A technician. So, I paid the \$300 for a new pan and when I got home, I dug through my past service records. I discovered that a service technician wrote in a past report that he/she had over-torqued my oil pan. Ugh! I copied off that report, made three copies of my letter, and sent it all to their respective places – the service place itself, Volkswagen Customer Service, and – why not – Volkswagen Headquarters. Days later, I got a few phone calls, I received a handful of apologies, and a check for \$300 showed up in my mailbox shortly after.

Anyone who tells you that sending letters doesn't do anything is full of bunk.

### **LET ME TELL YOU ANOTHER STORY:**

When my sister was in high school and trying to get her first job, she interviewed at a local grocery store. She interviewed horribly because it was her first time, so after telling this story at a family gathering, our uncle suggested that she send a Thank You letter. She did. She explained her nervousness, she thanked him for the experience, and... yes, she got a call back! They offered her a part-time gig!

Letters vary in motivation and in their messages. Some letters are written without the need for a response, some are written with a simple message of "Hi," and some letters are harsh and are meant to be that way.

## The Difference Between Letters

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The main thing that differentiates a business letter from other letters is that a business letter is a legal document. The writer can be held liable for anything written in the letter. For example, if it is stated that a project will be completed by a certain date in a business letter, the project legally must be completed by that date. However, if the project can't be completed by that date, another letter can be written stating that the project is behind schedule and why. For this reason, business letters must be written differently than letters used for personal use.

A business letter is used primarily to request or provide information, to relate a deal, to bring or continue conversation, and/or to discuss prior negotiations. A business letter can be classified as private; however, it is typically not circulated to others, but rather meant for the eyes of the participants involved. Therefore, a business letter needs to be clear, focused, and to the point. When writing a business letter, the author should avoid interjecting personal stories.

## Business Letters<sup>36</sup>

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Business letters are written messages to a person or group within a professional setting. Business letters are used when the writer would like to be formal and professional. Letters may vary in length depending on the writer's objective, purpose, and message of the letter. The letter can address anyone including, but not limited to: clients and customers, managers, agencies, suppliers, and other business personnel or organizations. It is important to remember that any business letter is a legal document between the interested parties. These documents can be held for up to seven years, so it is important that all information is honest and legitimate.

## Formatting Your Letters

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- Use single spacing. There is no need to double space a business letter.
- Use a simple format with font that is easy to read.
- Leave a blank line between each paragraph. This makes it easier to follow the changes of topics within the letter.

## THE INTRODUCTION

- This paragraph should introduce why you are writing the letter and sum up the key points in the following paragraphs.
- Include a statement that shows you are knowledgeable of the audience to which your letter is directed.

## THE BODY

- Provide background or history regarding the purpose of the letter.
- Talk about key points you are making.

<sup>36</sup> "Professional and Technical Writing/Business Communications/Letters." *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. 26 Mar 2016, 21:00 UTC. 11 May 2016, 18:31  
<<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=ProfessionalandTechnicalWriting/BusinessCommunications/Letters&oldid=3066458>>.

- Include a justification of the importance of the main points.
- List any important dates, discussions, and conversations that are relevant.
- Ask questions, if necessary.
- A business letter needs to be concise and clear. Being too wordy is the biggest downfall in this form of writing. Keep sentences short and precise.
- Organize the letter from most important subjects to least.
- The content of the letter should be persuasive and usable.
- The tone of the letter should be formal and professional.

## CONCLUSION

- Summarize the main points of the letter.
- Restate the problem and resolution if pertinent.
- Include deadlines.
- Provide contact information (Email, Phone Number, Fax, Etc...).

## CLOSING SALUTATION

Always close a letter. 'Sincerely' would be the safest way to close out a business letter. On a typed business letter, following the closing, you should leave a space to sign your name with a pen. This will allow for a more personal touch on an otherwise bland letter. This is the only handwriting on the paper so make sure the signature is clear. Below this personal signature should be your typed first and last name to allow for easy reading. After this you can include anything else that the reader may need to know. This could include anything from job title, identification, a notation that there are copies attached at the bottom of the document, or other contact information, such as e-mail address or business phone number.

A few other general ending salutations deemed professional include:

- Kind regards,
- Respectfully,
- Best,

## Tips on Writing Letters

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- Address the letter to a specific person whenever possible, and not the company so it does not get discarded.
- Use company letterhead to make the document more professional, if the document is related to company affairs.
- Collect all the information you will need for your letter and jot down the basic order in which you plan to cover this information. Organize your material in the most persuasive order.



## EXAMPLE: RECOMMENDATION LETTER

Mildred Johnson Library  
NDSCS  
701-555-2555

June 17, 2011

Human Resources  
Some Company  
Hippie Town, ND 55000

Re: Ethel Aardvark Letter of Recommendation

As a staff member at North Dakota State College of Science, I have had the opportunity during the last few years to work with Ethel Aardvark. She is applying for tenure status, and I am honored to serve as a letter of recommendation.

Ethel certainly has a passion for teaching, and it is this passion that fuels some of her key attributes. She is willing to absorb various aspects of a topic; she will listen, draw out comments/insight from group members and contemplate the information at hand. Ethel then takes it to the next level, where she will dig a bit deeper into the topic to solidify her own perspective. She does not just take something at face value but has that researcher-instinct to "dig a bit deeper."

Ethel is NOT a procrastinator, which I personally feel is a critical trait when tackling graduate school. During break, Ethel can be found working ahead on course improvements because she likes to get things done and done right. She puts pride into her work and will give the effort required to complete a quality project.

She is motivated in his tenure pursuit and will certainly succeed. NDSCS would be fortunate to have her as a tenured faculty member. If you have any other questions, please contact me.

Sincerely,  
Miss Tough Gal, Librarian



## EXAMPLE: COVER LETTER

Alisa Priebe  
555 70th Avenue West, #555  
Fargo, ND 58555

January 30, 2013

Human Resources  
c/o Flint Communications  
101 North 10th Street  
Suite 300  
Fargo, ND 58107

Dear Mr. Person:

I am writing to you to apply for the open position of Production Artist. I am an excellent candidate; I have strong communication skills, I'm a quick learner, and I have a fun, creative personality.

I earned a Bachelor of Arts degree in English from North Dakota State University. I chose this educational path because I am a strong communicator and I enjoy expressing myself. My writing abilities are exceptional; while my specialty is creative writing, I excel at technical writing as well. Not only did my education allow me to sharpen these skills, but my employment experience played a large part as well.

For example, at *Integreon*, a company which provides document support services to law firms and other corporations, I spent nearly three years corresponding with clients (mostly attorneys and legal secretaries) via email and telephone. Through these exchanges, I would follow a particular process: receive request to format, edit, or proofread a legal document; delegate the request to the appropriate coworker; review said request; and, return the request by the requestor's preferred timeline. I learned how to understand their needs and complete their requests accordingly.

While polishing my communication abilities, I was fortunate to become skilled at many different types of software. The training team at *Integreon* did an amazing job with its employees. Most training courses were required while others were available to expand your computer skills and complete a wider range of project requests. At every job since my time at *Integreon*, I have had fellow employees approach me and tell me that my computer and software skills are impressive. It is a true testament to both their training and my ability to learn quickly.

With many types of software, I have been able to create and design different documents. At *Warner and Company Insurance*, I created a recipe booklet of potluck favorites for the employees. At *Integreon*, I created the first team-specific newsletter which included

images, quotes, short stories, and tips and tricks. At *Vogel Law Firm*, I acted as Co-Captain for the United Way drive and created certificates for prizes and “kudos” cards for employee appreciation.

In these experiences, I learned to communicate with clients to meet their needs, expand my computer knowledge and skills, and use my ability to create beautiful documents for many purposes. Please refer to my resume for further information. Thank you for your time and consideration. I look forward to hearing from you about how I can become an asset to your company.

Very truly yours,  
Alisa Priebe



## **EXAMPLE: COMPLAINT LETTER**

Sybil Priebe  
555 10th Ave North  
Wahpeton, ND 58075

February 3, 2016

Sanford Health  
801 Broadway N  
P.O. Box 2010  
Fargo, ND 58122-0001

Dear Sanford Health,

I recently signed up and logged into the MySanfordChart portal, and, at first, I was pleasantly surprised at how nice it was to have access to my test results, schedule an appointment, and message my doctors. Unfortunately, recently, I realized that the first item listed under “My Medical Record” isn’t Test Results or a Health Summary... no, it’s my supposed BMI.

I am EXTREMELY offended by this, not only because listing it first means – somehow – that it’s the most important, but that under that tab, I’m supposed to have goals to remedy this? What? Excuse me!? Let me tell you why this offends me so much: The BMI chart is archaic; rumor has it that pharmaceutical companies created it in order to prescribe patients drugs for their “obesity.” Even if it wasn’t archaic and built by drug companies, the BMI chart in no way determines health because it doesn’t take into account muscle mass.

Secondly, health is more than weight. There's even recent movement about the whole idea: the HAES movement = Health at Every Size. Eating less, restricting, leads to binging. Focusing a patient, constantly, on their size or weight leads to major mental issues – obsessing over food and exercise. That's not healthy. Diets don't work; studies show that only 5% of people can keep the weight off beyond the 5-year mark.

Here are my two solutions: A) Remove any mention of the BMI chart from the MySanfordChart unless a patient has high blood pressure, diabetes, etc. And even then, don't place it at the top of the "My Medical Record" area. Don't let them focus on that. They'll be happier that way. B) If you can't remove the BMI crap, then at least remove it from the top **ESPECIALLY** for patients like myself who don't have any issues related to "obesity."

Since I want to end on a positive note, let me say how much I adore the two doctors who've recently taken care of me: X in Wahpeton and Y in Fargo. They are both so personable and quick to relay information.

Thank you for reading, and I hope to hear from you soon regarding MySanfordChart.

Sincerely,  
Sybil Priebe



## **EXAMPLE: THANK YOU LETTER**

Dear Dr. Julie Jackson:

Thank you so much for the opportunity to sit down with you and Dr. Bob to discuss the Lab Assistantship at Harvard. I am grateful to be considered for the position. I think I will be an asset to your department, especially given my experience with dissecting frogs.

I was nice to chat with you about how much you adore the TV show *Big Brother*, and I really appreciate the natural lighting that you have all added to the employee lounge; I'm sure it will encourage people to hang out a while longer, thus increasing morale.

I look forward to hearing from you.

Sincerely,  
Zelda Smith



**ASSIGNMENTS AND QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

- Write a complaint letter or complimentary letter to a company of your choice. At the minimum, include the following criteria:
  - Structure: opening, body, closing/signature
  - Three reasons - with evidence - as to why you're writing
  - A professional tone



# MANIFESTOS

## How to Write a Manifesto

This guide was<sup>37</sup> co-authored by Megan Morgan, PhD; Updated: March 29, 2019

A manifesto is a document wherein a person, government, or organization outlines their intentions, motivations, and/or views. These texts ask and attempt to answer the question: What do I believe? The Declaration of Independence is a form of manifesto. There are artistic manifestos, philosophical manifestos, corporate manifestos, personal manifestos, and political manifestos. A religious manifesto is referred to as “a creed”. The word manifesto comes from Latin, and it connotes something which is very clear and conspicuous. While the length and content of a manifesto varies between each one, any well-composed manifesto will not only present clear attack on a worldview, but also a practical means to manifest goals. When writing a manifesto, you should keep all this in mind.

## Preparing to Write Your Manifesto

Start with a meaningful question. This is a way to help you form inspiring ideas. These meaningful questions can give you focus. You may wish to ask more than one, or to focus on topics surrounding a particular question. Some examples of meaningful questions include:

- What do you want your legacy (as an individual, group or organization) to be?
- What gives your life purpose and meaning?
- What types of actions are aligned with your values?
- How do you want to show up in the world?
- What do you want to accomplish in your life?
- What are you willing to do to achieve those accomplishments?

Think about your audience. To whom are you writing the manifesto? Will your work be read by your colleagues, the general public, or clients? This may change how you choose to use language. A theological manifesto might have a lot of academic terminology if your audience is academics, but it might use very plain speech if it is directed at a wider audience.

<sup>37</sup> Found at wikiHow; wikiHow uses the Creative Commons. The Creative Commons is a non-profit organization that is devoted to expanding creative work for others to build upon and legally share. Under an Attribution-Noncommercial-Share Alike 3.0 Creative Commons License, wikiHow's text content is free to modify, republish and share.

Brainstorm your ideas. When you're first starting out, don't feel like you have to know exactly what you're going to say. Just write down your ideas in little brainstorming sessions. There are lots of ways to go about brainstorming. Choose one which suits you best, and which enables you to most freely jot down your ideas. The key is not to criticize, but to open yourself up to ideas.

- Thought webs can help you to connect many different ideas. Make sure you are adding as many connected details as you can. This will also help you to build an outline.
- Lists are a great way to get a lot of ideas down quickly. Make a list for each section of your manifesto, and to title them appropriately.
- Stream of consciousness writing can help you to get your brain working on the topic. By writing whatever comes to mind, and not worrying about the punctuation and grammar conventions, you can feel free to express important concepts. Give yourself a time limit and see how much you can jot down in that time.

Research. By researching your topic, you will strengthen your ideas. Provide yourself with sources to back up your argument. Also, survey other manifestos to see if anyone has written something similar which can provide you with models.

- Read other manifestos on a similar topic for useful tools and arguments. Famous manifestos include: *The Communist Manifesto* by Karl Marx, "I Have a Dream" by Martin Luther King, or John F Kennedy's "Man on the Moon."
- Strengthen your arguments by reading the opponents of your views online. Take a class if you have the time and the money.
- Familiarize yourself with theory surrounding your topic. Go to your local library or bookstore and ask a librarian or clerk to help you find similar writers.

Write an outline. Once you have enough ideas that you see a unifying point, make an outline. This will help you to arrange your ideas once you write. Put them into a logical order. Make sure to include an introduction and a conclusion in your outline. You don't need to write full sentences here. This is a point where you're just trying to figure out the flow of your writing.

- Use Roman numerals to number the major sections.
- Use uppercase letters to list details about the major sections.
- Use Arabic numerals (1,2,3) to give specifics or examples about the details of your major sections.

## Writing the Manifesto

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Identify yourself and your aims. This might include your personal beliefs, your worldview, and your experiences that directly inform your manifesto. By introducing yourself, your readers will have a better sense of your life course.

- Make sure that you share life details related to your ideas.
- Relate important experiences from work, school, or life that help readers see you as an authority.

- Mentioning your degree in art might be useful in an artist's manifesto, just as civil service would be worth mentioning in a political manifesto.

Include a thesis. There should be some unifying point to your manifesto. This is delivered in your introduction. It will be a compelling argument, connecting all your ideas together. Make sure you take time to craft a well-written thesis statement.

Explain your precepts in the introduction. A precept is an actionable ideal, an instruction meant to regulate behavior or thought. Tell your readers a little about what ideals they're going to read about, before they go into it. You don't want to say everything, just a little bit, so that readers can engage with your manifesto's larger picture. Give yourself at least one sentence to mention the main points of your manifesto.

- You can use bullet points to list your precepts.
- Follow a precept up with a sentence explanation if you need clarity but save most of your explaining for the body paragraphs. If it isn't merely presenting the precept, don't put it in the introduction.

Give a plan for action. Don't just provide your ideas. Offer a direction for change. Manifestos are revolutionary by nature. Though not all revolutions are equal in scale, all share in this desire for change.

- Focus on verbs to evoke a sense of action. Avoid verbs like "am/is/are", "have/has" and other passive constructions. For example: "Every artist manifests Art itself," instead of "Every artist is Art itself."
- Use concrete details. Avoid words like "thing" and "something", as these are not specific. For example: "Something in our political system disturbs me" becomes "Negligence in our political system disturbs me."
- Take a current problem and re-imagine it changed through your ideology.

Elaborate on your ideas individually. Even for a short manifesto, you will want to make sure you devote a section to each of your main points. This will make your points more concrete for readers. It will also help to make sure you address any questions your readers might have.

- Give each precept its own paragraph.
- For longer sections, use a subheading.

Be concise. A well written manifesto is crisp and sharp. The focus is clear and there is exactness in the intention. Its meaning and purpose are unmistakable. By keeping your manifesto concise, you avoid getting off-topic.

Make sure to have a conclusion. This way you can remind your readers about what they've read and the main point of your manifesto. The conclusion will help give readers a sense of closure. Make sure to restate your thesis at some point during your conclusion.

## FAQ

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What's the key difference between a mission statement and a manifesto?

A manifesto is a declaration of someone's intentions, motives or ideas. It usually proposes some changes that the group or individual thinks should be made to the current system of government. A mission statement is what a company sets itself as its intended goal.



## **EXAMPLE: “I HAVE A DREAM” BY MARTIN LUTHER KING JR.<sup>38</sup>**

I am happy to join with you today in what will go down in history as the greatest demonstration for freedom in the history of our nation.

Five score years ago, a great American, in whose symbolic shadow we stand today, signed the Emancipation Proclamation. This momentous decree came as a great beacon light of hope to millions of Negro slaves who had been seared in the flames of withering injustice. It came as a joyous daybreak to end the long night of their captivity.

But one hundred years later, the Negro still is not free. One hundred years later, the life of the Negro is still sadly crippled by the manacles of segregation and the chains of discrimination. One hundred years later, the Negro lives on a lonely island of poverty in the midst of a vast ocean of material prosperity. One hundred years later, the Negro is still languished in the corners of American society and finds himself an exile in his own land. And so, we've come here today to dramatize a shameful condition.

In a sense we've come to our nation's capital to cash a check. When the architects of our republic wrote the magnificent words of the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence, they were signing a promissory note to which every American was to fall heir. This note was a promise that all men, yes, black men as well as white men, would be guaranteed the "unalienable Rights" of "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness." It is obvious today that America has defaulted on this promissory note, insofar as her citizens of color are concerned. Instead of honoring this sacred obligation, America has given the Negro people a bad check, a check which has come back marked "insufficient funds." But we refuse to believe that the bank of justice is bankrupt. We refuse to believe that there are insufficient funds in the great vaults of opportunity of this nation. And so, we've come to cash this check, a check that will give us upon demand the riches of freedom and the security of justice.

We have also come to this hallowed spot to remind America of the fierce urgency of Now. This is no time to engage in the luxury of cooling off or to take the tranquilizing drug of gradualism. Now is the time to make real the promises of democracy. Now is the time to rise from the dark and desolate valley of segregation to the sunlit path of racial justice. Now is the time to lift our nation from the quicksands of racial injustice to the solid rock of brotherhood. Now is the time to make justice a reality for all of God's children.

<sup>38</sup> For audio of this speech, go to this web site: <https://www.americanrhetoric.com/speeches/mlkihadream.htm>

It would be fatal for the nation to overlook the urgency of the moment. This sweltering summer of the Negro's legitimate discontent will not pass until there is an invigorating autumn of freedom and equality. Nineteen sixty-three is not an end, but a beginning. And those who hope that the Negro needed to blow off steam and will now be content will have a rude awakening if the nation returns to business as usual. And there will be neither rest nor tranquility in America until the Negro is granted his citizenship rights. The whirlwinds of revolt will continue to shake the foundations of our nation until the bright day of justice emerges.

But there is something that I must say to my people, who stand on the warm threshold which leads into the palace of justice: In the process of gaining our rightful place, we must not be guilty of wrongful deeds. Let us not seek to satisfy our thirst for freedom by drinking from the cup of bitterness and hatred. We must forever conduct our struggle on the high plane of dignity and discipline. We must not allow our creative protest to degenerate into physical violence. Again, and again, we must rise to the majestic heights of meeting physical force with soul force.

The marvelous new militancy which has engulfed the Negro community must not lead us to a distrust of all white people, for many of our white brothers, as evidenced by their presence here today, have come to realize that their destiny is tied up with our destiny. And they have come to realize that their freedom is inextricably bound to our freedom. We cannot walk alone.

And as we walk, we must make the pledge that we shall always march ahead. We cannot turn back.

There are those who are asking the devotees of civil rights, "When will you be satisfied?" We can never be satisfied as long as the Negro is the victim of the unspeakable horrors of police brutality. We can never be satisfied as long as our bodies, heavy with the fatigue of travel, cannot gain lodging in the motels of the highways and the hotels of the cities. We cannot be satisfied as long as the negro's basic mobility is from a smaller ghetto to a larger one. We can never be satisfied as long as our children are stripped of their self-hood and robbed of their dignity by signs stating: "For Whites Only." We cannot be satisfied as long as a Negro in Mississippi cannot vote and a Negro in New York believes he has nothing for which to vote. No, no, we are not satisfied, and we will not be satisfied until "justice rolls down like waters, and righteousness like a mighty stream."

I am not unmindful that some of you have come here out of great trials and tribulations. Some of you have come fresh from narrow jail cells. And some of you have come from areas where your quest -- quest for freedom left you battered by the storms of persecution and staggered by the winds of police brutality. You have been the veterans of creative suffering. Continue to work with the faith that unearned suffering is redemptive. Go back to Mississippi, go back to Alabama, go back to South Carolina, go back to Georgia, go back to Louisiana, go back to the slums and ghettos of our northern cities, knowing that somehow this situation can and will be changed.

Let us not wallow in the valley of despair, I say to you today, my friends.

And so even though we face the difficulties of today and tomorrow, I still have a dream. It is a dream deeply rooted in the American dream.

I have a dream that one day this nation will rise up and live out the true meaning of its creed: "We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal."

I have a dream that one day on the red hills of Georgia, the sons of former slaves and the

sons of former slave owners will be able to sit down together at the table of brotherhood. I have a dream that one day even the state of Mississippi, a state sweltering with the heat of injustice, sweltering with the heat of oppression, will be transformed into an oasis of freedom and justice.

I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by the color of their skin but by the content of their character.

I have a *dream* today!

I have a dream that one day, down in Alabama, with its vicious racists, with its governor having his lips dripping with the words of "interposition" and "nullification" -- one day right there in Alabama little black boys and black girls will be able to join hands with little white boys and white girls as sisters and brothers.

I have a *dream* today!

I have a dream that one day every valley shall be exalted, and every hill and mountain shall be made low, the rough places will be made plain, and the crooked places will be made straight; "and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed and all flesh shall see it together."

This is our hope, and this is the faith that I go back to the South with.

With this faith, we will be able to hew out of the mountain of despair a stone of hope.

With this faith, we will be able to transform the jangling discords of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood. With this faith, we will be able to work together, to pray together, to struggle together, to go to jail together, to stand up for freedom together, knowing that we will be free one day.

And this will be the day -- this will be the day when all of God's children will be able to sing with new meaning:

*My country 'tis of thee, sweet land of liberty, of thee I sing. Land where my fathers died, land of the Pilgrim's pride, From every mountainside, let freedom ring!*

And if America is to be a great nation, this must become true.

And so, let freedom ring from the prodigious hilltops of New Hampshire.

Let freedom ring from the mighty mountains of New York.

Let freedom ring from the heightening Alleghenies of Pennsylvania.

Let freedom ring from the snow-capped Rockies of Colorado.

Let freedom ring from the curvaceous slopes of California.

But not only that:

Let freedom ring from Stone Mountain of Georgia.

Let freedom ring from Lookout Mountain of Tennessee.

Let freedom ring from every hill and molehill of Mississippi.

From every mountainside, let freedom ring.

And when this happens, and when we allow freedom ring, when we let it ring from every village and every hamlet, from every state and every city, we will be able to speed up that day when *all* of God's children, black men and white men, Jews and Gentiles, Protestants and Catholics, will be able to join hands and sing in the words of the old Negro spiritual: *Free at last! Free at last!*

*Thank God Almighty, we are free at last!*



**ASSIGNMENTS AND QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

- Write up your very own manifesto. At the minimum, include the following criteria:
  - Some sort of structure (intro, body, conclusion)
  - Focus/thesis
  - Three precepts with details
  - Passionate/persuasive language



# MEMOIRS

This chapter is brought to you by Sybil Priebe and edited parts of this Wikibook<sup>39</sup>.

## You Are Now About to Know More About Memoirs Than Oprah. Yes, You Read That Correctly.

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In 2006, James Frey wrote a memoir about parts of his life when he was under the influence of drugs called *A Million Little Pieces*, and after Oprah had him on her show to discuss the book – it was featured in her popular book club, of course – she was told that he “lied” about certain parts. Well, he didn’t lie. Memoirs contain what we remember. What we remember isn’t always “fact.” What I always say is that if you have all of your family members report what happened at a family gathering – like a birthday party or Christmas – whose report would be correct? No one’s! That’s what memoir is. It’s still nonfiction because it’s what the person remembers, but it’s not false on purpose. If I remember that my sister responded to me in a snotty way one day and my other sister didn’t think so, no one is correct. It’s just my memory versus hers.

Now, typically, memoirs encompass just a chunk of someone’s life, like when James Frey wrote about his drug years, but sometimes, some famous person in their 70s (or older) will write his/her memoir. No matter what, it’s simply what they remember, and I suppose if someone’s on drugs or has an awful memory, the stories could appear to be false. But they aren’t. That’s why they say, “life is stranger than fiction.”

Memoirs are part of the nonfiction category of literature; they contain a lot of description and detail, and they are typically very, very personal in content.

## The Bits and Pieces of Memoir

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Memoir<sup>40</sup> is a specific type of narrative. It is autobiographical in nature, but it is not meant to be as comprehensive as biography (which tells the entire life story of a person). Instead, a memoir is usually only a specific “slice” of one’s life. The time span within a memoir is thus frequently limited to a single memorable event or moment, though it can also be used to tell about a longer series of events that make up a particular period of one’s life (as in Cameron Crowe’s film memoir *Almost Famous*). It is narrative in

<sup>39</sup> “Basic Writing/Print version.” Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project. 9 Sep 2008, 16:02 UTC. 11 May 2016, 16:53 <<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=BasicWriting/Printversion&oldid=1273791>>. Licensed CC-BY-SA.

<sup>40</sup> “Basic Writing/Print version.” Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project. 9 Sep 2008, 16:02 UTC. 11 May 2016, 16:53 <<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=BasicWriting/Printversion&oldid=1273791>>. Licensed CC-BY-SA.

structure, usually describing people and events that ultimately focuses on the emotional significance of the story to the one telling it. Generally, this emotional significance is the result of a resolution from the conflict within the story. Though a memoir is the retelling of a true account, it is not usually regarded as being completely true. After all, no one can faithfully recall every detail or bit of dialogue from an event that took place many years ago. Consequently, some creative license is granted by the reader to the memoirist recounting, say, a significant moment or events from his childhood some thirty years, or more, earlier. (However, the memoirist who assumes too much creative license without disclosing that fact is vulnerable to censure and public ridicule if his deception is found out, as what happened with James Frey and his memoir, *A Million Little Pieces*.)

Furthermore, names of people and places are often changed in a memoir to protect those who were either directly or indirectly involved in the lives and/or event(s) being described.



### **EXAMPLE: “FOLLOWING MY FATHER’S COURAGE” BY BETTY YANG<sup>41</sup>**

Some of my friends describe the North side as the ghetto. Peers from college say it is extremely dangerous. I called it home for most of my life. The faint smell of grilling as I drove through the streets was a reminder that it was getting warmer out. In the summer, there were kids out throwing balls in the streets. Corner stores and gas stations were frequently busy. As a Hmong daughter, raised in a traditional home on the North side of Minneapolis, there were expectations of me since I was young. I had to learn the basics of cooking a meal, making sure there was rice, and doing well in school. I had to clean, do laundry, and help babysit as needed. It was an expectation for me to help my parents as much as I could. The decision to move in with my significant other was not an easy one as it took me a year to come to the conclusion. However, the more I did of what I wanted, the happier I felt.

Growing up, my dad had to learn how to hunt, how to farm, how to survive during a war, and how to provide for his family. He was reliable and smart. He was the oldest and the only son for most of his life. He has a younger sister and many years later, he has a half-sister and a half-brother.

When the war was ending and the American soldiers were leaving, Hmong people were completing forms and hoping to earn a spot to come to the U.S. It was a dark and gloomy day. The voices in the living area of the home became louder. My grandfather refused to go. “There are giants in the land you are moving to! You will get eaten if you move!” My dad made his decision to immigrate to the U.S. He is determined to live his life in a promising land, far away from the one he knew.



<sup>41</sup> Following my Father’s Courage by Betty Yang is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivs 4.0 International license. <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/legalcode>

My dad would share stories about how poor he was as a child. He would tell us how far he had to walk just to go to school. It was so bizarre I almost don't believe it. He would have to wake up and prepare three hours ahead before his journey to school every morning.

In the dark, before the bright yellow sun rises, my dad would wake up at the crack of dawn. The loud "cock-a-doodle-doo" from outside meant it was time to start the day. There were no alarm clocks and the family's rooster was the only reliable alarm.

In the small corner of the house made of bamboo and hay, would be a small shadow of a young boy, turning pages of his one and only notebook he owned. My dad was always studious, trying as hard as he could to be ahead of his classmates. Although the rooster was the only other living creature up, there was no light to read or to study math by. My dad refused to be defeated by the lack of resources. It would have been easier for him to sleep in and wait until the sun rose for him to have light to study. Instead, my dad would gather sticks and logs of wood to start a little fire. He used the ashes from the fire as his light to study.

My father grew up with only one sister. She was about two or three years younger than him. While he was up studying, she was sleeping. While my father attended school, she stayed behind with my grandmother to farm and to feed the animals. They had three large plots of land to harvest fruits, vegetables, and rice.

When the sun started to rise and the temperature started to increase, it was time to start the long walk of five miles to school. Other children in the neighborhood followed one another to the same destination. The staggered group of young students traveled on the brown, dirt roads without any shoes, hoping they didn't step on anything that could cause infection.

There were days when he was late, and he would know what was coming once he gets to school – punishment. In front of his class, his teacher would make him kneel while holding a large rock in each hand. His hands had to remain at a 180-degree angle and if his arms fell below it, his teacher would use a long stick to hit the arm that was falling. The punishment was purposely done during class, as a way to publicly humiliate students who were late, who were caught cheating, or who misbehaved.

An hour later, he would wipe the dust off his black uniform pants and join his class. The day would go on as if he was never punished because students were frequently punished. Students were publicly disciplined so they would become more motivated to do better and to be more studious. There were not many options for the youth in the villages. They often had to pick between going to school or helping the family farm. Some youth did not have the luxury of picking and often times, those were young women. I think it is unfortunate that the girls, more frequently than not, automatically have to help the family babysit younger siblings and farm. The freedom to learn is sacrificed and I wish there were more opportunities for the young women to choose how they want to live.

I grew up very differently. My parents were more involved. I know I have more control of how I live my life. My mother and father did their best with what they had to raise the ten of us. Half of us shared the same father and the older half had their own. Their father died in the Vietnam War and a few years later, my mom married my dad. I have always viewed my older siblings the same as my other siblings. We all fought one another at some point and ganged up on each other at another. The rivalry was real. We built alliances and held grudges. We got even and this made my childhood complete.

The white truck with distinct music defined my childhood. The catchy loud song from a block away lets me know that the ice cream truck is getting close. Although my parents always warned us about buying ice cream from the ice cream man, my siblings and I would always beg my parents for some spare change just to be able to enjoy a small popsicle in the heat, on a sunny summer day.

On days when my parents didn't have money, my siblings and I would gather and hide inside the house and crack the windows wide open. When the ice cream truck rolled by, we would yell, "Stop!" as loud as we can. Once the truck stopped and we saw that no one was in line to buy ice cream, we giggled and lightly hit each other out of happiness that we got him. As soon as the truck started moving again, we would all yell, "Stop!" We did this until the truck passed our block. We had a ball.

As a child of ten, there wasn't always enough to go around. We all had our own hiding spots for popsicles in the freezer. It was survival of the fittest and we all made sure we'd make it.

When my parents came home from the grocery store, we all rushed outside to help bring groceries in. When it was time to divide the bag of candy, we all gathered at the table to make sure we each had a pile. The oldest at the table was responsible to evenly distribute the candy. Any leftover candy would end up in my parents' pile. Once we collected our pile, we all look for my dad to tell us where to hide our goods so that no one can get to them. One by one, we lined up to hear where my dad's secret spot was. When it was my turn, I leaned in and my dad whispered, "In your basket of clothes." It took me many years to figure out that we all had the same hiding spots, in our own basket of clothes.

○

At Washburn High School, I was taking some advanced classes and I was eager to figure out the next step in my life. The St. Olaf TRiO Educational Talent Search program did a tremendous job helping me apply to colleges. TRiO Educational Talent Search is a federally funded program that provides services to first generation, low-income and under-represented students. On the way home from the bus stop, I grabbed the mail and saw something for me. I knew right then that I had been accepted to St. Olaf College because of the thick white packet. I was ecstatic! Although I had many responsibilities at home, my parents always supported my academic endeavors. They knew my heart and they knew that I would come back with a degree.

In May 2014, I became the second person in my family of ten children to graduate with a Master's Degree. I earned a Master's in Non-Profit Management from Hamline University.

At the time, I thought about running a program, because I believed in the outcomes. I have continuously set goals for myself with the support from my parents. I started seeing that my accomplishments were bigger than me. It was a chance for my parents to experience a glimpse of their dreams through me.

○

My dad was in his room, clicking away on his black Sony laptop. I sat down on the small stool and broke the news. I told my dad my decision. My dad didn't say much. He told me that when he made the decision to leave his father behind in Thailand to immigrate to the United States, his father and relatives felt neglected by him. My dad said, "Perhaps this is karma because I left my family."

"Dad? Today I'm moving out. It's not because I'm tired of living here with you and mom. I want to live on my own and I need to have my own space." I explained that I would still be around to help. I will come visit and buy groceries every now and then. As my dad was sitting down, I gave him a hug to reassure him that I will still be present in his life, even if I am no longer living with him under one roof.

After living with my family for five years after I graduated from college, I had decided to move out. Although I was nervous, I figured that it was time. I was in my late 20's, with two degrees, a car of my own, and a secure job. This is widely expected of adults in America. However, moving out before marriage is frowned upon in the Hmong community because I am a woman and I am not married.

I moved into a one-bedroom apartment in a suburb on the outskirts of the city. My roommate is my boyfriend. The quietness of the place brings both serenity and boredom. You can hear the clock tick when the TV is turned off. There is no one to fight over the remote. There are no more secret hiding spots in the fridge. I feel so thankful for my parents and the way they raised my siblings and me. I have always felt lucky to have such wonderful childhood memories. It contributed to my humility and it makes me want to do nice things for my parents as a way to thank them for raising us to be the best we can be.

Although some of his stories are not relatable, I have always admired my dad. I have had the privilege of living in a safe home with electricity and running water. I am thankful that my parents show that they care, and they support me. I rarely heard my dad complain about how hard life was. It was a way of living and it was what he only knew. His persistence and ambitions is what makes me want to be just as great as my dad. He is often the light that guides me when I am lost. My dad made decisions that will better his future, just like how I am making my own decisions to better mine as his daughter.



**ASSIGNMENTS AND QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

- Assignment Description: This project is a small autobiography, also known as a memoir, about you. The TWIST is that it will be written in 3<sup>rd</sup> person. At the minimum, include the following criteria:
  - Content in third person
  - Some sort of structure



# PROFILES

This chapter is brought to you by Sybil Priebe and edited parts of this Wikibook<sup>42</sup>.

On the cover of most magazines are people posing and photoshopped. Profiles are the textual piece that's written about that person about halfway into the magazine. *Rolling Stone* might do a profile piece on the most influential band at the time, *Glamour* might have a profile piece on some actress who has a movie coming out, and even *Hunting* might have a profile piece on the newest species to watch out for.

The best profile pieces typically include interviewee statistics, intriguing quotes from that interviewee woven in with a summary of the interview, concluding analysis of what the interviewer thought of the whole interview, as well as background information on the interviewee before or during the interviewer's body paragraphs.

Unlike some profile pieces in magazines, most teachers will not want students to simply report back every single word the interviewee said. They will want that nice balance of quote + summary: approximately 30% quotes and 70% summary/analysis.

## Profile Creation

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A good profile piece requires a well-rounded person; these are people who are fleshed out in detail, with, for example, a back story that explains their motivations. A flat profile piece is less well rounded, possibly even one-dimensional. They are not as interesting to read.

The following takes you through the steps to create a well-rounded profile piece – it starts on the outside and works its way to the insides of the person.

## Profile's Appearance

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The appearance of a person is important but remember as a writer you are describing the appearance and much will be left to the readers' imagination. Of course, if you are writing for film or television or for a visual work like a comic book, then appearance becomes more important.

## PHYSICAL ATTRIBUTES

<sup>42</sup> "Character Creation." *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. 17 Aug 2010, 15:00 UTC. 16 May 2016, 15:18 <<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=CharacterCreation&oldid=1913045>>. Licensed CC-BY-SA.

You should decide the physical attributes of your profile person. At the least you should consider:

- Height – are they tall, short, average?
- Weight – are they overweight, underweight, average?
- Skin tone and freckles, hair and eye color
- Distinguishing features – birthmarks, scars, tattoos
- Hair color – brunette, blonde?
- Hair length – short, long, shoulder length?

Some of these attributes will be worked into the writing early on to allow the reader to form an image of the character in their “mind’s eye.” You should try to avoid the stereotypes – not all pirates have only one eye and have a wooden leg!

## ACCESSORIES & CLOTHING

Think about the things your character wears, carries, and uses and whether any should be distinctive. Think of Doctor Who’s sonic screwdriver, James Bond’s Walther PPK, or Carrie’s heels in *Sex in the City*! These are all iconic accessories. People in real life tend to favor certain items and these items are part of how we recognize them and think of them. The glasses they wear, the type of watch they use, the jewelry they wear. Add accessories to shape your profile person. Are they fascinated with different sorts of glasses? Funny t-shirts? Vintage Levi’s jeans? Use a pocket watch instead of a wristwatch? Wear a locket around his/her neck?

## PROFILE BACKGROUND

This section covers the creation of the profile person’s background. The background is essential, even if it is not actually detailed. As well as making the profile more interesting and adding depth to the story, the writer can use the background to ensure the profile person’s behavior remains consistent. If the writer has written up the background and stated that the character is claustrophobic, then the readers are more likely to understand why the profiled person doesn’t like MRIs if the interviewer asks them about medical issues the profiled person has had.

## THE BASICS

Start out with writing down some of the basic facts:

- Is your character male, female, transgender?
- Where was your character born?
- How old are they?
- What is their current job?
- What are their interests outside their job?
- Who do they love? And who did they used to love?
- Who are their enemies and friends?

## HERITAGE

Ask about the profile person's heritage. Is he/she Irish, German, African American/Black? A writer might try to bring out the profile person's heritage in the profile piece. Use the way they pronounce things, and how they feel about things to demonstrate their background, perhaps.

Your profile person's heritage (and current nationality) could affect other aspects of the profile piece or questions the writer will ask. But equally you should strive to avoid the stereotypes – Germans aren't all mean, Italians aren't all about love and pasta. Sometimes discovering the opposite of the stereotypical view will surprise and interest your reader. How about a vodka-loving Norwegian?

## **MOTIVATIONS & ROUNDEDNESS**

You need to understand why your profile person behaves the way they do. Ask them about motivations that you can't understand – otherwise you won't be able to write effectively about them.

Very few real people are static or completely stable. Your profile person might have things that drive them and things that repel them – but there will probably be more than one. Nobody is just a custodian, nobody is just a mother caring for her children, nobody is just a busy doctor.

## **Profile's Personality**

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Is your profile person mean, nice, funny? That can be determined all by their personality...

## **PERSONALITY MIX**

Most people have a mixture of a few personalities. The caring mother mentioned above might be a Type-A scrap booker and a wine lover. The busy doctor might compete in triathlons and have three pit bulls who she/he puts into competitions. The custodian may be a collector of vintage motorcycles, obsess over a particular hockey team, and spoil his/her granddaughters. It is your job as the profile writer to ask questions that lead to these findings. Here are a few questions to ask:

- What adjectives would your friends use to describe you?
- What hobbies do you have?
- What would your “best day” consist of?
- What is on your Bucket List?
- Describe yourself in one sentence.
- What's something weird in your fridge right now?
- What three items would you want on a deserted island?

## **Profile: The Little Details**

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Details are very important in writing a profile piece; they could make or break your story! I won't give you tips on little details, since there can be so many, but I will tell you one

thing: when writing out details, be careful, they can change your profile piece a lot! For example, a reader can tell that a character is impatient if he/she taps her feet from time to time.



## **EXAMPLE: “SHE ‘WANTS TO BE A ZOMBIE IN A FUTURE LIFE’.”**

When she was born, I called her “that girl.” Apparently, I wasn’t too keen on having another kid around. I had the place to myself for three years, so, I guess I had territorial issues.

She was chubby = “Just say I was a fat kid already.” She still claims that her baby gut never went away; in college, it was expanded with her addiction to diesel Pepsi. Since then, she’s given up that all-out sugar and fills the baby gut with beer. “It’s the only right thing to do.”

She also felt the oddness, once the other siblings were born, of being the middle child = “It sucks.” Alisa was accused of things the rest of us did, which was not cool, but it happened. Of all of us, she was an easy target; she feels guilt quicker (“It’s that damn Catholicism at worked!”) and had a very secretive rebel side that no one knew of until later. Did she really start smoking at age 14? Yep. And drinking at 15? Yes. But we didn’t suspect it.

We lived together when she decided to go to NDSU. At that point, I was a clean freak and she wasn’t, but when I ended up on my own later, teaching & exhausted, we would switch spots. Now, she’s almost got OCD (“I like things done in 5s; when people touch the volume in my car, I have to ask them to do it in units of 5.”). And what adds to it is her English degree. We both get easily irritated with spelling and punctuation errors.

With that English degree came more awkwardness of what to do with it. She’s very creative but lacks confidence. And she’s not a huge book reader, either, which shocks most. Her most recently read book was *The Zombie Survival Guide*.

While at times I have felt like a mom to her, she is my best friend. We look similar, but her very blue eyes and naturally brown hair make her look wiser and more authentic (“Do people think I’m older than you because I’m angry?” Me: “I think it’s your hair color.”). She’s brutal and fun and knows how to kick ass. Any mention of zombies or pirates or sharks (“Shark Week! Did you know...”) or Peyton Manning, and she’ll talk your face off. She’s almost gotten two nicknames related to her storytelling skills = Sideline and Bulldozer. She tends not to stay on track, and, yes, she’ll bulldoze you over with statistics any time.

She’s the glue in our family. I wouldn’t be as close to my youngest siblings if it weren’t for Alisa. We’ve been through a lot together, but we stick by each other. We’ve paid each other’s way, financially or otherwise (“Red Lobster, courtesy of Ma & Pa!”).

At the end of my life, I hope her and I follow-through on our wishes = to have purple hair and wear sweatpants along with t-shirts that say stupid stuff like “Princess” or “Bite Me.”

## Works Cited



**ASSIGNMENTS AND QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

- This project is a small interview-based piece, known as a profile, about someone you know. At the minimum, you'll complete the following criteria:
  - You will interview the person.
  - You will write about their life up to this point, using quotes from the interview.
  - Make sure you have written about them in a way that lets us into who they really are. Ask interesting questions; get them to tell stories.
  - Proofread. Have someone else read it aloud if you don't want to.
  - Add a very, very cool title.

# PROPOSALS

Writing a good proposal<sup>43</sup> is a critical skill in many occupations, from school to business management to geology. The goal of a proposal is to gain support for your plan by informing the appropriate people.

Your ideas or suggestions are more likely to be approved if you can communicate them in a clear, concise, engaging manner. Knowing how to write a persuasive, captivating proposal is essential for success in many fields. There are several types of proposals, such as science proposals and book proposals, but each following the same basic guidelines.

**Define your audience.** You need to make sure that you think about your audience and what they might already know or not know about your topic before you begin writing. This will help you focus your ideas and present them in the most effective way. It's a good idea to assume that your readers will be busy, reading (or even skimming) in a rush, and not predisposed to grant your ideas any special consideration. Efficiency and persuasiveness will be key.

**Define your issue.** It is clear to you what the issue is, but is that also clear to your reader? Also, does your reader believe you really know what you are talking about? You can support your *ethos*, or writing persona, by using evidence and explanations throughout the proposal to back up your assertions. By setting your issue properly, you start convincing the reader that you are the right person to take care of it. Think about the following when you plan this part:

- Has anyone ever tried to deal with this issue before?
- If yes: has it worked? Why?
- If no: why not?

**Define your solution.** This should be straightforward and easy to understand. Once you set the issue you're addressing, how would you like to solve it? Get it as narrow (and doable) as possible.

- Is the solution you're offering logical and feasible? What's the timeline for your implementation?

<sup>43</sup> "How to Write a Proposal." Co-authored by Megan Morgan, PhD. 11 June 2019. <https://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Proposal>. CC-BY-NC-SA.

**Include a schedule and budget.** Your proposal represents an investment. In order to convince your readers that you're a good investment, provide as much detailed, concrete information about your timeline and budget as possible.

- When do you envision the project starting? At what pace will it progress? How does each step build on the other? Can certain things be done simultaneously? Being as meticulous as possible will give your readers confidence that you've done your homework and won't waste their money.
- Make sure your proposal makes sense financially. If you're proposing an idea to a company or a person, consider their budget. If they can't afford your proposal, it's not an adequate one. If it does fit their budget, be sure to include why it's worth their time and money.



## EXAMPLE: GRADING BY JAKE<sup>44</sup>

To: North Dakota State College of Science  
From: Jake M.  
Date 5/3/2020  
RE: Grading and Assignments

I am making this proposal to try and change some of the grading and assignments of classes in the school system. All school systems use same grading where there a lesson taught with homework, and then they take quizzes and tests on the material then move on to the next lesson. I have a proposal to change the system that schools use today to make it more effective for students to obtain the information, and have it been more applicable to real life careers.

### **Introduction:**

My plan is to set up class where they check your progress over the year where your scored on how far you progress in the class instead of on each assignment individually. I feel like this is fairer to the students, because they stress out about studying for a bunch of tests on one chapter and after that test most of the information leaves their head when they start the next lesson. This process happens every new chapter.

### **Audience:**

This proposal is directed towards North Dakota State College of Science, but I hope it applies to a lot of schools soon.

### **The End Product:**

That schools will still have their assignments and projects, but instead of grading everything individually you base it off progress. You would compare their progress throughout the year from the very first assignments to the ones by the end of the year. If

<sup>44</sup> Thank you to Jake M. from the Spring 2020 class for the usage of your proposal

the work is better compared to the end of the year, then the grade will reflect how far along they have come.

### **Costs and Supplies:**

There will be no extra cost for this because you are only changing the way the grading happens in the classes.

### **Tentative Schedule of the Proposal:**

This will be the trial run for next fall using the progress-based grading system.

- In August with the first assignments being turned in you see where all the students start off.
- Then in about October or midterms you can see where the progress has come through the year so far.
- Then in December you would compare their work to the midterm work and the very first work to get a grade for the semester.



### **ASSIGNMENTS AND QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

- This deals with College Redesign<sup>45</sup>. You will propose a total redesign of one aspect of your college experience. This might include: admissions criteria, the academic calendar, grading and assessment, faculty and hiring, division of disciplines/departments/majors, what we teach in the classroom and how, what a classroom is, the role of teaching vs. research, residential life, housing/hospitality/food, what a degree is, extracurriculars, tuition/financial aid/fundraising/endowment/salaries, private vs. public, cultural attitudes about education, OR who attends college, when, and for how long...
  - Get creative but make a good-faith effort to propose something that you might actually like to see happen. At the minimum, use the typical structure of a proposal to outline a redesign you think would benefit students.

<sup>45</sup> This assignment was developed for the class Punk and the Making of Self at Ithaca College, Fall 2016, by Dr. S. Alexander Reed: <http://salexanderreed.com/> Licensed CC-BY-NC-SA.



# REPORTS

A report is a very technical document that presents information in an objective way – it's like the polar opposite of an essay or memoir or story. No fluff. Low on creativity. Be precise.

## Read the Guidelines Carefully<sup>46</sup>

If your teacher or boss gave you guidelines for your report, make sure you read them thoroughly. The prompt will give you information such as whether your report should be informative or persuasive, who your audience should be, and any issues your report should address.

- The guidelines will also typically tell you the requirements for the structure and format of your report.
- If you have any questions about the assignment, speak up as soon as possible. That way, you don't start working on the report, only to find out you have to start over because you misunderstood the report prompt.

## Report Writing Types:

Types of reports<sup>47</sup> include memos, minutes from meetings, lab reports, book reports, progress reports, justification reports, compliance reports, annual reports, and policies and procedures. Other types of reports<sup>48</sup> include: feasibility reports, credit reports, sales activity reports, personal evaluation reports, incident reports, financial reports, etc.

## Long and Short Reports

From John M. Lannon, "Technical Communication"<sup>49</sup>:

"In the professional world, decision-makers rely on two broad types of reports: Some reports focus primarily on *information* ('what we're doing now,' 'what we did last month,' 'what our customer survey found,' 'what went on at the department meeting'). But beyond merely providing information, many reports also include *analysis* ('what this information means for us,' 'what courses of action should be considered,' 'what we recommend, and why').

<sup>46</sup> "How to Write a Report." Co-authored by Emily Listmann, MA, Education; 12 Sept 2019. <https://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Report> Under an CC-BY-NC-SA License.

<sup>47</sup> Nordquist, Richard. "What Are Business and Technical Reports?" ThoughtCo, Jun. 8, 2019, [thoughtco.com/report-writing-1692046](https://www.thoughtco.com/report-writing-1692046).

<sup>48</sup> "How to Write a Report." Co-authored by Emily Listmann, MA, Education; 12 Sept 2019. <https://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Report> Under an CC-BY-NC-SA License.

<sup>49</sup> Lannon, John M. "Technical Communication." Laura J. Gurak, 14th Edition, Pearson, January 14, 2017.

"For every long (formal) report, countless short (informal) reports lead to informed decisions on matters as diverse as the most comfortable office chairs to buy to the best recruit to hire for management training. Unlike long reports, most short reports require no extended planning, are quickly prepared, contain little or no background information, and have no front or end matter (title page, table of contents, glossary, etc.). But despite their conciseness, short reports do provide the information and analysis that readers need."

## How to Write a Report

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To have an effective report, always follow the right procedure. You can either order a report from the experts or have a look at seven steps to excellent report writing to be an expert yourself.

1. Choose the main objective – stay focused and engage the readers with clarity.
2. Analyze your audience – change the data, vocabulary, and supporting materials depending on the target readers. If you understand your audience, you can add some personal touch and suit the preferences of particular people.
3. Work on the report format – learn how to start off a report and how to finalize it effectively.
4. Collect the data – add the facts, figures, and data to add credibility.
5. Structure the report – use the lab write up format or read the tips of the memo and report writing to know how to arrange the elements of the report.
6. Ensure good readability – make navigation easy by adding visuals, graphics, proper formatting with subtitles, and bullet points. Shorter paragraphs are better than long bulks of text.
7. Do the editing – after you have prepared your draft report, revise the content twice. Keep it aside for a day or two and then work it over again to gain perfection.

**Scan the report to make sure everything is included and makes sense.** Read the report from beginning to end, trying to imagine that you're a reader that has never heard this information before. A good question to ask yourself is, "If I were someone reading this report for the first time, would I feel like I understood the topic after I finished reading?"

## How to Write an Incident Report<sup>50</sup>

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If you're a security guard or police officer deployed to the scene of an incident, writing up a detailed and accurate report is an important part of doing your job correctly. A good incident report gives a thorough account of what happened without glossing over unsavory information or leaving out important facts. It's crucial to follow the appropriate protocol, describe the incident clearly, and submit a polished report.

<sup>50</sup> "How to Write an Incident Report" was co-authored by Clinton M. Sandwick, JD, PhD. Updated: May 10, 2019; <https://www.wikihow.com/Write-an-Incident-Report>; licensed CC-BY-NC-SA.

## POSSIBLE SAMPLE INTRO:

On (date, time) reporting officer (name) was (dispatched, observing, contacted by) (to, who) (location), etc. For example, On June 21, 2016, at about 2100 hrs, reporting officer, Smith was on duty and received a dispatch call for a burglary in progress at 123 2nd St; in St. Cloud, Mn. Upon arrival, the officer observed an elephant smashing the front window glass of an electronics store, the elephant, later identified as Snout, Henry, placed a large television set in his trunk and attempted to flee the location on foot.

## Steps:

---

- 1) Start the report as soon as possible. Write it the same day as the incident if possible. If you wait a day or two your memory will start to get a little fuzzy.
- 2) **Provide the basic facts.** Your form may have blanks for you to fill out with information about the incident. If not, start the report with a sentence clearly stating the following basic information:
  - a) The time, date and location of the incident (be specific; write the exact street address, etc.).
  - b) Your name and ID number.
  - c) Names of other members of your organization who were present
- 3) Include a line about the general nature of the incident. Describe what brought to you at the scene of the incident. If you received a call, describe the call and note what time you received it. Write an objective, factual sentence describing what occurred.
  - a) For example, you could write that you were called to a certain address after a person was reported for being drunk and disorderly.
  - b) Note that you should not write what you think might have happened. Stick to the facts and be objective.
- 4) **Write a first-person narrative telling what happened.** Write a chronological narrative of exactly what happened when you reported to the scene.
  - a) Use the full names of each person included in the report. Identify all persons the first time they are cited in your report by listing: first, middle, and last names; date of birth, race, gender, and reference a government issued identification number.
  - b) For example, when the police officer mentioned above arrives at the residence where he got the call, he could say: "Upon arrival the officer observed a male white, now known as Doe, John Edwin; date of birth: 03/15/1998; California Driver's License 00789142536, screaming and yelling at a female white, known as, Doe, Jane, in the front lawn of the above location (the address given earlier). The officer separated both parties involved and conducted field interviews. The officer was told by Mr. John Doe that he had come home from work and discovered that dinner was not made for him. He then stated that he became upset at his wife Mrs. Jane Doe for not having the dinner ready for him."
  - c) If possible, make sure to include direct quotes from witnesses and other people involved in the incident. For example, in the above scenario, the officer could write "Jane said to me 'Johnny was mad because I didn't have dinner ready right on time.'"

- d) Include an accurate description of your own role in the course of what occurred. If you had to use physical force to detain someone, don't gloss over it. Report how you handled the situation and its aftermath.
- 5) **Be thorough.** Write as much as you can remember - the more details, the better. Don't leave room for people reading the report to interpret something the wrong way. Don't worry about your report being too long or wordy. The important thing is to report a complete picture of what occurred.
  - a) For example, instead of saying "when I arrived, his face was red," you could say, "when I arrived, he was yelling, out of breath, and his face was red with anger." The second example is better than the first because there are multiple reasons for someone's face to be red, not just that they are angry.
  - b) Or, instead of saying "after I arrived at the scene, he charged towards me," you should say "when I arrived at the scene, I demanded that both parties stop fighting. After taking a breath and looking at me, he began to run quickly towards me and held his hand up like he was about to strike me."
- 6) **Be accurate.** Do not write something in the report that you aren't sure actually happened. Report hearsay as hearsay, not as fact.
  - a) Additionally, if you are reporting what the witness told you, you should write down anything that you remember about the witness's demeanor. If their statement's cause controversy later, your report can prove useful. For example, it would be helpful to know that a witness appeared excited while telling you what happened, or if they seemed very calm and evenhanded.
- 7) **Be clear.** Don't use flowery, confusing language to describe what occurred. Your writing should be clear and concise. Use short, to-the-point, fact-oriented sentences that don't leave room for interpretation.
- 8) **Be honest.** Even if you're not proud of how you handled the situation, it's imperative that you write an honest account.

## Polishing Up a Good Report:

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- Double check the basic facts. Check to make sure the basic information (spellings of names, the dates, times, and addresses, the license plate numbers, etc.) match those you listed in your report.
- Do not try to make sure that statements in your report match those of your colleagues. Individually filed reports guarantee that more than one account of an incident survives. Incident reports can appear later in a court of law. If you alter the facts of your report to match those of another, you can be penalized.
- Edit and proofread your report. Read through it to make sure it's coherent and easy to understand. Make sure you didn't leave out any information that should have been included. Look for obvious gaps in the narrative that you might need to fill in.
- Remove any words that could be seen as subjective or judgmental, like words describing feelings and emotions.

Submit your incident report. Find out the name of the person or department to whom your report must be sent.



## EXAMPLE: REPORT ON STUDENTS

To: Wade King, Department Chair  
From: Sybil Priebe, Associate Professor  
Date: November 7, 2013  
Subject: Report on My Students

### INTRODUCTION:

This survey report shows the results of three years of my classroom grades and excuses from students.

### DATES:

This survey was completed in November, during the years listed on the charts, on the campus of North Dakota State College of Science in Wahpeton, ND; this town is located 48 miles to the south of Fargo, ND.

### DEFINITION OF THE POPULATION:

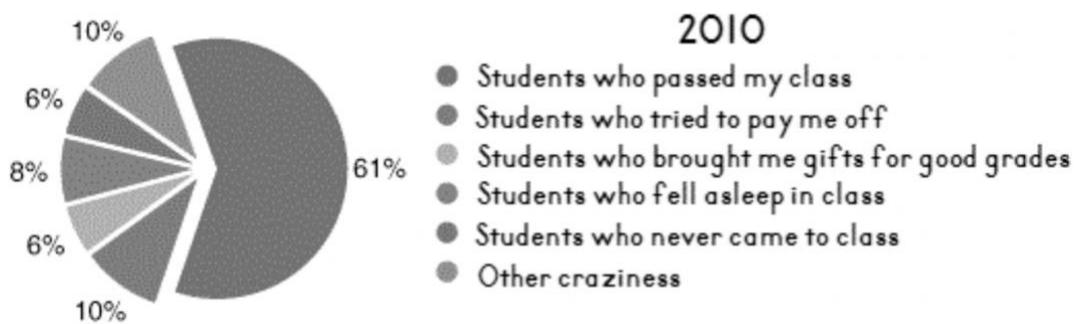
All of my students were used for this report. Some were in class all the time, some were not. Some might have been drunk, and some may have not been "all there," but oh well. The approximate age surveyed was 21.5, while the span of ages ranged from 18 to 25. Forty percent of those surveyed were males; the rest were females. All students surveyed were full-time students; only 5 of the 50 surveyed were students who did not live on campus.

### EXCLUSIONS FROM THE SAMPLE:

Older-than-average students and single-parents happen to not be a part of this survey's sampling.

### GOAL OF REPORT:

Through this survey, I hope to identify how students are doing in my classes.

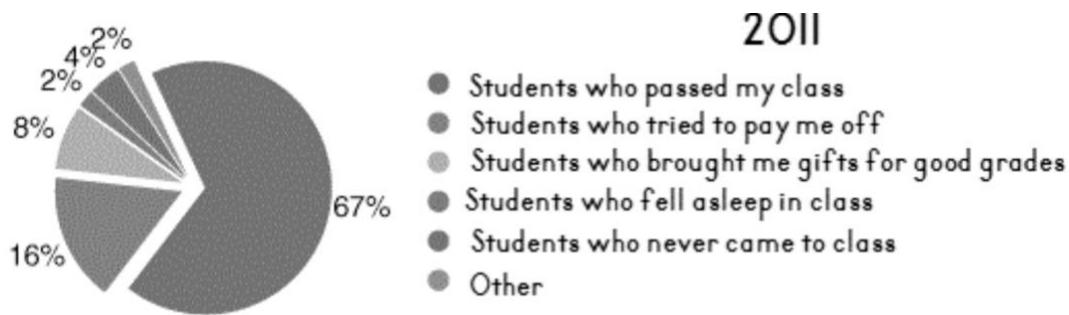


Let me first start off by explaining the options above before I compare the years. The options – ranging from "students who passed" to "students who never came to class" –

were created after years of me journaling the various excused I've gotten from students about their efforts and attendance in class.

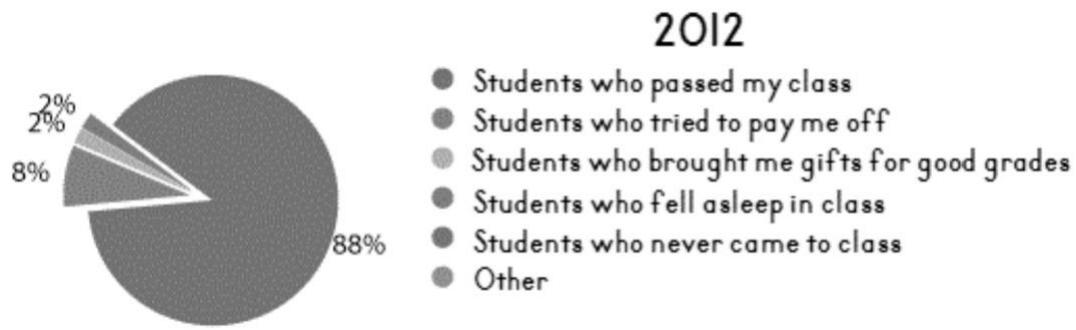
Let's begin by analyzing the first option and the largest chunk of the pie chart.

When I first started keep track of students, my pass rate was 61% which is barely passing (if one uses the 60-70-80-90 Grade Scale). One can see that in 2011, that rate bumped up a bit, and then in 2012, it dramatically increased. I can only contribute that large jump to the lack of "Other craziness" that year. "Other craziness" translates into: weather-related chaos, a rise in student illness, weird vibes in certain classes (maybe due to students being hangry), etc. In 2012, there were also a lot less students trying to pay me off for good grades, so that is obviously a side effect of students passing.



Speaking of the "pay off" option, it oddly jumped from 10 to 16% in 2011, but then chopped itself in half for 2012. I'm uncertain why there was such a jump between 2010 and 2011, but the cut from 2011 to 2012 seems to be due to the rise in passing students.

As for gifts, that percentage stayed relatively the same. Sleeping in class took a dive after 2010, and I'm unsure why (although I taught more in the late morning that year, so perhaps there's a connection). Lastly, students who never came to class trailed off into nothing by 2012, so that's reassuring.



#### OVERALL FINDINGS:

This report has shown me all sorts of variety in how my students approach the class and how our surroundings can affect student learning. When there was less "craziness" on campus, students came to class and passed. Teaching late morning classes has helped

keep my students awake, and when there are fewer students falling asleep or being absent, they pass as well!



**ASSIGNMENTS OR QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

- Situation: You're a security guard or police officer deployed to the scene of an incident. Write up a detailed and accurate incident report; make sure to follow the steps in the chapter to create the best report possible.



# RESUMES

This chapter was brought to you by this Wikibook<sup>51</sup>.

## What is a Résumé?

A résumé is a summary of your educational background, employment experience, and skills. It is a way to communicate your qualifications for a desired position to an employer. Your résumé is your tool to market yourself and the key to getting an interview. Essentially, you are creating your résumé as a pitching, selling, and branding tool of yourself to potential employers.

There is no "best way" to write a résumé. However, there are some general guidelines, such as clarity, accuracy and neatness, that should be followed. It is important to choose a résumé style and format that will work best for you and the job you are applying for. How do you decide what approach will be the best? Here are some questions you can ask yourself to help with the decision:

- What are the employer's needs and interests for the position for which I am applying?
- What are my strengths for the job and how can I emphasize them?
- How can I format and organize the content and graphics of my résumé to show what I have to offer?

## Types of Résumés

There are three main types of résumés: Experiential, skills, and a combination of the two. What format to use is up to you. Each type emphasizes a different component of the résumé. Experiential résumés emphasize work experience, skills résumés emphasize skills and abilities, and combination résumés seek to find a balance between the two. When deciding what type of résumés to create, choose one that is common to your industry. Every industry uses different types of résumés according to what the industry standard is.

### EXPERIENTIAL RÉSUMÉS

Experiential résumés list information in reverse chronological order. Résumés are organized under headings such as "Education," "Work Experience," and "Activities." Most college students will choose to list education first, because students have limited work experience. The most recent degrees are listed first followed by previous degrees. The same format is followed under each heading. Skills gained from each job are listed under

<sup>51</sup> "Professional and Technical Writing/Career/Resumes." *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. 16 Aug 2019, 12:37 UTC. 10 Oct 2019, 17:09 <[https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Professional\\_and\\_Technical\\_Writing/Career/Resumes&oldid=3563457](https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Professional_and_Technical_Writing/Career/Resumes&oldid=3563457)>. Licensed CC-BY-SA.

each job title, along with accomplishments and responsibilities. Experiential résumés are useful for establishing a work history and for showcasing accomplishments made at each career position. Experiential résumés are the most common type of résumé and are a simple way to detail responsibilities held at different jobs.

**Ethel Aardvark** **701-555-5555**



900 Perfection Road  
Bingo, MN 58075  
**Phone:** (o) 701-671-5555, (h/c) 701-555-5555  
**Email:** ethel.aardvark@gmail.com

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**EDUCATION**

**Some Midwest State University: Boonies, ND.**  
B.A. in Cool Education, May, 1999.

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**EXPERIENCE**

**Crazy Scholars Program – Online: Some Texas University, Spring 1999.**  
+Duties: Preparing activities, tutoring students via email (revising and assessing stuff), and keeping office chat room hours.

**Research Palace: Mini-Apple, MN, 1990-1999.**  
+Duties: Assisted a regional independent student newspaper with general customer service and photography, as well as assisted in editing/proofreading.

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**PROFESSIONAL GROUPS**

-ISP (Independent Student Paper) Coalition.

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**INTERESTS**

-Anything Blasphemous and/or Cool  
-Hypertext & Web Site building  
-Technical and Professional Document/ Design

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**REFERENCES**

Mr. Stevie Nicks, Manager  
(Retired) Research Palace, stevie\_nicks@aol.com

Professor Reed Books  
Cool Research Department, Some Midwest State University.

## SKILLS RÉSUMÉS

A skills (or functional) résumé organizes information around types of skills and abilities. Headings may include “Computer Skills,” “Foreign Languages,” and “Leadership Experience.” A skills résumé will list the skill and then explain when and how that particular skill was used. Skills résumés are useful for several reasons.

- Avoids repeating the same information under each job title
- Emphasizes skills and abilities (a college graduate’s work history may be from only part-time work, and a skills résumé will merely mention these positions)
- Hides gaps in an applicant’s work history

Anytime attention should be focused away from work experience – due to a gap in experience, etc. – a skills résumé is recommended.

**Rodger Bern**

6767 Juniper Drive - Apt. 4  
Lovely Lane, FL 50005  
**Phone:** (h/c) 218-555-5555  
**Email:** RB1999@gmail.com



**EDUCATION**

Florida State University.  
B.A. in Construction; May 2010.

**PROFESSIONAL GROUPS**

- National Honor Society
- National Construction Alliance
- Students of Latino Pride

**SKILLS**

Computer Skills:

- PlanGrid - Project Designware, Bid Management, Field service management, and Safety Reporting
- Microsoft Office
- Construction Takeoff Software
- Estimation of Materials Costware
- PMS: Project Management and Scheduling

Foreign Language Skills:

- Fluent Spanish in speaking and writing
- Fluent Italian in speaking
- Fluent English in speaking and writing

Leadership Skills: Conflict Resolution, Group Work Delegation

**REFERENCES**

Professor Tresha Bloom

## COMBINATION RÉSUMÉS

A combination résumé lists skills and abilities first, but also lists accomplishments and responsibilities under specific job titles and experiences. A combination résumé allows an applicant to highlight specific skills that may be desired by the employer while also emphasizing job experience. Combination résumés are useful for applicants with an extensive job history in a highly specialized field. For example, applicants in computer programming may want to highlight their computer language skills before detailing their computer programming experience.

## The Pieces of a Résumé

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When writing your résumé, you must make decisions about such things as what to say, how to organize, how to design pages and so on. Think about your readers. What will they be looking for? How will they look for this information? How will they use it when they find it? What are their attitudes about your subject and what do you want their attitudes to be when they have finished reading? The following sections provide your general style when writing your résumé:

- **Personal Information:** Include your name, address, and professional email address. Many employers like to see a home or cell phone number on the résumé as well.
- **Career Objective - Optional:** Many people believe that they need to have an objective listed underneath their contact information; however, the truth is that maybe objectives should not part of your résumé because they are limiting.
- **Education:** Education should be included immediately after your identifying information unless you have had significant work experiences in the field for which you are applying. In that case, education should be placed at the end of the résumé. You should name the institute you attended, the degree you achieved or are working to achieve, and the graduation date or expected graduation. Provide information directly relevant to the employment such as advanced courses taken or achievements. Your GPA should be included only if it is above average. You should avoid adding anything about high school unless it is particularly impressive. Other facts to highlight about your education include study abroad programs, training programs, academic honors, or even classes outside your major to show your broad range of abilities.
- **Work Experience:** Include information about your employment history within your résumé. For each job, include the company name, location, and specific dates employed. Be sure to spell out the months you worked at the company to make your résumé internationally accepted. For example, 1/10/2010 can mean different things in different places. A good example of a listed date is April 5, 2010. In addition, employment should be listed in reverse chronological order. If applicable, advancements in the company or accomplishments should be included. You should also list some of the knowledge you gained from your work experience and some of the responsibilities you were given. When describing your work experience, make sure to use action verbs, not nouns. You should use strong verbs to show what you did at that job and avoid lifeless, uninteresting verbs. Lastly, you want to make sure the verbs are parallel.
- **Achievements:** Awards, recognitions, or other special circumstances should be included if they are outstanding and directly related to the job for which you are applying.
- **Volunteer Experience:** Include information on present or former volunteering sites within your résumé. Information included should be the company name, location, and specific dates you volunteered.
- **Skills:** Be sure to include any special skills that you have, such as being fluent in another language or being an expert in Microsoft applications. These skills can be what set you apart from the other applicants.
- **References:** When choosing a reference or references, make sure that you can trust them to answer honestly and that they will not reveal any intrusive

information. Be sure to ask them if they are willing to be a reference before giving their information to a potential employer. Shy away from putting "references upon request" because that's one extra step an employer has to take; make it easy for them to hire you.

## Designing Your Résumé

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Your résumé is the first step in obtaining an interview and potentially getting hired. A major question you want to ask yourself when creating your résumé is "How do I want the employer to SEE me?" You can create a résumé that is uniquely yours and that will stand apart from others by illustrating your personality within your résumé:

- Short, informative headings
- Bulleted lists
- Italics
- Left, center, right tabs
- Variety of type sizes
- Different typefaces for headings than for text
- White space to separate sections
- 1" margins
- Having a visual balance

Just as companies market products, you must market yourself. You should organize your information in a way that is accurate yet interesting to the employer. You do not want an employer to overlook your résumé because the type is too small, etc. Having a clean, crisp, and organized résumé design will enable your potential employer to easily read and find information.

## USE ACCOMPLISHMENT STATEMENTS

Think in terms of the value you bring to the potential employer. All of the following examples have one thing in common - they all affect the profitability and productivity of a company.

- Increase productivity and quality...
- Improve service...
- Improve communications and information flow...
- Streamlined operations...
- Developed new administrative procedure that...
- Implemented a new program in...
- Reduced cost of...
- Increased sales...

Any time you can quantify your results you should. It gives your statements more power. You need to prove that you can contribute to the organization by adding value. Statements that are specific and show how you will add value will increase your chances of being selected for an interview.

## Résumé Design Tips

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- **Simplicity:** Do not clutter the page with unnecessary information. Keep your headings short, informative, to-the-point, and clear of graphics. Résumés should be concise and easy to read to ensure that the potential employer can find the information they need quickly. Generally, people look at these for about 30 seconds, so you want them to have a solid idea of your qualifications in less time than that.
- **Eye Catching:** It is important that the person reviewing your resume is interested. A person looks at a resume an average of 30 seconds. If they do not get interested, the resume is set down and forgotten. There are so many people looking for jobs, if your resume does not stand out you will just blend in with the crowd. So, use descriptive words and make yourself look interesting.
- **Format:** Typically, résumés should not be no longer than one page, unless stated otherwise. However, there are many different opinions on this. It is best to keep it to one page because that is what the majority of employers like; however, some people have no preference. It would be best to do some research about what company you are applying for looks for. TRY NOT GO OVER TWO PAGES!
- **Consistency:** Use the same formatting for similar sections on your résumé. Use line breaks, indents, and font variations to organize relevant information into sections. For example, you could use a different font for the headings. This will make your résumé more aesthetically pleasing. Make sure all headings are the same size and type (bold, italic, etc.). Headings the second largest, name of organizations third largest, and the smallest should be your bullet points.
- **Hierarchy:** Create a system that uses different sizes of headings, subheading, and body text. For example:
  - Heading
    - Subheading
      - Body Text
- **Font:** Be sure to use fonts that are easy to read. Do not try to make the font a creative piece of your résumé. It is important when sending a résumé as a Microsoft Word document or any other word processing software that you use common font styles such as Arial, Verdana, Georgia, or Tahoma. This is because the fonts may transfer improperly and be unreadable.
- **Paper:** Choose a fine grade paper. There are many paper options but remember white or slightly off-white paper that is slightly thicker than traditional printer paper is the gold standard.
- **Branding:** Create your own brand (your personal touch or signature if you will) through the paper type you choose, the envelope in which you enclose the necessary information, and how you format the résumé. Consistency is important with all contents of the résumé package, which may include your résumé, cover letter, referral letters (be sure to only enclose this when it is asked, you do not want to give out references information to just anybody), portfolio, and the job application itself. Consistency will create a lasting impression on the employer.
- **Verbs:** When speaking of past tasks, you held at a previous job, verbs should be in the past tense form. If you are speaking of job tasks you currently perform, use the present tense. Use action verbs! Use a thesaurus as a resource in order to not repeat verbs.

- **Templates:** Many word processing applications have templates for résumés. Using these templates is acceptable but may lack the **branding** discussed above. So, try designing your own, before using a template. Some employers may prefer that all résumés are standardized. This allows employers to go through them quickly and look for specific qualifications.

## HELPFUL DESIGN TRICK:

To see how your potential employer will view your résumé, be sure to have your peers proofread and offer constructive criticism. Many universities have career offices and counselors who are able to help edit your résumé and give advice.

## Helpful Résumé Tips

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- Many employers use automated applicant-tracking systems that scan traditional résumés and store them in a database. This means that the first "person" to scan your résumé, is a computer. Then, employers search the database for candidates whose résumés contain specific keywords relevant to a particular position. So, you may want to ask the employer if your résumé will be scanned. Otherwise, enclose both a regular and scannable résumé. If they are going to scan it, make a list of keywords. Then put these keywords in the resume.
- Since many employers use keyword searches to find qualified candidates, it is very important to use relevant words associated with particular job openings, industries, and professions, especially words that appear on the job announcement (NOT synonyms).
  - In addition, action verbs like "managed" or "designed", which are recommended for use in traditional paper résumés, are not effective in electronic résumés because most applicant-tracking systems (ATS) keywords are NOUNS. Nouns indicate your accomplishments rather than verbs that focus on duties. It is better for you to use the noun version of these verbs like "management" instead of "managed, and "design" instead of "designed."
- There are no paragraphs anywhere on the résumé. Use bulleted statements to make achievements quick and easy to read.
- Write out all acronyms to anything that the reader may not understand followed by the abbreviation in parentheses. Ex. Do not write CLA, write out College of Liberal Arts (CLA)
- When writing dates, spell out the month rather than writing it in number form, and be sure to write the year out in full. Ex. March 12, 2010
- Make sure to include your contact information on your résumé. Only send documents from a professional e-mail address. For example, [firstname\\_lastname@yahoo.com](mailto:firstname_lastname@yahoo.com) is an acceptable e-mail address. Nickname e-mail addresses such as, [Babygurlzz98@hotmail.com](mailto:Babygurlzz98@hotmail.com) is not acceptable for professional correspondence.
- Leave only one space in between sentences. Modern software puts the correct amount of space after a period.



#### **ASSIGNMENTS AND QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

- Take your text-based resume and make it very visual. Examples here: [Example 1](#) & [Example 2](#). At a minimum, the project should include the following criteria:
  - Before and After, showcasing the change from very textual to very visual
  - At least three (3) creative elements: images, borders, complimentary typefaces and sizes, white space usage, etc....
  - If you don't have a resume, feel free to create one before you make it visual. Or, you could [play with this textual resume](#) if you don't want to create yours quite yet.



# REVIEWS

Whether a book or movie<sup>52</sup> is a rotten tomato or a brilliant work of art, if people are reading or watching it, it's worth critiquing. A decent book/movie review should entertain, persuade and inform, providing an original opinion without giving away too much of the plot.

A *great* review can be a work of art in its own right. Read on to learn how to analyze a book/movie, come up with an interesting thesis and write a review as entertaining as your source material.

**Start with a compelling fact or opinion on the book/movie.** You want to get the reader hooked immediately. This sentence needs to give them a feel for your review and the work -- is it good, great, terrible, or just okay? -- and keep them reading. Some ideas include:

- **Comparison to Relevant Event or Book or Movie:** "Every day, our leaders, politicians, and pundits call for "revenge" -- against ISIS, against rival sports teams, against other political parties. But few of them understand the cold, destructive, and ultimately hollow thrill of revenge as well as the characters of *Blue Ruin*."
- **Review in a nutshell** "Despite a compelling lead performance by Tom Hanks and a great soundtrack, *Forrest Gump* never gets out of the shadow of its weak plot and questionable premise."
- **Context or Background Information:** "*Boyhood* might be the first movie made where knowing how it was produced -- slowly, over 12 years, with the same actors -- is just as crucial as the movie itself."

**Give a clear, well-established opinion early on.** Don't leave the reader guessing whether you like the book/movie or not. Let them know early on, so that you can spend the rest of the time "proving" your rating.

- Using stars, a score out of 10 or 100, or the simple thumbs-up and thumbs-down is a quick way to give your thoughts. You then write about why you chose that rating.
- **Great Movie:** "It is the rare movie that succeeds on almost every level, where each character, scene, costume, and joke firing on all cylinders to make a film worth repeated viewings."
- **Bad Movie:** "It doesn't matter how much you enjoy kung-fu and karate films: with *47 Ronin*, you're better off saving your money, your popcorn, and time."

<sup>52</sup> "How to Write a Movie Review." Co-authored by wikiHow Staff | Updated: September 17, 2019. <https://www.wikihow.com/Write-a-Movie-Review> Under an CC-BY-NC-SA License, wikiHow's text content is free to modify, republish and share.

- **Okay Movie:** "I loved the wildly uneven *Interstellar* far more than I should have, but that doesn't mean it is perfect. Ultimately, the utter awe and spectacle of space swept me through the admittedly heavy-handed plotting and dialogue."

**Write your review.** This is where taking notes during the movie really pays off. No one cares about your opinion if you can't give facts that support your argument.

- **Great:** "Michael B. Jordan and Octavia Spencer's chemistry would carry *Fruitvale Station* even if the script wasn't so good. The mid-movie prison scene in particular, where the camera never leaves their faces, show how much they can convey with nothing but their eyelids, the flashing tension of neck muscles, and a barely cracking voice."
- **Bad:** "*Jurassic World*'s biggest flaw, a complete lack of relatable female characters, is only further underscored by a laughably unrealistic shot of our heroine running away from a dinosaur -- in heels."
- **Okay:** "At the end of the day, *Snowpiercer* can't decide what kind of movie it wants to be. The attention to detail in fight scenes, where every weapon, lightbulb, and slick patch of ground is accounted for, doesn't translate to an ending that seems powerful but ultimately says little of substance."

**Move beyond the obvious plot analysis.** Plot is just one piece of a movie and shouldn't dictate your entire review. Some movies don't have great or compelling plots, but that doesn't mean the movie itself is bad. Other things to focus on include:

- **Cinematography:** "*Her* is a world drenched in color, using bright, soft reds and oranges alongside calming whites and grays that both builds, and slowly strip away, the feelings of love between the protagonists. Every frame feels like a painting worth sitting in."
- **Tone:** "Despite the insane loneliness and high stakes of being stuck alone on Mars, *The Martian*'s witty script keeps humor and excitement alive in every scene. Space may be dangerous and scary, but the joy of scientific discovery is intoxicating."
- **Music and Sound:** "*No Country for Old Men*'s bold decision to skip music entirely pays off in spades. The eerie silence of the desert, punctuated by the brief spells of violent, up-close-and-personal sound effects of hunter and hunted, keeps you constantly on the edge of your seat."
- **Acting:** "While he's fantastic whenever he's on the move, using his cool stoicism to counteract the rampaging bus, Keanu Reeves can't quite match his costar in the quiet moments of *Speed*, which falter under his expressionless gaze."

**Bring your review full circle in the ending.** Give the review some closure, usually by trying back to your opening fact. Remember, people read reviews to decide whether or not they should watch a movie. End on a sentence that tells them.

- **Great:** "In the end, even the characters of *Blue Ruin* know how pointless their feud is. But revenge, much like every taut minute of this thriller, is far too addictive to give up until the bitter end."

- **Bad:** "Much like the oft-mentioned "box of chocolates", *Forest Gump* has a couple of good little morsels. But most of the scenes, too sweet by half, should have been in the trash long before this movie was put out."
- **Okay:** "Without the novel, even revolutionary concept, *Boyhood* may not be a great movie. It might not even be "good." But the power the film finds in the beauty of passing time and little, inconsequential moments -- moments that could only be captured over 12 years of shooting -- make Linklater's latest an essential film for anyone interested in the art of film."

**Gather basic facts about the book/movie.** You can do this before or after you watch/read the movie/book, but you should definitely do it before you write the review, because you'll need to weave the facts into your review as you write. Here's what you need to know: The title and year; the director's or author's name; the names of the lead actors/characters; the genre.

**Take notes.** Before you sit down to watch a film, or read a book, get out a notepad or a laptop to take notes. Movies/books are long, and you can easily forget details or major plot points. Taking notes allows you to jot down little things you can return to later.

- Make a note every time something sticks out to you, whether it's good or bad. Think about how this detail relates to the rest of the piece and what it means in the context of your review.
- Take note of patterns you begin to notice.



## **EXAMPLE: REMEMBER THE TITANS REVIEW BY SHAYLYNN N.**

The movie "Remember the Titans," is about the segregation and football. It starts when two different schools, black and white students, combine their football team. The season before their senior year they all must go to a summer football camp together and join as one strong team to win the state champion. However, during this time they are not fond of each other and fight all the time. The coaches bring them together as one and each game is an adventure especially playing all white teams. In the end of the movie one of the captains gets severely hurt and cannot finish the game, but at the end the team finishes the job and takes home the champion.

In my opinion, I think that this movie is very good. It teaches about segregation. It's about leadership, sports, and commitment. I think a huge factor that plays in it is race and no matter what color you are everybody is the same. It is very inspirational, and it is based on a true story. In the movie there was a lot of injustice about race and it's a great story. I think it brings faith back in humanity.

My opinion early in the movie was that there was a lot of judgement between the whites and black and it made me very emotional to see how it was back them for an example how the blacks were treated and I thought that it was going to stay like that for the whole movie. However, in the end it came out to have a great outcome.

Finally, my review of the movie would be a 10/10 just because it teaches so much about history and I love how it is based on a true story. I would definitely recommend this movie to someone who likes sports because it teaches a lot of leadership and respect to others.



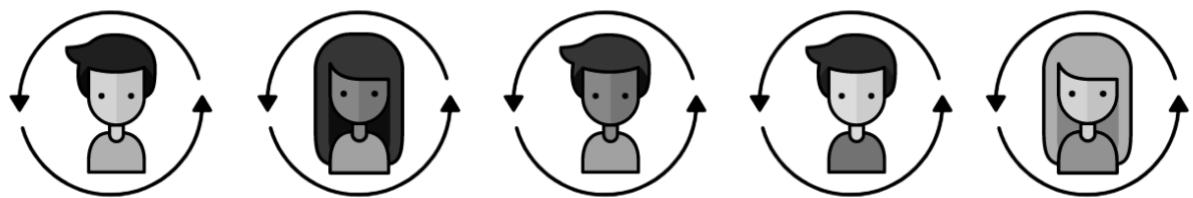
**ASSIGNMENTS AND QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

- Compose a movie, book, or TV show review. At a minimum, include the following criteria:
  - Gather basic facts about the book/movie/TV show and take notes.
  - Start with a compelling fact or opinion on the book/movie.
  - Give a clear, well-established opinion early on.
  - Move beyond the obvious plot analysis.
  - Bring your review full-circle in the ending.

# MORE GENRES

Journal Entries  
Greeting Cards  
Business Letters or Correspondence  
Schedule, To Do, or Goals List  
Short Scene from a Play  
Texting  
Inner Monologue  
Short Story / Ghost Story  
Myth, Tall Tale, or Fairy Tale  
Picture Book  
Human Interest Story  
Future News Story  
Classified Ad or Personal Ad  
Obituary and Eulogy or Tribute  
Critique of a Published Source  
Speech, Diatribe, or Debate  
Philosophical Questions  
Chart/Diagram w/Explanation & Analysis  
Timeline, Chain of Events, or Map w/  
Explanation& Analysis  
Top Ten List  
Textbook Article  
Talk Show Interview or Panel  
Posters  
Magazine or TV Ad or Infomercial  
Glossary or Dictionary entry  
Recipe and Description of Traditional  
Holiday Events  
Restaurant Description and Menu

How to or Directions Booklet  
Travel Brochure Description  
Science Article or Technical Report  
Company or Organization Publication  
Receipts, Applications, Deeds, Budgets  
Wedding or Graduation Invitation  
Birth Certificate  
Yearbook or School Newspaper or  
Newsletter  
Classroom Discussion/Dialogue  
Class Blog entries  
Award Nomination  
Contest Entry Application  
Doctor/Lawyer/Teacher/Nurse Notes  
Employer Records  
Character Analysis or Case Study  
Board Game or Trivial Pursuit  
Comedy Routine or Parody  
Comic Strip  
Tabloid Article  
Puzzle, Witticisms, or Aphorisms,  
Famous Quotes  
Poetry  
Favorite Inspirational Quotation w/a  
Journal Entry  
Lyrics for a song or ballad  
Video  
PowerPoint/Google Slides  
Web Site



# THE WRITING PROCESS

# THE CORE

## Writing is the Tangible Result of Thinking<sup>53</sup>.

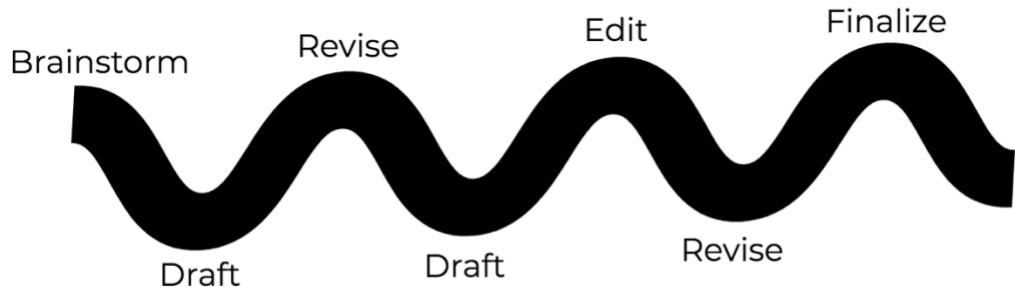
And learning how to think—how to develop your own ideas and concepts—is the purpose of a college education. Even though the end result of writing is a product, writing itself is a process through which you ask questions; create, develop, hone, and organize ideas; argue a point; search for evidence to support your ideas...and so on. **The point here is that writing really involves creative and critical thinking processes.** Like any creative process, it often starts in a jumble as you develop, sort, and sift through ideas. But it doesn't need to stay in disarray. Your writing will gain direction as you start examining those ideas. It just doesn't happen all at once. Writing is a process that happens over time. And like any process, there are certain steps or stages.

The writing process is something that no two people will do the same way. There is no "right way" or "wrong way" to write. It can be a very messy and fluid process, and the following is only a representation of commonly used steps. Just in case you weren't aware of this already:

Rarely does the Writing Process look like this:

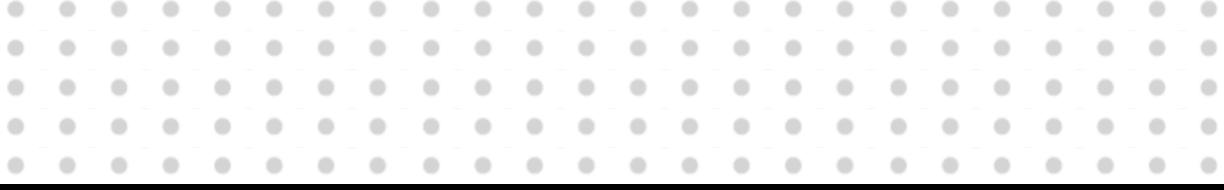


It looks more like this:



This visual was created by Sybil Priebe using Piktochart.com.

<sup>53</sup> From the Excelsior Online Writing Lab (OWL), 2019. This site is licensed under a CC-BY license. <https://owl.excelsior.edu/writing-process/writing-process-overview/>



# BRAINSTORMING & PREWRITING

This chapter brought to you by Sybil Priebe and edited pieces of this Wikibook<sup>54</sup>.

## Why Prewrite?

Prewriting for even 5 to 20 minutes can help you establish what you already know about a paper topic, as well as aid you in discovering where you would like to go with a paper (i.e. what you want to know). Doing so can often help prevent you from committing to superficial and/or mundane responses. Prewriting can help you find strong, thoughtful, and clear answers to questions posed by either the assignment or by your consideration of it. It can reveal to you those potential areas of personal interest within the writing task: in a manner of speaking, prewriting enables you to “discover” yourself within the context of your topic. It can also help you nail down responses – to move ideas from short-term memory into long-term or written memory – so that you can get to the work of writing rather than trying to remember what it is you want to say. That is, your thinking is often more clear and better focused when engaged in actual writing. As such, prewriting can act as a tool to ward off or break through what is commonly called “writer’s block.”

## Prewriting Activities:

The following are techniques that can aid in the composition process, either in coming up with ideas or in working through various obstacles along the way.

### Brainstorming:

Brainstorming is one of the most effective pre-writing techniques you can use. It’s virtually painless and can be pretty fun, if you let it! Brainstorming is easy because there are NO RULES. Let your mind wander and think about things that you would like to explore more. Try to create a mental web of things you can connect to one another. Let the lightning of ideas strike you as they may. If you’d like a bit more structure in your prewriting, try one of these methods:

<sup>54</sup> “Basic Writing/Print version.” *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. 9 Sep 2008, 16:02 UTC. 11 May 2016, 18:08 <<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=BasicWriting/Printversion&oldid=1273791>>. Licensed CC-BY-SA.

## **Listing:**

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Listing allows the writer to accomplish several important tasks:

- Finding a topic
- Determining whether you have enough information for a topic before proceeding
  - After narrowing down your topic, create a list with everything

## **EXAMPLE OF LISTING**

The assignment is an essay about anything you want to learn more about; the topic I'm thinking of writing about is finding balance in college.

1. Balancing classes and work
2. Studying better
3. Distant friendships
4. How do I find time to take care of myself?

## **Freewriting:**

---

Similar to listing, only in this case you simply start writing in sentence form literally anything that comes to mind in context of thinking about your topic and/or assignment.

## **EXAMPLE OF FREEWRITING**

I don't know what I want to learn. I really hate having to balance school and work right now. Hey, maybe that's something; I could research balance in people's lives and how they achieve it?

## **Outline:**

---

This form of prewriting is geared more toward organization. It groups your thoughts into a definite main point and the supporting details.

## **EXAMPLE OF OUTLINING**

- A. Intro: Why We Need Balance
  - i. Mental/Spiritual
  - ii. Academic
  - iii. Financial
- B. Obstacles to Finding Balance
  - i. People
  - ii. Stress and Illness
- C. Who Has Found Balance?
  - i. Examples
- D. Tips on Finding Balance
  - i. Be Organized

- ii. Find Routines that work for you

## **STUDENT EXAMPLE OF OUTLINING**

In our student sample<sup>55</sup>, the writer may start with the events of his freshman year, going all the way through to his senior year.

Paragraph 1 = Freshman:

I learned to manage my time with practice, schoolwork, and my social life.

I learned what it means to earn your status within a group atmosphere.

Paragraph 2 = Sophomore:

I learned to deal with adversity, as I was injured throughout most of the season.

I learned to ask for and rely on the help of others when I could not do things on my own.

Paragraph 3 = Junior:

I learned to truly work together to achieve team goals, as we had a very successful season.

I learned to present myself as a role model, as I gained some community notoriety.

Paragraph 4 = Senior:

I learned how to present myself as a true leader of a group, as I was elected team captain.

I learned to take pride in everything I do because it is the most rewarding.

## **EVENTS OF THE NARRATIVE**

Paragraph 1:

My experience playing High School basketball taught me skills which will benefit me throughout the rest of my life. It all started during the fall of my freshman year at Otucan Bila National High School, when I quickly found out how important time management is. I had my schoolwork, which was fourteen credits including an extremely difficult Mathematics class. I had basketball, which included meetings and practice every day and running and lifting a couple times of week. I also had my social life, another important aspect, especially to a twelve-year-old.

Paragraph 2:

My sophomore year taught me how to deal with adversity. I broke my leg during the second game of the season against Team Angels, and I learned how something that seems devastating can be seen in a positive light. I learned that life will always have something unexpected in store but learning to deal with it makes us stronger people.

Paragraph 3:

My junior year taught me how to set goals and achieve them in a team atmosphere. Our team that year had a mission to make the playoffs, and we were not going to let anything get in our way. We really came together that year because we all had a common goal. I

<sup>55</sup> "Rhetoric and Composition/Narration." *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. 2 Nov 2015, 14:59 UTC. 25 May 2016, 04:18 <[https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Rhetoric\\_and\\_Composition/Narration&oldid=3012523](https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Rhetoric_and_Composition/Narration&oldid=3012523)>. Licensed CC-BY-SA.

learned that a group can achieve wonderful things if all of the group members work together and believe in each other.

Paragraph 4:

My senior year in basketball taught me how to be a leader. I was elected team captain by my teammates, which showed me that my peers respected me and knew they could rely on me. Leadership does not come easily, however. I learned that leadership must not only be earned, but it also must be kept. I was always conscious of the way I acted and spoke, because I knew my teammates were looking to me for strength.

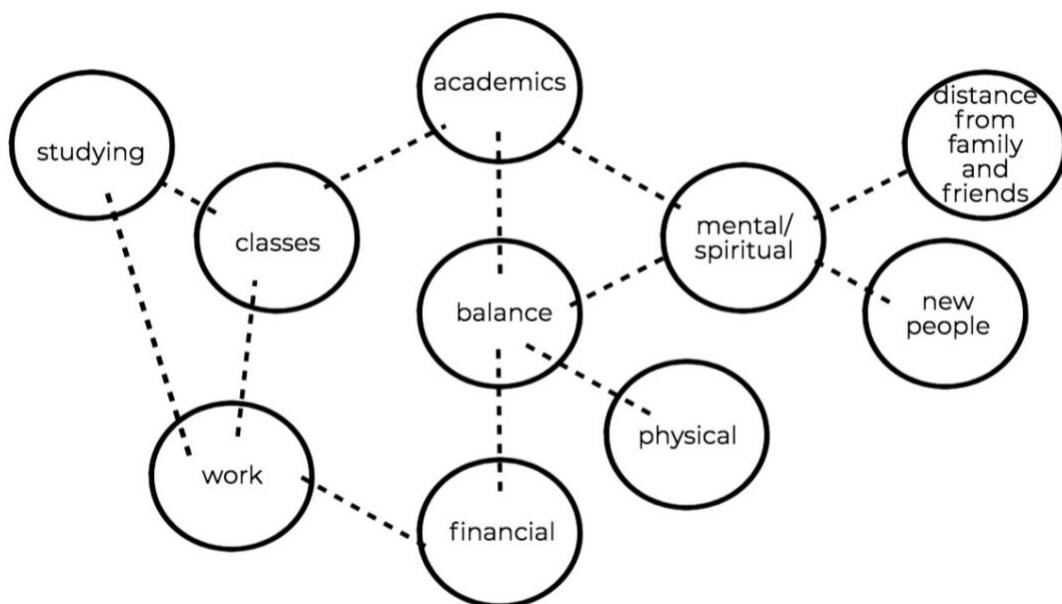
Conclusion:

Each year I played High School basketball taught me something not only about myself but also about the nature of the world and the people who inhabit the world. I learned how to balance my time, deal with adversity, the true meaning of teamwork, and how to be a respected leader. These skill-building activities will benefit me throughout the rest of my life.

## Clustering:

Clustering is a primarily visual form of pre-writing. You start out with a central idea written in the middle of the page. You can then form main ideas which stem from the central idea. [Other forms of clustering might be called Bubble Diagrams or Venn Diagrams.]

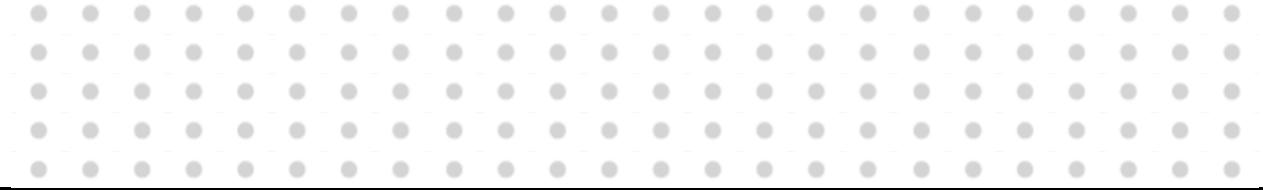
## EXAMPLE OF CLUSTERING





***ASSIGNMENTS OR QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:***

(Insert ideas from students or teacher here.)



# THESIS & TOPIC SENTENCES

This chapter brought to you by Sybil Priebe and edited pieces of this Wikibook<sup>56</sup>.

A thesis statement is a statement that expresses the main idea of your paper. It is usually one sentence, but it can be longer if necessary. Think of a thesis statement as a topic sentence for your entire paper.

## General v. Specific Thesis Statements

Naturally, you want your thesis to be very specific in the sense that it exactly states your main idea. However, how specific or general you make that idea can be very important to the outcome of the paper. A thesis that is too broad will not provide enough direction, and a thesis that is too narrow may keep you from discussing some key issues related to the topic.

- Example A: Television has had a negative impact on American society.
- Example B: Violent television has caused some teenagers to change the way they perceive violence in real life.
- Example C: South Park has influenced some teenagers to commit violent acts.

Unless you are planning on writing a book, Example A simply covers too much territory. Example B is probably ideal for a longer research paper. Example C, on the other hand, might be too restrictive if you were aiming to write a longer paper because it only allows you to discuss one negative effect of one specific television program, but just right for a short essay. Essentially, there is no such thing as “too general” or “too specific.” It is simply a matter of matching the thesis to the ideal length.

If the scope changes or your focus shifts (or even if you change your mind completely) while you are researching or writing, it is fine to change your thesis statement so it better reflects what you want to say about the topic, but you must be sure that all the information in the final draft supports the new thesis.

<sup>56</sup> “Basic Writing/Print version.” *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. 9 Sep 2008, 16:02 UTC. 11 May 2016, 18:08 <<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=BasicWriting/Printversion&oldid=1273791>>. Licensed CC-BY-SA.

## Example Thesis Statements from Various Disciplines

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It is probably worth noting that the above examples are probably a bit too simple to be representative of actual thesis statements, but the following are examples of reasonable thesis statements one might use to address a wide variety of topics and for a variety of purposes:

1. Math/Natural Science (to explain): Although Fibonacci sequences are most often applied to mathematical contexts, the sequences play an interesting role in nature as well.
2. Art (to explain): Pablo Picasso's innovative approach to art led to a new movement, not only in art, but in music and literature as well.
3. Psychology/Criminal Justice (to persuade): It is unethical to sentence serial killers to the death penalty because they are essentially mentally ill.
4. Literature (to analyze): A different aspect of the American dream motivates each of the main characters in John Steinbeck's *Of Mice and Men*.
5. Agriculture (to persuade): The USDA's current procedure for detecting mad cow disease in cattle earmarked for human consumption is grossly inadequate.
6. Astronomy (to analyze): There are valid arguments on both sides of the controversy regarding the recent reclassification of Pluto.
7. Business (to explain): The quantity theory of money emphasizes the positive relationship of overall prices with the quantity of money.

## Topic Sentences

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So, thesis statements tell us the goal of the entire writing assignment, and topic sentences tell us the goal of a particular paragraph. Essentially, the CEO is the thesis statement, and the topic sentences are the managers. If you were to return to the Prewriting method of Outlining in the previous chapter, you'd easily see how topic sentences are created.

### TIPS<sup>57</sup>

1. Often, writing an introductory paragraph is the most difficult part of writing an essay. So, don't start there if you don't want to. Go back to your brainstorming and find a different starting point.
2. When writing an essay for a class assignment, make sure to follow your teacher or professor's suggestions. Most teachers will reward creativity and thoughtful organization over dogmatic adherence to a prescribed structure. If you are not sure how your teacher will respond to a specific structure, ask.
3. Transitions connect the paragraphs together by using key words to draw the reader from one paragraph (idea) to the next.

<sup>57</sup> "How to Write an Essay/Parts." *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. 22 Apr 2016, 07:12 UTC. 16 May 2016, 14:59 <<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=HowtoWriteanEssay/Parts&oldid=3073150>>. Licensed CC-BY-SA.

4. Each body paragraph is something like a miniature essay in that they each need an introductory sentence that sounds important and interesting, and that they each need a good closing sentence in order to produce a smooth transition between one point and the next. Body paragraphs can be long or short. It depends on the idea you want to develop in your paragraph. Depending on the specific style of the essay, you may be able use very short paragraphs to signal a change of subject or to explain how the rest of the essay is organized.
5. As with all writing, it is important to know your audience. Place yourself in your teacher's position and try to imagine reading one formulaic essay after another. If you want yours to stand out, capture your teacher's attention and make your essay interesting, funny, or compelling.



**ASSIGNMENTS OR QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

(Insert ideas from students or teacher here.)



# DRAFTING

This chapter brought to you by Sybil Priebe and edited bits of this Wikibook<sup>58</sup>.

## Nobody Gets It Right the First Time

Whether a writer is the next Sandra Cisneros, or a student looking to earn a good grade, drafting must be done as a part of successful writing. Even when writers work to deadline and write at a single sitting, they return to parts of it again and again in order to get it just right.

It does not matter whether the work is a research paper or a poem, all forms of writing need to be drafted. Since a professional writer almost never creates a perfect first draft, don't feel bad if you need several drafts, too. So, if you find yourself very unhappy about your first try at a paper, think of it as just the start of something better, i.e. the rough draft.

Another advantage to multiple drafts is that the more drafting you do the more chances you have of catching mistakes and improving the paper. This is why it is so important to make time for multiple drafts during the writing process. The time spent drafting will bring you closer than ever to a more kick-ass version of your final draft.

The Importance of Just Getting It on The Page:

Not much can be done for a piece of writing until it is on paper or computer screen. You may worry that the paper will not be very good or even think that it will be awful, yet you won't really know until you've actually written it. Not only will you and your reader(s) not be able to see what you have written, but there is no chance of working to fix what has not yet been written.

## Rough Draft

A rough draft is a very important step in the writing process. Writing more than one draft gives you the opportunity to catch problems and see where the paper may not be working. So, it is a very good idea to leave yourself with enough time to write at least two

<sup>58</sup> "Basic Writing/Print version." *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. 9 Sep 2008, 16:02 UTC. 11 May 2016, 18:08 <<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=BasicWriting/Printversion&oldid=1273791>>. Licensed CC-BY-SA.

or three drafts of your paper. You may want to do an outline to plan your paper beforehand but doing that is not always necessary. After you choose your topic, any possible research and or sources needed in order you can begin actually writing. While you write your rough draft, you may not feel completely satisfied about the paper, but that's okay because that is what a rough draft is for. You want to give yourself a chance to work to get to the best arrangement of ideas and find different ways of expressing them.

## **TIPS FOR DRAFTING:**

- Start it, say it, finish it – that's an academic writing draft in its simplest form.
  - Start it. The introduction starts it all. That's where you get the reader involved in what you are writing about and along the way, and it also gets them interested in what you have to say. At the end of the introduction section, many forms of academic writing have a thesis – the main idea or claim.
  - Say it. Say what you have to say, and don't forget to set up a sequence of ideas that will eventually lead to the conclusion. Each idea or “point” needs room to breathe, so give it its own paragraph, at the very least. Supporting details and examples will also help.
  - Finish it. The conclusion wraps it all up in a way that doesn't just repeat the thesis- -it makes it both bigger and more specific. The term for this kind of writing is “synthesis.” In synthesis, the whole is greater than its parts, and that is exactly what a good conclusion does.

## **Final Draft**

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Yay! Here's how you know you have a final draft:

1. The overall structure and organization is solid.
  - a. The thesis is clear, and your topic sentences link back to that thesis statement.
  - b. Each of the paragraphs is centered around the topic sentence.
2. You've edited for clarity and audience.
3. The nerdy proofreader in you, or at your tutoring center, found any goofy errors in punctuation, spelling, and grammar.
4. The writing assignment has been formatted in MLA or APA style; all sources are properly cited in the text and at the end of the paper with full details.

## **STUDENT EXAMPLE: DRAFTING**

Title of Assignment: Dear Me at age 15

**Details:** Write a letter to your younger self; you get to choose the age, but I would suggest anywhere from 10-15. What do you want to tell your younger self? What advice do you have right now? You can be serious or funny; it's your letter to YOU.

## DEAR ME AT 15 - FIRST DRAFT

Dear Julia,

How are you? Are you shocked that I am writing to you from the future? Me too. Here are some things I wanted to tell you:

When it comes to the family, Mom and Dad are about to get a divorce. But it is not your fault. Don't blame yourself. They are unhappy, and I think you can feel that in the apartment when they are around together. Maybe you don't feel comfortable, and I don't think they do either.

All your friends will see changes too in their lives. Being a teenager sucks, and you should just realize that right away. Braces suck your teeth will look great later on tho.

## DEAR ME AT 15 - SECOND DRAFT

Dear Julia,

How are you? Are you shocked that I am writing to you from the future? Me too. Here are some things I wanted to tell you: Mom & Dad are about to divorce. This crushes you because you think it is your fault. It isn't. You should focus your energy on your little sister, Hayley. She starts to rebel because of the divorce.

All your friends will see changes too in their lives. Tanya's parents' divorce and you are both sad together. You two need to support each other and talk about what's going on. When I was first in your shoes, I ignored a lot of people, but maybe you'll listen to this letter and do better than me.



### ASSIGNMENTS OR QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

(Insert ideas from students or teacher here.)



# PEER REVIEW

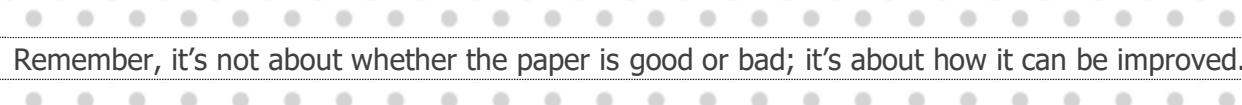
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Peer revision has added benefits over self-revision. Other people can notice things in your paper that you didn't. Some instructors set aside class time for peer review, but even if your instructor doesn't, it's a good idea to seek out feedback from a classmate, roommate, a tutor (if your college has a tutoring center), or anyone who can offer a fresh perspective.

If you're the one who wrote the paper, make sure you tell your peer what your biggest concern with the paper is. If you need help writing a conclusion, you don't want your peer to spend time circling grammatical mistakes in a paragraph you were thinking about deleting anyway. Remember, your peer isn't just there to catch your mistakes; he or she might have some ideas about new material you can add to make your paper more exciting.

On the other hand, if you're the one who is reviewing your peer's paper, think about what you'd want in his/her place. Ask if there's anything he's/she's having trouble with. Be nice, of course, but don't be so nice that you aren't helpful. He/she may like to hear "Good job," but make sure to explain what you liked about the paper and where you think it could be even better.

Remember, it's not about whether the paper is good or bad; it's about how it can be improved.



You have a responsibility to the student whose paper you are reading. Be familiar with the qualities and requirements of the assignment.

## Possible List of Peer Revision Questions:

- What is the writer's purpose?
- Does the writing include all the necessary characteristics of its particular type (cause-and-effect, narrative, research, etc.)?
- Is the writing organized logically?
- Has the writer used language that enhances his/her message?

<sup>59</sup> "Basic Writing/Print version." *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. 9 Sep 2008, 16:02 UTC. 11 May 2016, 17:37 <<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=BasicWriting/Printversion&oldid=1273791>>. Licensed CC-BY-SA.

- Is the writing unified/coherent?
- Did you point out the strength(s) or part(s) you found interesting?
- Is there any part that required more information?
- Is there any part that was irrelevant?
- Did you answer any questions the reader had about his/her writing?

Talking with someone else about your paper will always help you re-evaluate your content. Sometimes it reassures you that you've got it right; sometimes it reveals to you the places that need work. It is always a good idea to share your work before submitting the final draft.

## Possible Steps in the Peer Review Process:

1. Exchange a draft with a classmate, or group of classmates.
2. Read it aloud – either the classmate could read your own draft back to you or you could read your own draft to a classmate or group of classmates.
3. Answer these questions:
  - a. Does it fully complete the assignment?
  - b. Does it speak to its audience properly?
  - c. Does it contain enough content? Is it missing anything?
  - d. Does it have a purpose?
  - e. Is it organized well?
4. Give feedback on:
  - a. Word choice.
  - b. Style.
  - c. Sentence structure.
  - d. Transitions.
  - e. Readability.
  - f. Coherence.
  - g. Details.
5. Have a chat about your drafts.
6. Revise the draft taking into account the feedback you received.

## STUDENT EXAMPLE: PEER REVIEW

Title of Assignment: Dear Me at age 15

**Details:** Write a letter to your younger self; you get to choose the age, but I would suggest anywhere from 10-15. What do you want to tell your younger self? What advice do you have right now? You can be serious or funny; it's your letter to YOU.

## DEAR ME AT 15 - FIRST DRAFT

Dear Julia,

How are you? Are you shocked that I am writing to you from the future? Me too. Here are some things I wanted to tell you:

When it comes to the family, Mom and Dad are about to get a divorce. But it is not your fault. Don't blame yourself. They are unhappy, and I think you can feel that in the apartment when they are around together. Maybe you don't feel comfortable, and I don't think they do either.

All your friends will see changes too in their lives. Being a teenager sucks, and you should just realize that right away. Braces suck your teeth will look great later on tho.

## **DEAR ME AT 15 - SECOND DRAFT**

Dear Julia,

How are you? Are you shocked that I am writing to you from the future? Me too. Here are some things I wanted to tell you: Mom & Dad are about to divorce. This crushes you because you think it is your fault. It isn't. You should focus your energy on your little sister, Hayley. She starts to rebel because of the divorce.

All your friends will see changes too in their lives. Tanya's parents' divorce and you are both sad together. You two need to support each other and talk about what's going on. When I was first in your shoes, I ignored a lot of people, but maybe you'll listen to this letter and do better than me.

## **DEAR ME AT 15 - PEER REVIEW [STUDENT REVIEWER'S NOTES IN BRACKETS]**

Dear Julia,

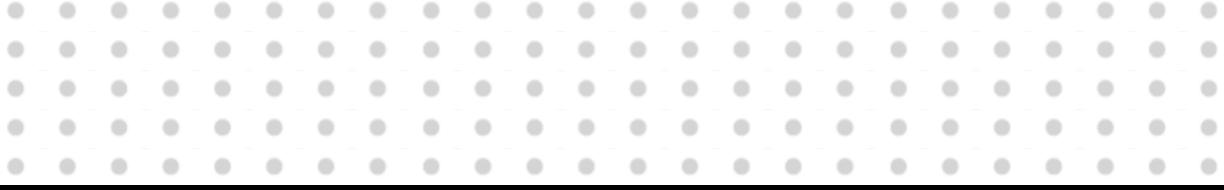
How are you? Are you shocked that I am writing to you from the future? Me too. Here are some things I wanted to tell you: Mom & Dad are about to divorce. This crushes you because you think it is your fault. It isn't. [Maybe you should say more about why it's not your fault?] You should focus your energy on your little sister, Hayley. She starts to rebel because of the divorce. [How does she rebel? What specifics should your younger self do?]

All your friends will see changes too in their lives. Tanya's parents' divorce and you are both sad together. You two need to support each other and talk about what's going on. When I was first in your shoes, I ignored a lot of people, but maybe you'll listen to this letter and do better than me. [Give more details here, too. How can your younger self do better this time?]



***ASSIGNMENTS OR QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:***

(Insert ideas from students or teacher here.)



# REVISING

This chapter is brought to you by Sybil Priebe and edited parts of this Wikibook<sup>60</sup>.

Your first draft shouldn't be your final draft. No draft is ever perfect; there's always room for improvement. You have to have content to work with before you revise. After you have completed drafting your ideas and have established what you consider to be a complete product of the thoughts you intend to convey, then dive into the revision process.

As you were drafting, you were probably revising in your head as you wrote out your immediate thoughts. You had concerns about the paper as you were constructing it. Write those concerns down (make notes in the margin, highlight, make familiar marks) so that you can return to them. Identify what you think are strengths, too, and bring the rest of your paper to the level you are seeking.

Revising is more than correcting spelling errors; it's finding clarity of thought. It could even be finding new thoughts you didn't have before you started the paper. You might find yourself getting rid of extra fluff.

## Steps

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1. **Read carefully** over your draft several times, with a different purpose in mind to check a specific problem each time. Look first for content (what you said), then organization (your arrangement of ideas), and finally style (the way you use words).
2. **Listen carefully.** Read your paper aloud for confusing statements or awkward wording. Try reading it backward, even. Listen for the paper's flow and pay attention to details one idea to the next. Each idea should come to some sort of conclusion while introducing the next idea, and each idea should relate to the one before it and the one after it.
3. **Take time** between readings. Allow yourself time to finish a paper so you can put it aside and read it fresh when you go back to it later, to be more objective.

<sup>60</sup> "Basic Writing/Print version." *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. 9 Sep 2008, 16:02 UTC. 11 May 2016, 17:39 <<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=BasicWriting/Printversion&oldid=1273791>>. Licensed CC-BY-SA.

The **essential components of content** are the intended purpose, sufficient support, and that all the details are related to the main idea of your paper.

- Achieving the intended purpose – does it provide explanation, details, argument, or narration? Does it complete the writing assignment's goal, as explained by your instructor?
- Providing sufficient support – does it need more detail, facts, examples to support the topic?
- Including relevant details – do you need to cut any irrelevant “fluff” information?

The **importance of organization** is to arrange ideas and details to make the most effective order, and to connect ideas to show a clear logic of thought process.

- Ideas and details are arranged in the most effective order--ideas and details should make your meaning clearer.
- Ideas are logical and clear – use of appropriate transition words to relay the connection of thoughts (such as “therefore”, “for example”) and any use of sentence combining techniques.

The **power of your style** will make the meaning clear, interesting for the audience with purpose, and ensure the sentences read smoothly.

- Is the meaning clear – did you use vague or general terms where you need to be precise?
- Is the language interesting, appropriate for audience and purpose – is the language to be formal or informal, did you avoid slang and clichés?
- Is it smooth – did you use a variety of sentence structures?

**Four steps to revising:** add, cut, replace, and reorder. These are the words you can use in the margin of your paper as you read and make decisions to revise. If you know the standard editing marks you can make revisions directly to the writing context.

Are you saying what you mean to say?

Will your audience understand it?

Does it accomplish the purpose?

## STUDENT EXAMPLE: REVISING AFTER PEER REVIEW

Title of Assignment: Dear Me at age 15

**Details:** Write a letter to your younger self; you get to choose the age, but I would suggest anywhere from 10-15. What do you want to tell your younger self? What advice do you have right now? You can be serious or funny; it's your letter to YOU.

## DEAR ME AT 15 - FIRST DRAFT

Dear Julia,

How are you? Are you shocked that I am writing to you from the future? Me too. Here are some things I wanted to tell you:

When it comes to the family, Mom and Dad are about to get a divorce. But it is not your fault. Don't blame yourself. They are unhappy, and I think you can feel that in the apartment when they are around together. Maybe you don't feel comfortable, and I don't think they do either.

All your friends will see changes too in their lives. Being a teenager sucks, and you should just realize that right away. Braces suck your teeth will look great later on tho.

## **DEAR ME AT 15 - SECOND DRAFT**

Dear Julia,

How are you? Are you shocked that I am writing to you from the future? Me too. Here are some things I wanted to tell you: Mom & Dad are about to divorce. This crushes you because you think it is your fault. It isn't. You should focus your energy on your little sister, Hayley. She starts to rebel because of the divorce.

All your friends will see changes too in their lives. Tanya's parents' divorce and you are both sad together. You two need to support each other and talk about what's going on. When I was first in your shoes, I ignored a lot of people, but maybe you'll listen to this letter and do better than me.

## **DEAR ME AT 15 - PEER REVIEW [STUDENT REVIEWER'S NOTES IN BRACKETS]**

Dear Julia,

How are you? Are you shocked that I am writing to you from the future? Me too. Here are some things I wanted to tell you: Mom & Dad are about to divorce. This crushes you because you think it is your fault. It isn't. [Maybe you should say more about why it's not your fault?] You should focus your energy on your little sister, Hayley. She starts to rebel because of the divorce. [How does she rebel? What specifics should your younger self do?]

All your friends will see changes too in their lives. Tanya's parents' divorce and you are both sad together. You two need to support each other and talk about what's going on. When I was first in your shoes, I ignored a lot of people, but maybe you'll listen to this letter and do better than me. [Give more details here, too. How can your younger self do better this time?]

## DEAR ME AT 15 - THIRD DRAFT, POST-PEER REVIEW WITH REVISIONS

Dear Julia,

How are you? Are you shocked that I am writing to you from the future? Me too. Here are some things I wanted to tell you:

Mom & Dad are about to divorce. This crushes you because you think it is your fault. It isn't. They chose to be with each other, and it didn't work. They wanted to have you, but they couldn't make it work as a couple. These things are not related. Please know that!

You should focus your energy on your little sister, Hayley. She starts to rebel because of the divorce. In school, try to say hi to her in the hallways more. Try to talk to her every day to show your support because the rebelling starts with her getting into trouble with her teachers first and goes from there.

All your friends will see changes too in their lives. Tanya's parents' divorce and you are both sad together. You two need to support each other and talk about what's going on. When I was first in your shoes, I ignored a lot of people, but maybe you'll listen to this letter and do better than me. At one point, she invites you over for a Friday night sleepover. You don't want to go, but you should. She needs to talk to you that night, so go and listen.



### ASSIGNMENTS OR QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

(Insert ideas from students or teacher here.)



# EDITING

This chapter is brought to you by Sybil Priebe and edited pieces of this Wikibook<sup>61</sup>.

## What is Editing?

Editing is sometimes confused with Revising, or with Proofreading. After you feel you've revised the draft as much as is needed, editing comes into play. Editing involves a number of small changes in a draft that can make a big difference in the draft's readability and coherence. Editing can happen at several points in the drafting process--not just at the end to "fix" things that are wrong.

So, what kinds of things happen when editing? Here are a few:

- word changes
- minor sentence rearrangement
- added transitions
- changes for clarity
- minor deletions

## What Should I Edit For?

The main areas that should be addressed in editing are: Content and Structure.

When editing the **content** of your writing, it is important to make sure your work has a clear focus or main idea. By asking yourself a few questions, you can avoid incomplete thoughts and/or irrelevant material. The following is a checklist you can use in editing your content:

- I have discovered what is important about my topic.
- I have expressed the main idea clearly.
- I have removed material that is unnecessary, confusing, or irrelevant.

Editing for **structure** ensures that your ideas are presented in a logical order. A single idea should be represented in each paragraph. Transitions serve to make the relationships between ideas clear. The following checklist is helpful in editing structure:

- My ideas are logically connected to one another.
- Each paragraph deals with only one major idea.

<sup>61</sup> "Basic Writing/Print version." *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. 9 Sep 2008, 16:02 UTC. 11 May 2016, 17:39 <<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=BasicWriting/Printversion&oldid=1273791>>. Licensed CC-BY-SA.

- I have included appropriate transitional words or phrases.

## Where Does Proofreading Come into Play?

Proofreading is the process of carefully reviewing a text for errors, especially surface errors such as spelling, punctuation, grammar, formatting, and typing errors. So, refining the **mechanics** in the proofreading phase prevents the reader from being distracted from your ideas. Here's a checklist can also help you catch these errors in your writing:

- I have used punctuation marks and capitalization correctly.
- I have checked the spelling of unfamiliar words.
- All subjects and verbs agree.
- I have corrected run-ons and sentence fragments.
- I have used words with the correct meanings in their proper context.

## Editing, Proofreading, and the Writing Process

A major question that students will probably find themselves asking is this: How do I know when to edit a paper? How do I know it's time to proofread? As a matter of fact, there is no simple answer to those questions. Writing is a process that involves several steps, and these steps do not always occur in a straight line. Writing any sort of text is a circular rather than a linear process. Writers are rarely completely finished with one step, even after they move onto the next.

Most people tend to think that editing tends to happen sometime near the completion of the paper. In fact, that is not always the case. While the most important part of writing is simply the ability to express yourself and get ideas across, it can sometimes be helpful to take a quick break from drafting or revising and to spend some time editing (or even proofread a bit). Sometimes, playing with word choice, sentence structure, or transitions can help stimulate your mind, leading to new ideas. Thus, it's important to realize that editing is not necessarily a one-step action, but rather something that can be done throughout the entire writing process.

### STUDENT EXAMPLE: PROOFREADING AND EDITING

Title of Assignment: Dear Me at age 15

**Details:** Write a letter to your younger self; you get to choose the age, but I would suggest anywhere from 10-15. What do you want to tell your younger self? What advice do you have right now? You can be serious or funny; it's your letter to YOU.

### DEAR ME AT 15 – FIRST DRAFT

Dear Julia,

How are you? Are you shocked that I am writing to you from the future? Me too. Here are some things I wanted to tell you:

When it comes to the family, Mom and Dad are about to get a divorce. But it is not your fault. Don't blame yourself. They are unhappy, and I think you can feel that in the apartment when they are around together. Maybe you don't feel comfortable, and I don't think they do either.

All your friends will see changes too in their lives. Being a teenager sucks, and you should just realize that right away. Braces suck your teeth will look great later on tho.

## **DEAR ME AT 15 – SECOND DRAFT**

Dear Julia,

How are you? Are you shocked that I am writing to you from the future? Me too. Here are some things I wanted to tell you: Mom & Dad are about to divorce. This crushes you because you think it is your fault. It isn't. You should focus your energy on your little sister, Hayley. She starts to rebel because of the divorce.

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## **DEAR ME AT 15 – PEER REVIEW [STUDENT REVIEWER'S NOTES IN BRACKETS]**

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## **DEAR ME AT 15 – THIRD DRAFT, POST-PEER REVIEW**

Dear Julia,

How are you? Are you shocked that I am writing to you from the future? Me too. Here are some things I wanted to tell you:

Mom & Dad are about to divorce. This crushes you because you think it is your fault. It isn't. They chose to be with each other, and it didn't work. They wanted to have you, but they couldn't make it work as a couple. These things are not related. Please know that!

You should focus your energy on your little sister, Hayley. She starts to rebel because of the divorce. In school, try to say hi to her in the hallways more. Try to talk to her every day to show your support because the rebelling starts with her getting into trouble with her teachers first and goes from there.

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## **DEAR ME AT 15 – PROOFREADING**

Dear Julia,

How are you? Are you shocked that I am writing to you from the future? Me, too. Here are some things I wanted to tell you:

Mom & Dad are about going to divorce. This crushes you because you think it is your fault. It isn't. They chose to be with each other, and it didn't work. They wanted to have you, but they couldn't make it work as a couple. These things are not related. Please know that!

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**ASSIGNMENTS OR QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

(Insert ideas from students or teacher here.)

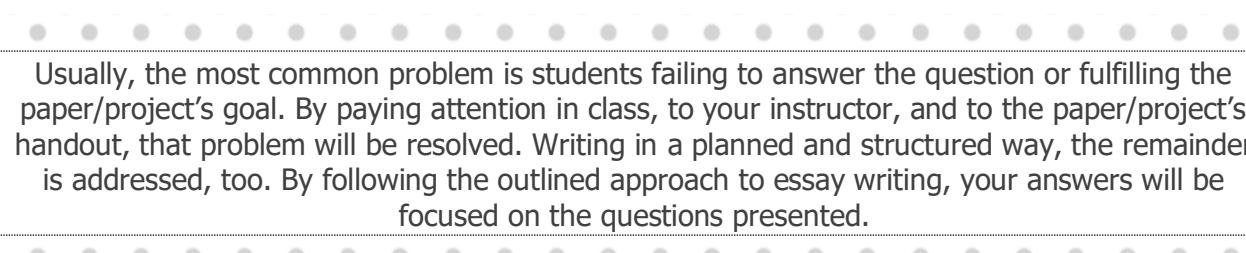


# COMMON PROBLEMS

This chapter is brought to you by Sybil Priebe and edited pieces of this Wikibook<sup>62</sup>.

By following the approach of essay writing outlined in this book, you can avoid a whole range of very common essay problems:

1. **Unstructured:** If an essay is unstructured, it becomes difficult to read. If you want to get your point across, or tell a story well, you don't want to alienate a reader with sentences and paragraphs that aren't connected to one another. Sometimes, this can be solved by simply breaking up what you want to say into paragraphs that cover one topic at a time.
2. **Rambling:** The problem of rambling is often just a symptom of the above problem: lack of structure. By thinking in a structured way, tendencies to ramble are reduced. Once you know what you're going to say, and in what order you're going to say it, it's much easier to stay on track.
3. **Not relevant:** If your instructor requires you to conduct research on X topic and you hand in a paper about your dog, it's not relevant. Perhaps you can bring up your dog if your research topic is researching the best pets for families with children.



Usually, the most common problem is students failing to answer the question or fulfilling the paper/project's goal. By paying attention in class, to your instructor, and to the paper/project's handout, that problem will be resolved. Writing in a planned and structured way, the remainder is addressed, too. By following the outlined approach to essay writing, your answers will be focused on the questions presented.

## Asking for and Getting Help

- If you are having trouble getting started on a paper/project, try reading the samples offered by your instructor – or in this book. They might jump start ideas for your own paper/project.

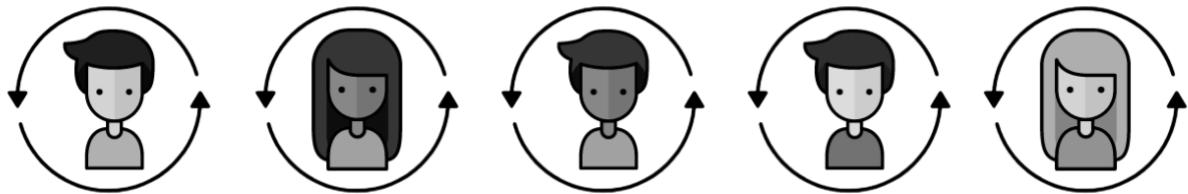
<sup>62</sup> "Writing Better University Essays/Common essay problems." *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. 9 Apr 2015, 08:11 UTC. 11 May 2016, 16:20 <<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=WritingBetterUniversityEssays/Commonessayproblems&oldid=2840084>>. Licensed CC-BY-SA.

- Once you have a draft down on paper, if you can't attend peer review in class – or your instructor doesn't include that in the process of that particular paper/project – feel free to use the brains around you or the tutors at the college tutoring center. Seek out people to read your material.
- When researching, head to your local library (if your college doesn't have one). Ask the librarian to help you, if you feel comfortable enough; they might appreciate a break from their duties to help out, and they are knowledgeable of their space.
- For advice on writing style, there are a great number of books available. Again, check your bookshop or library. Some books focus on the choice of the right word, others on different aspects of style. Note that different books give different stylistic advice.
- If you're unsure about plagiarism, or worried about your writing skills, the best way to get help is approaching your tutor or supervisor. They will be familiar with most of the conventions, and equally important, be able to guide you to more specialized assistance should this be necessary. In terms of plagiarism, there are a number of useful Internet sites, including <http://www.plagiarism.com/>.
- If you aren't a native English speaker, you might want to consider buying a grammar handbook. The choice of grammar books is vast, and you should pick one you feel comfortable with. The same goes for dictionaries, if you're not a native speaker; in addition, look around for books focusing on English as a foreign language. And, by the way, we're aware that the English language is a goofy language... just the slang alone is hard to keep up with.



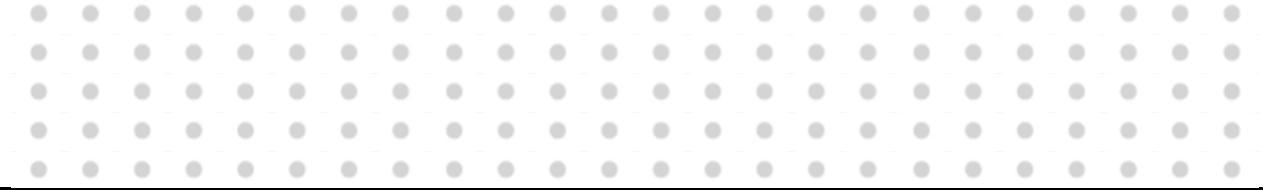
**ASSIGNMENTS OR QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

(Insert ideas from students or teacher here.)



# RESEARCH UNIT

Most students hear the word research, and they cringe. They envision a long, drawn-out process with limited success, and, horror of horrors, documentation. This chapter is devoted to alleviating student anxiety and facilitating the research process. In fact, the unit is broken down into STEPS, so just follow them one by one...



# THE STEPS

This chapter is brought to you by Sybil Priebe and other OER pieces.

At some point in your college career, a teacher is going to throw a research project in your face. The teacher might assign the topic to be researched – “Your question is: Where did the electoral college come from?” – or it might be open-ended, and in that case, you almost have free reign as to what you dive into.

## Step 1: Why Does this Matter?

### A STORY<sup>63</sup>

Mateo and Isabella are two very different students, both of whom are taking first-year College Composition. When asked to write a research-based essay, Mateo copies text directly from internet sources and pastes it into his document as he stays up late and tries to meet the morning deadline for turning in his essay. Isabella, on the other hand, has been researching for the past four weeks, finding ideal resources, jotting down her own ideas and significant facts into a Google Doc or in her notebook, always recording exactly what page and paragraph number from which the information came. She was able to use the sources she found in a way that is ideal for college-level writing—to allow them to provide support for her own, original, unique ideas.

Isabella gave herself time to gain more knowledge and, therefore, more expertise regarding her topic so that all her studying and gained knowledge would help her become informed for this particular research-based assignment, as well as giving her practice for similar writing assignments that would come her way throughout her college career. Isabella had based her writing on her own ideas and then cited others’ appropriately, which she continued to do throughout the semester. Her professor praised Isabella for her creativity, thoroughness, and organization, along with her correctly citing her sources.

As Isabella continued to grow in confidence, she decided to apply for a position as a writing tutor through her college’s peer mentoring program. Once hired, she would not only earn a paycheck, but she would also gain valuable experience helping others

<sup>63</sup> Contributed by Ann Inoshita, Karyl Garland, Kate Sims, Jeanne K. Tsutsui Keuma, and Tasha Williams: Professors at University of Hawaii. Sourced from *University of Hawaii OER*. This story has been licensed under CC-BY 2.0. Updated Sept 9, 2019.

understand the intricacies involved in the research and writing processes while sharing her own stories regarding how to succeed in college.

Mateo, however, was asked by his professor to make an appointment to meet with her. When he arrived at her office, she invited him to take a seat. “Where did you find your content for this report?” she asked.

A bit befuddled, he answered, “Through researching it . . . like with sources I found on the internet and in articles I found about my topic. They’re all listed in my Works Cited.” He reached for the paper and flipped to the back pages. “See. These sources. And I included the in-text citations here.” He pointed to another section within the body of his report. “And here.”

His professor knew that Mateo’s report was not only suffering from his failure to commit to the number of hours necessary for such a research-based project but that he had also never adequately learned how to incorporate the words and ideas of experts of others with his own words and ideas in a way that allowed already-existing information to fortify his original writing . . . not replace it.

Such plagiarism—taking the work of others and using it as his own—could involve department chairs and even college deans, the threat of failing a course, or, in extreme cases, suspension. However, particular consideration needed to be given to the fact that Mateo had been writing his research-based essays like this for years, and he had still made it to college. Was he at fault for beginning his report too late and thinking an all-nighter and what was largely a cut-and-paste job could save him? Certainly. But how many instructors before this had just let it slide because he had “included the intext citations”?

One successful habit Isabella used was not only reading but also engaging with the source she discovered during the research process. She interacted with the texts by jotting down observations on printouts of articles regarding what the writers’ ideas made her think about. For online sources, she created two columns on a page in her notebook: (1) notes and citations of what the author was saying, and (2) her thoughts, opinions, analysis, or evaluation of each source along with her own, original ideas that came to mind as she was reading.

What Isabella did was participate in the existing dialogue about her topic—the conversation that was taking place among the established experts—and contribute by “publishing” (by submitting her essay by the deadline to her professor) her own original ideas as well as her analysis and evaluation of what others said. This practice also resulted in her own synthesis of her previous knowledge with her newly gained knowledge and her continued analytical thinking, innovation, and creation of written knowledge about that topic. She learned that writing allows the individual doing so to enter the conversation, which is what academia, especially at the college level, is all about.

Mateo's instructor helped him understand how to properly incorporate the ideas of others within his essay through using a body paragraph from his own essay that was largely composed from content that he had obtained from an outside source. She asked Mateo to use two different colored highlighters to identify the phrases that were in his own voice and that were written from his own knowledge and those that came from an outside source. The professor explained the 70/30 rule, which says that 70% of an essay should be in the original voice of the writer and a maximum of 30% can be in the voice of an established expert on the subject, noting that some prefer more of a 60/40 percentage.

The instructor showed Mateo how to follow quoted, paraphrased, or summarized content with standard intext citations within parentheses. She also showed him how to intersperse such important information with sentences he crafted on his own. "State it again in your own words. Explain in your own words how that information relates to the overall focus of your section. Connect that information to more information that will follow," she explained. "And when you get to the end of your paragraph with more information from an outside source, finish up with your own wise voice."

"I can do that," Mateo said. "How come nobody ever showed me how to do that? I've been getting away with this kind of research-based writing for years."

The focus of College Composition is the types of writing students will encounter in college and their careers. Most of the majors students choose require them to conduct extensive research all the way through college. So, the students' job is to learn how to do it so as to demonstrate their researching skills and increasing knowledge.

An introduction to college writing is based on understanding that the primary underlying skill of academic writing at the college level lies within analysis and the ability to synthesize information into one's own words, citing sources as needed, with the confidence of one who feels part of a given community. The skills needed for good research-based writing involve reading the work of experts, assimilating that information with one's own brilliant (and evolving) ideas, possibly mirroring some of the writing that suits each individual student, and becoming a clear, creative, and confident writer in his or her own right.

## Step 2: What is Your Topic?

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If the research project is open-ended, use the Brainstorming Chapter to figure out what your topic will be. Will you try to answer what vegans eat and why? Will you look up all the reasons behind teen suicides? Or will you research ways to start your own business?

## Step 3: Who is Your Audience?<sup>64</sup>

All writing is created for a specific audience. Writers must identify the specific reader they want to reach.

- If they are writing for a general audience, what is the best way to capture a wide range of readers' interests?
- Should they provide background information that general readers would not necessarily know?
- Are they writing for an audience already well versed in this topic, and, if so, does this mean writers can use more scholarly language and include less background information?

## Step 4: What Types/Kinds of Research Are Required?

After nailing down a research topic, decide whether to use primary or secondary sources. When it comes to secondary, instructors may want a combination of popular and scholarly. And, lastly, sometimes, your instructor will push you to consider both primary and secondary that come from both popular and scholarly areas.

### **TYPES OF RESEARCH**

#### **PRIMARY RESEARCH**

This is conducted first-hand and includes interviews, blogs and forums, surveys and question groups, etc. The key to conducting primary research is accuracy and privacy.

#### **SECONDARY RESEARCH**

This is the gathering of information that has previously been analyzed, assessed, or otherwise documented or compiled including: sources (print or electronic) such as books, magazine articles, Wikipedia, reports, video recordings, correspondence, reports, etc.

### **KINDS OF RESEARCH**

This table<sup>65</sup> showcases some of the differences between popular and scholarly sources you may find during your researching process.

CRITERIA	POPULAR	SCHOLARLY
Intended audience	The general public	Researchers, experts, and student
Authors	Staff writers	Researchers and experts
Are sources cited?	Not often	Always (required for publication)

<sup>64</sup> Contributed by Ann Inoshita, Karyl Garland, Kate Sims, Jeanne K. Tsutsui Keuma, and Tasha Williams: Professors at University of Hawaii. Sourced from *University of Hawaii OER*. This information has been licensed under CC-BY 2.0. Updated Sept 9, 2019.

<sup>65</sup> Found on our own NDSCS Library web site; it was revised from the table at UNC's libraries: <https://library.unc.edu/support/tutorials/journal-types/>

Purpose	To provide general information and to entertain the reader	To disseminate research findings
Content	General interest stories/news	Reports on research
Publisher	Commercial organizations	Universities, associations, or scholarly publishing companies
Is the source trustworthy?	Generally, yes. But the authors are not experts, the editors aren't experts, and the information isn't cited	Yes. Before publication the information goes through expert review

## Step 5: Finding Quality Secondary Research.

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If the research project calls for secondary research, then you'll need to seek out some quality pieces to use. If the research project calls for only primary research, then you'll seek out experts to interview, create surveys for people to take, etc.

### SEARCH TRICKS

If you start by searching on good old regular Google, seeking out some popular sources, accurate terms or punctuation changes should be used to signal a more specific search or topic and lead to better results. First, determine what words or phrase best suits your needs. For example: If you are looking for information regarding a specific type of dieting, use quotation marks to indicate to the search engine that you are just looking for “vegan restaurants in California.” This will narrow down the return you get in your search.

These Search Tricks (also called Boolean and/or Proximity Searching) allow you to specify how close a search term appears in relation to another term contained in the resources you find. Boolean search operators show relation to other terms using and, or not, etc. Similarly, Proximity operators are shorthand notations used during a search that usually has a number to indicate how close search terms should appear.

- Using “AND” retrieves articles that contain all the terms and narrows down the search.
  - Example: “child abuse” AND Maryland
- Using “OR” retrieves articles with an of the terms and broadens the search.
  - Example: obesity OR overweight children OR juveniles
- Using “NOT” eliminates articles containing the second term and narrows the search
  - Example: depression AND teens NOT adults
  - Example: “video games” AND teenagers NOT children

## SEARCH ENGINES

Choosing the appropriate search engine for scholarly sources is simple—if one is assigned or you have already become well versed in online research. However, if you are a novice in the field of research, the following list of electronic search engines may ease some of your research stress.

- College Libraries:
  - The NDSCS Library is called the Mildred Johnson Library. To hit up their search engines, go to [ndscs.edu](http://ndscs.edu) then Library then Resources.
- Google Scholar was created as a tool to congregate scholarly literature on the web.
- Populated by the U.S. Department of Education, the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) is a great tool for academic research with more than 1.3 million bibliographic records of articles and online materials.

## Step 6: How Do I Check My Sources For Quality?

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### IMPLEMENT THE CRAAP TEST<sup>66</sup>

The **CRAAP test** is a test to check the reliability of sources across academic disciplines. CRAAP is an acronym for Currency, Relevance, Authority, Accuracy, and Purpose. Due to a vast number of sources existing online, it can be difficult to tell whether these sources are trustworthy to use as tools for research. The CRAAP test aims to make it easier for educators and students to determine if their sources can be trusted. By employing the test while evaluating sources, a researcher can reduce the likelihood of using unreliable information.

- **Currency** means that the information found is the most recent. That said, students and educators may ask where the information was posted or published.
- When looking at sources, the **relevance** of the information will impact a well-rounded research endeavor. One question in this category to ask is how does the topic relate to the information given in a source? More importantly, the writers of the references should focus on the intended audience.
- Students and educators will look to see who the author, publisher, or sponsor is before they can trust the information. Their education level and the author's affiliations are important because this can help the readers know if the author is qualified to write on the topic. There should also be a contact information of the publisher or author.
- The **accuracy** of the contents in the source must connect back to the origin. Evidence must support the information presented to the audience. Evidence can include findings, observations, or field notes. The report must be reviewed or referred. It must be verifiable from another source or common knowledge. That said, the language used in the sources has to be unbiased or free of emotion,

<sup>66</sup> Information gathered from *Wikipedia*. This page was last edited on 18 August 2019. Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike License.

because of its use for fact retrieval. The content in the source should be free of spelling, grammar, or typographical errors.

- The **purpose** of the sources helps the readers know whether the information they are looking for is right for their research. The questions that arise when looking for the purpose range from informing, teaching, selling, entertaining, research or even self-gaining purposes. Also, the author's intentions should be clear. Certain aspects should be taken into consideration whether the information given is fact, opinion, or propaganda as well as political, personal, religious, or ideological bias.

## Step 7: How Do I Cite Sources in My Text?

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Okay, so now you have the research completed. And you put your sources through the CRAAP test. It's time to put the information you found into your paper. You'll decide first if you are going to paraphrase that information, summarize it, or quote it. After that, you'll figure out how to give credit – with either MLA or APA (or Chicago Style; there are many citation formats).

### **PARAPHRASING VS. SUMMARIZING VS. QUOTING:**

- **Quotations** are identical to the original, using a narrow segment of the source (usually 3+ words in a row). If more than 4 lines (MLA) are quoted or 40 words (APA) are quoted, a block quote should be used.
- **Paraphrasing** involves restating a text, passage, or other document into your own words.
- **Summarizing** involves placing the main idea(s) of a larger passage from a source into your own words, including only the main point(s).

### **SAMPLES:**

- **Original Passage:** Last night, Snoop Dogg and the Detroit Panthers rebounded off a loss the night before to take down the Toronto Rascals. After a terrific shooting night from Dogg, which saw him scoring 22 points on just 9 shots, the defense and tenacious rebounding of players like Greg Money and Andre Simpson helped them gain a big lead, and, ultimately, they pulled away midway through the third and never looked back.
  - **Quote:** The Panthers “never looked back” last night during their win over the Toronto Rascals (ReporterLastName).
  - **Paraphrase:** The Detroit Panthers, led by Snoop Dogg, recovered from their tough loss the previous night to defeat the Toronto Rascals in a fierce game. Snoop was awesome from the field, scoring 22 on 8-9 shooting, and with supporting help on defense and on the boards from Greg Money and Andre Simpson, they managed to pull away in the third quarter.
  - **Summary:** The Panthers easily defeated the Toronto Rascals after pulling away in the third quarter off solid performances from Snoop Dogg, Greg Money, and Andre Simpson.

## MLA VS. APA STYLE

Typically, your teacher will require either MLA or APA style (they are the most common). Here are some basics to both styles:

### MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION STYLE

- MLA does not require a title page, asks that the margins be 1" all the way around, wants double-spacing, and sometimes instructors will ask that a student's last name and page number pop up at the top of each page on the right margin after the first page.
- MLA's in-text/parenthetical citations ask for the author's last name, most of all. If that's not available, then throw the article title in there, etc.
- To be considered a block quote (also called long quotations) in MLA, you must have more than four typed lines that you want to quote.

### AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGICAL ASSOCIATION STYLE

- APA does recommend a title page, asks that the margins be 1" all the way around, wants double-spacing, and sometimes instructors will ask that a student's title pop up in the upper left corner with the page number on the right margin.
- To be considered a block quote (also called long quotations) in APA, you must have more than forty words that you want to quote.

ALSO:

- Indent each paragraph when using MLA or APA style, as well as block quotes (a.k.a. long quotations).
- There is more to these styles – like how to use visuals and headings – so look online or in an updated handbook for more information on those specific writing situations.

## IN-TEXT CITATIONS

Once the style is decided, and you've looked over how to cite in the text using that style, you'll have paragraphs that look like these (depending on whether you use MLA or APA) meaning you have now embedded your in-text citations and are ready to create your end citations (covered in the next part).

## A PARAGRAPH EXAMPLE USING MLA FORMAT

The definition of the word "controversy" is tough to nail down, sometimes. For me, it's not those people who find ways to push everyone's buttons on a constant basis. No, those people are just mean. Instead, things that are "controversial" to me are things that are more hidden. Eric Haverty covers those people in his online post, but he also had definitions that fit my idea better. For example, he stated that people who "wear clothes reversed and inside out or none at all" are controversial. I agree. He also states that

controversial people park where they shouldn't! Keeping with the traveling concept, he also states that controversial people bike wherever they want to, too (Haverty).

## A PARAGRAPH EXAMPLE USING APA FORMAT

Americans are boastful and Japanese are reserved. These are widely held national stereotypes (Madon et al., 2001), but is there any truth to them? One line of evidence comes from cross-cultural studies of the better-than-average (BTA) effect - people's tendency to judge themselves as better than their peers at a variety of traits and skills (Alicke & Govorun, 2005). The BTA effect tends to be strong and consistent among American participants but weaker and often nonexistent among Japanese participants (Heine, Lehman, Markus, & Kitayama, 1999).

## Step 8: How Do I Cite Sources? What Do End Citations Look Like?

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Once you begin to wrap up your writing – or this can be done while you are adding to your research paper – you'll create Works Cited Page entries according to the format required. Essentially, you'll want to find all the pieces you can that identify the source you used: author, title, dates, pages.

### MLA FORMAT

THE MODERN LANGUAGE ASSOCIATION STYLE IS MOST COMMONLY USED IN WRITING COURSES.

#### BOOK:

Escholz, Paul, and Alfred Rosa. *Subject & Strategy*. 13th ed. Bedford St. Martins; New York, 2014.

#### ONLINE ACADEMIC ARTICLE:

Hernandez, Josh. "A Bovine Experience: Why the Cow Metaphor Doesn't Work." *University Literary Studies*, vol. 8, no. 2, 2002,  
[www.icu.edu/uls/bovinemetaphor/fig.lang](http://www.icu.edu/uls/bovinemetaphor/fig.lang).

#### ONLINE EDITORIAL FROM ACADEMIC JOURNAL:

"Information Technology and the Disassociation of the Student Body." Editorial.  
Persnickety Prose: the University Editor's Journal, vol. 3, no. 3, 2007, pp. 34-47.  
[www.persnicketyprose.org/editorital/IT/student](http://www.persnicketyprose.org/editorital/IT/student).

#### BLOG POST:

Ramone151(Joey Ramone). RE: "I Wanna Be Sedated and other punk rules to live by." *Random Rock Inc.* 1 June 1982, [www.randomrockinc.com/thread/616192/punk-lyrics-aka-rules-life](http://www.randomrockinc.com/thread/616192/punk-lyrics-aka-rules-life).

#### TWEET:

@Rosalinda16. "Living large in the outback of Argusville tonight." *Twitter*, 2 June 2015, 9:22 p.m., [www.twitter.com/Rosalinda/Argusville/night/2349810945483](http://www.twitter.com/Rosalinda/Argusville/night/2349810945483).

**FACEBOOK POST:**

Presley, Aaron. "Had the worst day. Came home and made a PB&J with bananas and bacon – now everything's better." 11 Aug. 2007, [www.facebook.com/peanutbutterandjelly](http://www.facebook.com/peanutbutterandjelly).

**EMAIL:**

Portmann, Rae. Subject: Foo Fighter's MPLS!!!! Received by: Cheryl Ann. 07 Sept. 2008.

**PERSONAL INTERVIEW:**

Priebe, Sybil. Personal Interview. 02 July 16.

**DICTIONARY DEFINITION:**

"Heuristic." *Merriam-Webster's Online Dictionary*, [www.m-w.com/dictionary/heuristic](http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/heuristic).

**SONG - CD:**

Nirvana. "Smells Like Teen Spirit." *Nevermind*, Geffen, 1991.

**SONG - STREAMING (Spotify):**

Prince. "Cream." *Diamonds and Pearls*, Paisley Park Records and Warner Bros. Records, 1991, Spotify, [open.spotify.com/track/omgilvthiso983432](https://open.spotify.com/track/omgilvthiso983432).

**MOVIE:**

*Shaun of the Dead*. Directed by Edgar Wright, performances by Simon Peg, Nick Frost, Kate Ashfield, Lucy Davis, and Bill Nighy. Universal Pictures, 2004.

**PHOTOGRAPH/IMAGE FROM A WEBSITE (Flickr):**

Clarke, Brenda. "Space." *Flickr*. 17 July 2009. [flic.kr/p/6FoPBk](http://flic.kr/p/6FoPBk).

**FIGURE - CHART, TABLE, IMAGES (from a book):**

Fig. 3. Taylor, A. *Research Geeks Rule*. Bedford St. Martins; New York, 2013. p. 323.

## **APA FORMAT**

AMERICAN PSYCHOLOGY ASSOCIATION STYLE IS MOST COMMONLY USED TO CITE SOURCES WITHIN THE SOCIAL SCIENCES.

**BOOK:**

Escholz, Paul and Alfred Rosa (2014). *Subject & Strategy*. Boston: Bedford.

**ARTICLE FROM AN ONLINE PERIODICAL:**

Hernandez, Josh (2002). "A Bovine Experience: Why the Cow Metaphor Doesn't Work."

*University Literacy Studies* (8.2). Retrieved from  
<http://ICU.edu/ULS/bovinemetaphor/fig.lang/>

ONLINE EDITORIAL FROM ACADEMIC JOURNAL:  
“Information Technology and the Disassociation of the Student Body” (2007). Editorial.  
*Persnickety Prose: The University Editor’s Journal*. 3.3. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.Persnicketyprose.org/editorital/IT/student/>

BLOG POST:  
Ramone, J. (1982, June 1). I Wanna Be Sedated [Blog Post]. Retrieved from:  
<http://www.randomrock.com/jramone/biblioinfo/>

TWEET:  
Rosalinda16 (2015, June 2, 9:22 pm). “Living large in the outback of Argusville tonight.”

FACEBOOK POST:  
Presley, Aaron (2007, June 11). “Had the worst day. Came home and made a PB & J  
with bananas and bacon – now everything’s better.”  
<http://facebook.com/peanutbutterandjelly>

EMAIL AND PERSONAL INTERVIEWS:  
“According to Rae Polemen (personal communication, September 7, 2008) studies show  
that music can influence....”

DICTIONARY DEFINITION:  
Heuristic. (n.d.). In *Merriam-Webster’s Online Dictionary* (11th ed.). Retrieved from  
<http://www.m-w.com/dictionary/heuristic>

## EXAMPLE: RESEARCH PAPER USING MLA FORMAT

Student's Name

Teacher's Name

Class Title

06 Nov 2001

### The Simpsons and Philosophy: The D'oh of Homer

"Don't you ever, EVER talk that way about television." - Homer Simpson

Is it ONLY a cartoon?

Only in our culture of today would you find such a question. And only in our 21st century way of thinking could you find such an answer.

As many people around the world take in, view, breathe the pop culture that is created and thrown at us on a daily basis by technology, by television, by magazines at a frightening pace, it is hard to take any of it for something more than what we see - what we can suck in from its material presence in front of us. But with an animated show called *The Simpsons* that has proven otherwise.

From the show, a book has evolved. Many college students around the country now own this book, *The Simpsons and Philosophy*. However, it isn't for recreational reading as you may think. It is a required compilation that accompanies other more ancient books in philosophy classes at various universities. In fact, the very man that edited the series the book appears in, *Popular Culture and Philosophy*, is an assistant philosophy professor at Kings College in Pennsylvania.

CONTENT CUT FOR SPACE – CONTENT CUT FOR SPACE

Our friendly neighbor country to the north had good things to say as well. Jason Holt's review in *Canadian Dimension* said:

In this way, the show is a useful discussion-point. It draws attention to important issues often marginalized or ignored in today's cult of the quick-fix. In addition, it illustrates how, in certain cases, it is ordinary folk, not philosophers, who have gotten things right.

On another note, only one review found the book to be full of itself. Timothy Yenter's review for *RealMagazine.com* of *The Simpsons and Philosophy* said, "Each essay takes a unique approach, and each has its own strengths and weaknesses.... (but) Not all the essays are so successful. Some never deliver the package they claim to offer, or they suffer from oversimplifying philosophical ideas or Simpson characters."

Mainly every reviewer and/or critic had nothing but great hoots and hollers for the book, if not the show as well. It IS a great springboard into philosophy for those not well equipped or versed in the discipline. William Irwin currently uses the book as an incredibly helpful addition to the books required in his class titled: Fundamentals of Philosophy. He, and other philosophy professors from around the United States, find the

book an essential contemporary text that allows students and their professors an outlet into a better understanding of how philosophy is interwoven in our American pop culture and daily lives.

It isn't just a cartoon. And it does have many deep meanings. It has influenced us enough to have professors writing essays for a book about it; it has influenced other professors to use it in their very curriculum; it has us talking and laughing about each episode with co-workers, friends, and family. There MUST be more to it then the two-dimensional characters and absurdness that radiates from it into our living rooms. "[It] has managed to be the only consistently funny, consistently smart source of political humor in mainstream American culture," asserted essayist David Kamp in *GQ* magazine ("Satire Still Superior On *The Simpsons*."). Absurdness, yes; satire galore, yes; pop cultural influence in every 30-minute session, yes. And insanely enough, we learn from ourselves more each time we witness Homer and his family living their lives as we do. D'oh!

"Let's go home kids."  
"We are home, dad."  
"That was fast."

#### Works Cited

Holt, Jason. Rev. of *The Simpsons and Philosophy*. *Canadian Dimension*. 34.6 (2001): 45.

Kamp, David. "Satire Still Superior on *The Simpsons*." *GQ*. 25 Sept 1998. 11 Oct 2001. <<http://www.gq.com/writings/>>.

LaCoe, Jean. "The Simpsons Give Philosopher Food For Thought." *Times Leader*. 14 Oct 2001. <<http://www.timesleader.com/>>.

"Simpsons Quotes." *Life Is A Joke.com*. 19 Oct 2001. <<http://www.lifeisajoke.com/simpsonspeak/>>.

The Official Simpsons Web Site. 10 Oct 2001. <<http://www.thesimpsons.com/>>.

Yenter, Timothy. Rev. of *The Simpsons and Philosophy*. *RealMagazine.com*. 14 Oct 2001. <<http://www.realmagazine.com/new/>>.

## EXAMPLE: RESEARCH PAPER USING APA FORMAT

\*Note: APA Uses a Cover Sheet

### The Simpsons and Philosophy: The D'oh of Homer

"Don't you ever, EVER talk that way about television." - Homer Simpson

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CONTENT CUT FOR SPACE – CONTENT CUT FOR SPACE

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On another note, only one review found the book to be full of itself. Timothy Yenter's review for *RealMagazine.com* of *The Simpsons and Philosophy* said, "Each essay takes a unique approach, and each has its own strengths and weaknesses.... (but) Not all the essays are so successful. Some never deliver the package they claim to offer, or they suffer from oversimplifying philosophical ideas or Simpson characters" (2001).

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"Let's go home kids."  
"We are home, dad."  
"That was fast."

### Works Cited

Holt, Jason. (2001) Rev. of *The Simpsons and Philosophy*. Canadian Dimension.

Kamp, David. (1998, Sept. 25). "Satire still superior on *The Simpsons*." *GQ*. Retrieved from <http://www.gq.com/writings/>.

LaCoe, Jean. (2001, Oct. 14). "The *Simpsons* give philosopher food for thought." *Times Leader*. Retrieved from <http://www.timesleader.com/>.

"Simpsons quotes." *Life Is A Joke*. Retrieved from <http://www.lifeisajoke.com/simpsonsspeak/>.

*The Official Simpsons Web Site*. (2001, Oct. 10). Retrieved from <http://www.thesimpsons.com/>.

Yenter, Timothy. (2001, Oct. 14) Rev. of *The Simpsons and Philosophy*. *RealMagazine*. Retrieved from <http://www.realmagazine.com/new/>.

# Step 9: How Do I Avoid Plagiarism?

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## TIPS FOR AVOIDING PLAGIARISM<sup>67</sup>

Research writing should present a writer's thinking, supported and illuminated by the thinking and writing of others. Distinguishing between the two is paramount to academic integrity. Desperate students sometimes purchase an essay from a website and submit it as original course work. More often, writers plagiarize due to sloppiness, haste or ignorance. To avoid unintentional plagiarism, writers need to do the following:

- Understand what types of information must be cited
- Understand what constitutes fair use of a source
- Keep source materials and notes carefully organized
- Distinguish what information is composed of facts or general statements that are common knowledge

### WHAT IS COMMON KNOWLEDGE?

Common knowledge is a fact or general statement that is commonly known. For example, a writer would not need to cite the statement that fruit juices contain sugar; this is well known and well-documented. However, if a writer explained the differences between the chemical structures of the glucose molecule and how sugar is related to today's levels of obesity in America, a citation would be necessary. When in doubt, cite.

### WHAT IS FAIR USE?

Writers are allowed to quote, paraphrase, or summarize material from previously published works without formally obtaining the copyright holder's permission. The concept of "fair use" means that writers may legitimately use brief excerpts from source material to support and develop their own ideas. For instance, a journalist might excerpt a few lines from a recently released film when writing a movie review.

### THE 70/30 AND 15% RULES:

The 70/30 Rule says that approximately 70% of the written content should be original words and ideas from the student writer, with up to 30% from outside sources. The 15% Rule is that student writers should never use more than 15% of direct quotes from sources. If the writing goes over this amount, the voice of the student is not strong enough.

## VALUE YOUR OWN VOICE

Plagiarism is the result of students who lack confidence in their ability to communicate in writing. It also frequently happens because students have not yet mastered the college success skills of time management, prioritization, and focus. In addition, some students

<sup>67</sup> Contributed by Ann Inoshita, Karyl Garland, Kate Sims, Jeanne K. Tsutsui Keuma, and Tasha Williams: Professors at University of Hawaii. Sourced from University of Hawaii OER. This information has been licensed under CC-BY 2.0. Updated Sept 9, 2019.

value the ethos and authority of the writing of experts, even at the cost of valuing their own words, phrasing, and ideas. They may be afraid to say things in their own way. But college is partly about students finding their own voices and building confidence in communicating. Students remember that quotes and sources shouldn't drive their papers. Their own original ideas should.

Here are two techniques one could use to avoid plagiarism when researching and writing using sources:

- After reading and annotating a research report, put it aside. Without looking at it, free-write a summary.
- Only use direct quotes when a source's original words provide a unique and critical perspective that can't be paraphrased or briefly summarized.



#### ASSIGNMENTS OR QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:

- Conduct some primary research on any topic. Then conduct some secondary research on that same topic. Combine these pieces into a mini-research paper, similar to the one below only with real sources. Follow the requirements for sources and citations.
- Create a “Mini-Mock Research Paper” similar to the one below on any topic; you will MAKE UP sources, and quotes. No real research required. In your mock essay, the following is required: Short (direct) quotation, block quote, paraphrase from a source, and a works cited area using the correct format—should include a citation from at least three sources—one interview, one book, and one newspaper/magazine/website article. It’s okay if your essay “ends” rather abruptly—you aren’t writing the entire essay—just a small chunk of it. No conclusion is necessary. Humor is encouraged and appreciated!

#### Cucumbers Are Gross

“A cucumber should be well sliced, and dressed with pepper and vinegar, and then thrown out, as good for nothing” (Jackson). As Samuel Jackson illustrates so clearly in the quote above, the cucumber is a disgrace to food everywhere. Studies nationwide have found the cucumber to be the most disliked of all vegetables. In a study I myself conducted, 90% of respondents said they would never even grow the vegetable in their garden, for fear of its terrible qualities spreading to their other vegetables. Because of its consistency and taste, the cucumber is the grossest food in the human diet.

“One of the most important factors in determining a food’s success or failure in popularity is its consistency” (Right 104). Something that tastes slimy when being chewed automatically results in a feeling of disgust. Such is one of the many problems that

plagues the cucumber. The interior has a texture similar to moist fish scales: not hard, but not soft. Doctors Moe, Larry, and Curly explain:

Basically, the cucumber incorporates water into the construction of its inner and outer skin. In doing so, the hydrocarbons from the cucumber plant only partially bind to one another due to the magnetic interference from the extra water molecules. This partial binding creates the unusual texture experienced when a person bites into a cucumber and adds to the intense flavor. (Fine)

As the good doctors above so clearly articulated, the cucumber's poor texture is a direct result of its own development. The Center For Steve is Always Right (CFSAR), in a study contacted last year, found only 6% of Americans didn't mind the gross feel of the cucumber plant (CFSAR). In creating a disgusting surface, it has made its survival much more likely since no one wants to eat something so vile. Or has it? Maybe we should exterminate the horrific plant, but that discussion shall be left for another day. We turn now to the cucumber's taste, another deplorable aspect to an already horrible food.

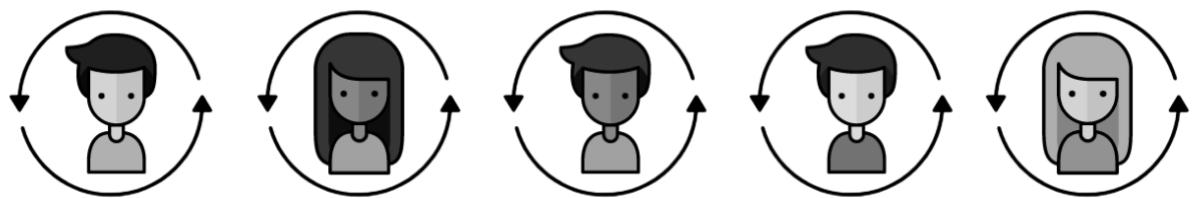
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# NERD UNIT

HAPPY WARNING: The best writers aren't the most knowledgeable people in the room when it comes to grammar and all that jazz. They aren't always the best spellers. They don't, perhaps, know the difference between using "who" and "whom." And that's what's great about writing; you don't have to know EVERYTHING to be creative with your storytelling, your plot lines, your word choices, your dialogue, your research skills, and/or your descriptions, summaries, and in-text citations.

With all that said, knowing the nerdy rules of the English language allow us to break them, right? So, why not learn some things here and there? Who doesn't want to appear smart on paper?



# GRAMMAR & MECHANICS

This chapter is brought to you by Sybil Priebe.

## Grammar.

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Grammar refers to the structure of a language: the parts of speech and their functions, their relationship to each other, word order in sentences, the parts of a sentence and how they are put together (sentence patterns).

## Mechanics.

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The mechanics of writing refers to the technical elements - or the itty-bitty building blocks of sentences - such as: punctuation, capitalization, spelling, etc.

### **HERE'S WHAT'S COMING UP IN THIS UNIT:**

- Grammar: Parts of Speech Review
- Grammar: The Basic Sentence Patterns
- Grammar: Active vs. Passive Voice
- Mechanics: Common Punctuation Errors
- Mechanics: The Basic Comma Rules
- Mechanics: Commonly Confused Words
- Mechanics: Common Misspellings
- Common Error: Subject/Verb Agreement
- Other Common Errors

# Grammar: Parts of Speech Review

Let's review using a poem!

## PARTS OF SPEECH POEM<sup>68</sup>

Every name is called a noun,  
As field and fountain, street and town,  
In place of the noun the pronoun stands  
As he and she can clap their hands.  
The adjective describes a thing,  
As magic wand or bridal ring.  
The verb means action, something done,  
As read and write and jump and run.  
How things are done the adverbs tell,  
As quickly, slowly, badly, well.  
The preposition shows relation,  
As in the street or at the station.  
Conjunctions join, in many ways,  
Sentences, words, or phrase and phrase.  
The interjection cries out, "Hark!  
I need an exclamation mark!"

### Side Note:

Things native English speakers know, but don't know we know<sup>69</sup>:  
...adjectives in English absolutely have to be in this order: opinion-size-age-shape-color-origin-material-purpose Noun. So, you can have a lovely little old rectangular green French silver whittling knife. But if you mess with that word order in the slightest, you'll sound like a maniac. It's an odd thing that every English speaker uses that list, but almost none of us could write it out. And as size comes before color, green great dragons can't exist.

# Grammar: Basic Sentence Patterns

Remember:

S = Subject = Topic of the sentence

V = Verb = What is going on in the sentence – what the subject is doing/action

C = Completer = Most sentences need to be completed, but there are some without completers like the sentence: "I do."

## THE SEVEN BASIC SENTENCE PATTERNS:

1. The Simple Sentence. Subject + Verb + Completer.

<sup>68</sup> Unknown author. If you know who created this, please let us know.

<sup>69</sup> From a tweet by Matthew Anderson, @MattAndersonBBC.

- a. Kenneth is a screwball.
- 2. The Compound Sentence. Subject + Verb + Completer + Comma + Conjunction + Subject + Verb + Completer.
  - a. He wouldn't stop telling racist jokes, and Sally didn't like that.
- 3. The Introductory Sentence. Intro Phrase + Comma + Subject + Verb + Completer.
  - a. Yesterday evening, Sally and Kenneth screwed in some lightbulbs.
- 4. The Interrupting Sentence. Subject + Comma + Interrupting Phrase + Comma + Verb + Completer.
  - a. Kenneth, the dude from Indiana, had some screwy-looking pizza.
- 5. The Embedded Sentence. Subject + Who/That + Phrase + Verb + Completer.
  - a. The pizza that was weird got tossed in the garbage.
- 6. The Trailing Sentence. Subject + Verb + Completer + Colon + List or Trailing Word.
  - a. The stinky garbage contained the following: the screwy pizza, two paper plates, and seven old lightbulbs.
- 7. The Complex Sentence. Subject + Verb + Completer + Semi-Colon + Complex Conjunction + Comma + Subject + Verb + Completer.
  - a. Kenneth took the garbage outside; however, Sally had to holler at him to do so.

Here is the entire list of conjunctions:  
and, but, or, nor, for, so, and yet.

Here's a list of complex conjunctions (a.k.a. conjunctive adverbs):  
also, consequently, for example, furthermore, however, in addition, in contrast, in fact, instead, likewise, moreover, nevertheless, otherwise, still, then, therefore...

## AND THE WEIRD SENTENCE PATTERNS:

- 8. Fragment: An incomplete sentence.
  - a. MAYBE: Without his love.
  - b. YES: I was torn without his love.
- 9. Run-on: Two or more SVC units fused together without punctuation.
  - a. EH: He didn't want to stay and well I guess that was okay, but I wanted him there and he couldn't be so whatever.
  - b. YES: He didn't want to stay, but I wanted him there. He couldn't be, though.
- 10. Comma Splice: A comma is spliced between two sentences, and it just needs to change into a period or semi-colon or an added conjunction and comma.
  - a. NO: The doctor mentioned the heart condition, I couldn't believe it.
  - b. YES: The doctor mentioned the heart condition; I couldn't believe it.

## HERE ARE THE FOUR PURPOSES A SENTENCE COULD HAVE:

- Declarative: I need my Batman cup in order to screw together this IKEA set.
- Imperative: Go get my Batman cup.
- Interrogative: Where did you put the screws?
- Exclamatory: Holy crud, Batman!

## Grammar: Active vs. Passive Voice

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The majority of readers and teachers prefer the active voice over the passive voice.

- NO/PASSIVE: The book was written by me.
- YES/ACTIVE: I wrote the book.

One main reason readers and teachers prefer active voice is because the passive voices allow writers to kind of evade responsibility:

- NO/PASSIVE: Dana's favorite pen was lost by Sybil.
- YES/ACTIVE: Sybil lost Dana's favorite pen.

Active voice must be used for contracts and all legal documentation.  
Passive voice is used in the sciences.

## Mechanics: Common Punctuation Errors<sup>70</sup>

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### COMMA:

Punctuation errors most often involve the comma, which means knowing when and how to use one. Of course, that's easier said than done.

- NO: Sally wants to go to the party, John will be there with his friends.
- YES: Sally wants to go to the party; John will be there with his friends.
- YES: Sally wants to go to the party because John will be there with his friends.
- YES: Sally wants to go to the party. John will be there with his friends.

### APOSTROPHE:

Used for contractions and to show possession.

- NO: I cant make my famous caramel roll's for the weekend.
- YES: I can't make my famous caramel rolls for the weekend.

### SEMI-COLON:

Sybil's favorite punctuation mark is the **semi-colon**. And not just because it makes a winky face when paired with a comma for a text message. No, she likes semi-colons

<sup>70</sup> "Basic Writing/Print version." *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. 9 Sep 2008, 16:02 UTC. 11 May 2016, 17:32 <<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=BasicWriting/Printversion&oldid=1273791>>.

because they are powerful. They can substitute a comma and conjunction when the two sentences smacked together are heavily related.

- YES: It's a gorgeous day today; I have to go swimming.

## **QUOTATION MARKS:**

Quotation marks are typically under-utilized by students. They can protect you from plagiarism, they help with adding dialogue to something, and they can go around words that are tricky to define.

- YES: In the article by Dr. James Johnson, he declares that, "Cramming knowledge into one's head the night before will causes headaches, not great test grades."
- YES: Then my mom said, "Please don't quote me in this essay you are writing; I don't want to sound stupid."
- YES: I wanted to ask him what he thought of the "party" we went to because it was weird.

## **CAPITALIZATION:**

The majority of students already know that capitalization is used for the first word of a sentence, for the names of people and of proper nouns, and when dealing with titles of books, movies, magazines, web sites, etc. The issues seen sometimes are usually centered around oddball items like titles of classes, titles of degrees, etc. YES: I took History 101 because it was required for my major. YES: Sybil, Ronda, and Dana have their Master's degrees.

## **HYPHENS & DASHES:**

The difference between hyphens and dashes is that hyphens are used IN words and dashes are not. Dashes are used in a similar way to how parenthesis function. YES: Three unlikely people - a witch, a pastor, and a bishop - all walked into a bar. Hyphens join two parts of a compound word like brother-in-law or five-years-old.

## **PARENTHESIS:**

Speaking of parenthesis, parenthesis are to be used to add extra remarks within a sentence. YES: Be sure to call me (extension 2346) when you get this message. YES: My brother (Jed) works in Fargo.

## **ELLIPSES:**

Ellipses are pauses in dialogue/speech and are rarely more than three periods... so, please stop using seventeen.

# **Mechanics: The Basic Comma Rules**

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1. Use a comma with a coordinating conjunction to join two or more sentences. In Layman's terms, fix a comma splice by adding one of the following: and, but, for, so, or, nor, or yet.
2. Use a comma to set off non-essential information in a sentence. Basically, put commas around extra information that is not part of the main idea. See #4 in Sentence Patterns.
3. Use a comma in lists or items in a series. See #6 in Sentence Patterns.
4. Use commas in addresses and dates. YES: I live in Wahpeton, ND.
5. Use a comma between adjectives if they make sense with the order reversed or with "and" inserted in between them. YES: She is a smart, beautiful human.

The Wildcard Rule:

There are always exceptions to the rules, and often it is just a matter of personal preference and style. Think about your purpose and your audience; then decide whether or not a comma makes the sentence clearer or is just an extra mark on the page.

## Mechanics: Commonly Confused Words

A spell-checker will warn you of most spelling mistakes, but if it's a word - even if it's the wrong one - Microsoft Word won't detect its "wrongness." A good tip is to keep a list of words you have trouble with.

Here are some you might need to include in that list:

- too/to/two
  - YES: The two of us are too tired to go to the store.
- their/there/they're
  - YES: They're going to their store over there.
- then/than
  - YES: She is smarter than he is, but then he's definitely nicer.
- lose/loose
  - YES: If they let the quarterback get loose, they will lose.
- definitely/defiantly
  - YES: I definitely want to finish this paper before the party.
  - YES: The toddler defiantly threw his food on the floor.

## Other Commonly Confused Words:

except/accept

capital / capitol

effect/affect

cite / site

all together / altogether

complement / compliment

allusion / illusion

farther / further

it's / its  
laid / lain / lay  
lend / loan  
who's / whose  
you're/your

passed / past  
precede / proceed  
principal / principle

## Mechanics: Common Misspellings

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accommodate  
achieve  
breathe  
convenience  
definite  
dilemma  
embarrass  
fundamental  
guarantee  
humorous  
independent  
judgment  
license  
loneliness  
marriage

necessary  
permanent  
privilege  
prejudice  
recommend  
repetition  
rhythm  
separate  
sacrifice  
surprise  
thorough  
truly  
weird  
whether

## Common Error: Subject/Verb Agreement<sup>71</sup>

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**Verb tense** and **subject/verb agreement** are also key errors that should be looked for when proofreading a paper. The subject should always agree with the verb in tense and number. These verb issues are often overlooked or unnoticed while writing an initial draft but can usually be caught with a good proofread.

Below are some examples of errors with subject/verb agreement. Take some time and see if you can figure out what the error is in these sentences.

- NO: The dog need to go on a walk.
- YES: The dog needs to go on a walk.
  - The subject in the original sentence (dog) is singular. The verb (need) is plural. The verb needs to be changed from plural to singular form in order to agree with the subject.
- NO: Chris and Molly goes for walks often in the evening.
- YES: Chris and Molly go for walks often in the evening.

<sup>71</sup> "Basic Writing/Print version." *Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project*. 9 Sep 2008, 16:02 UTC. 11 May 2016, 17:32 <<https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=BasicWriting/Printversion&oldid=1273791>>.

- In this case the verb started out as a singular form. It needed to be changed to plural to fit with Chris and Molly (plural subject).

A quick way to check for subject/verb agreement is to circle the verb and underline the subject of each sentence. Make sure that if the subject is plural, you use a plural form of the verb. If you cannot identify subjects and verbs this method will not be practical, and you should seek guidance.

## OTHER COMMON ERRORS: WITH A SIDE OF HUMOR

- NO: “Could of, would of, should of.” YES: “Could have, would have, should have.”
- No one needs to use more than three exclamation points if they are excited.
- “I seen him somewhere.” No, Dad. No. You saw him somewhere.
- NO: “Sybil took a class with Carrie and I.” YES: “Sybil took a class with Carrie and me.” If you’re stumped, take out one of the names.
- NO: “I’m pooped out, so I’m going to lay down.” The trick here is to substitute “lay” for “place,” and if the word “place” doesn’t work, the word you want is “lie.” YES: “I’m pooped out, so I’m going to lie down.”
- NO: “Please contact Sybil or myself if you have any questions.” YES: “Please contact Sybil or me if you have any questions.”
- Please don’t litter your sentences with side thoughts using parenthesis. If it’s important, make it a separate sentence. If it’s not, leave it out.
- The use of both “all right” and “alright.” NO: “Alright” is not in the dictionary.
- “Anyways” isn’t a word, yet. Go yell at Merriam-Webster if you want it in there.
- “Irregardless” also isn’t a word. Stop it.
- NO: “I could care less.” That means you still care. YES: “I couldn’t care less.” This means there is no more caring in your system.
- Watch out for dangling modifiers. NO: “After rotting in the basement for weeks, my sister brought up some apples.”
- Using the correct pronoun! NO: “Every one of the female students had their papers ready.” YES: “Every one of the female students had her papers ready.” NO: “Neither Jack nor John believed they had known about the project.” YES: “Neither Jack nor John believed he had known about the project.”
- Parallelism: NO: “Over the weekend, Kevin bought a new MacBook Pro online, two software programs, and arranged for free shipping.” YES: “Over the weekend, Kevin bought a new MacBook Pro online, ordered two software programs, and arranged for free shipping.”
- Comparison words need a comparison. NO: “Doctors make more money.” YES: “Doctors make more money than teachers.”
- Different than vs. Different from: Use the latter! YES: “This house is different from the one I have.” NO: “This house is different than the one I have.”



**ASSIGNMENTS OR QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

(Insert ideas from students or teacher here.)



# FIGURATIVE LANGUAGE

This chapter is brought to you by Sybil Priebe.

## The English Language is Weird.

This chapter exists for those students and teachers who wish to dig a little deeper into the English language because it's a weird language (if I'm allowed to say that). In our weird language, we have words and phrases that don't always follow their normal meaning... yeah, imagine that! So, not only do we have slang words and phrases evolving at a crazy rate – while also getting created by people weekly – this category is full of words and phrases that can change the meaning of a sentence without trying very hard.

There are few ways to use figurative language, including metaphors, similes, personification and hyperbole. Use this chapter for more information and certain examples of specific types of figurative language.

There is a lot to the category of figurative language; we might not cover ALL of the them, but here's a start:

### DOUBLE ENTENDRES

When a sentence means something literally while also meaning something perverted at the same time.

- Malik grabbed his ball before hitting it over the net.

### EUPHEMISMS

When a person wants to discuss a taboo topic but uses nicer language to talk about it.

- Malik urgently went to the bathroom; he had a call on line two.

### OXYMORONS

A phrase with contradicting terms side by side.

- Small elephant / jumbo shrimp

### CLICHÉS

These are overused phrases. Sometimes, they are okay to use; sometimes, they annoy your readers.

- Malik is crazy; he's like a chicken with its head chopped off.

## **HYPERBOLE**

These are incredible exaggerations.

- Ria's hair was so tall it reached the sky.

## **PERSONIFICATION**

This occurs when we give humanistic characteristics to non-humans.

- Ria's brain was acting like a jerk.

## **METAPHORS & SIMILES**

These are used in comparisons.

- Malik is as crazy as Ria is. Ria's personality is like an antenna for craziness.

## **PUNS**

The best explanation of this term might be to just say: "Corny jokes that older people tell."

- Malik shook the lettuce in my face and said, "Romaine calm!"

## **ALLITERATION**

When the same consonants keep popping up in a sentence or poem.

- Sally sells seashells by the seashore.

## **ONOMATOPOEIA**

This term is used when a word sounds like the sound it makes.

- "Pop" went the champagne; it was time to celebrate!

## **IDIOM**

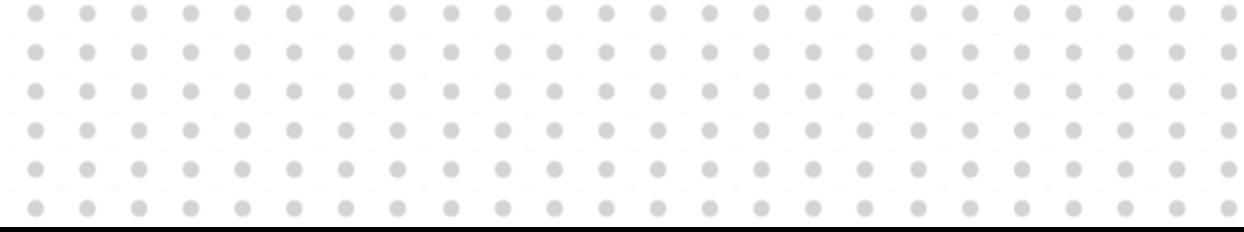
These are common phrases, that unlike clichés, are sometimes considered words of wisdom. Some claim they are big ideas condensed down into tiny bits.

- a little bird told me / a drop in the bucket / a bitter pill / a man of few words



### **ASSIGNMENTS OR QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

(Insert ideas from student or teacher.)



# STYLE

This chapter is brought to you by this Wikibook<sup>72</sup>.

**“Style is Created Through Elements Such as Tone, Diction, and Syntax<sup>73</sup>.”**

## DICTION

The style of a work, as manifested by the choice of vocabulary, phrasing and figures of speech.

Examples:

- Casual/colloquial = A bunch of girls are going to that concert.
- Standard = A group of girls are going to that concert.
- Casual/colloquial = Trey was kind of upset about the lasagna.
- Standard = Trey was somewhat upset about the lasagna.
- Casual/colloquial = There were like ten people at the party.
- Casual/colloquial = There were maybe ten people at the party.
- Standard = There were approximately ten people at the party.

## TONE

The manner in which speech or writing is expressed, such as serious or conversational. According to Kate Prudchenko<sup>74</sup>: “In general, the tone of a piece may be described as serious, ironic, formal, informal, angry, funny or any other adjective that appropriately defines the implied attitude of the writer or the speaker.” Ask yourself: How does knowing the tone of someone’s writing change the meaning?

## SYNTAX<sup>75</sup>

<sup>72</sup> “Rhetoric and Composition/Glossary.” Wikibooks, The Free Textbook Project. 15 Oct 2011, 20:47 UTC. 4 Aug 2016, 23:23 <[https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Rhetoric\\_and\\_Composition/Glossary&oldid=2183089](https://en.wikibooks.org/w/index.php?title=Rhetoric_and_Composition/Glossary&oldid=2183089)>.

<sup>73</sup> From the chapter on Rhetorical Situation.

<sup>74</sup> Prudchenko, Kate. "How to Identify Tone in an Essay.", <https://penandthepad.com/identify-tone-essay-1989.html>. Accessed 24 November 2019.

<sup>75</sup> “Syntax.” Definition. *Wikipedia*. Text is available under the Creative Commons Attribution-Share Alike License.

Syntax is the set of rules, principles, and processes that govern the structure of sentences in a given language, specifically word order.

The following sentence contains an error of English syntax:

- I is going to the concert tonight.

If we say this, other English speakers recognized the incorrect grammar; however, they will still understand us.



**ASSIGNMENTS OR QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER:**

(Insert ideas from students or teacher here.)

