

Writing & Reading Rhetoric



What, Why, and How?

Mastering 15 Concepts to Become a Better Writer

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**Written by Skyline English teachers
with contributions from our Librarians and the ESOL teachers**

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Introduction:
Behind the Rhetoric

WHAT'S BEHIND THE RHETORIC?

First off, rhetoric is the art of discourse, an art that aims to improve the ability of writers and speakers to inform, persuade and motivate. This textbook, Skyline's Writing & Reading Rhetoric, was written by English teachers at Skyline College with contributions from our Librarians and ESOL teachers with the goal of providing clear and consistent instruction on how to recognize and apply successful writing, reading, and research strategies.

This project is unique because English teachers and other faculty volunteered their time over two years to create this comprehensive and free textbook for students and instructors. This textbook is an English teacher's version of a love letter to our students. We love the written word and strive to infect our students with that shared love and appreciation of language. Also, we have dedicated our professional lives to help others reach their academic goals, and this textbook is a testament to our ongoing commitment to help our students succeed and flourish in college and beyond.

WHAT PHILOSOPHIES ARE BEHIND THE RHETORIC?

As we set out to create one text that promoted a shared set of values and approaches in teaching, we began by articulating our teaching philosophies and used these to shape our work.

First, we believe in and promote the mission statement of Skyline College: "To empower and transform a global community of learners." Next, here are our shared philosophies when it comes to teaching English:

When you take a Skyline English class, you will:

- **Become a part of a community of learners who**
 - **support each other's learning.**
 - **engage in collaborate projects.**
 - **lead and contribute to discussions.**
 - **develop your leadership abilities.**

- **Work with teachers who**
 - **value active learning that is hands-on where you can directly apply your knowledge.**
 - **encourage and respect multiple and diverse perspectives.**
 - **care about what you think.**
 - **create comfortable and inclusive learning environments that put students first.**
 - **who believe in empowering students and facilitating self-determination.**

- **Strengthen your reading skills by**
 - **reading texts that often reflect your experiences and interests.**
 - **being exposed to global perspectives.**
 - **applying strategies to improve your reading comprehension.**
 - **interpreting, analyzing, evaluating and synthesizing texts.**
 - **writing thoughtfully and analytically about the texts you read.**

When you take a Skyline English class, you will:

- **Strengthen your writing skills by**
 - **approaching writing as a step-by-step process that involves feedback and multiple drafts and revisions.**
 - **practicing timed in-class essay writing because the ability to compose quickly and on the spot is valuable.**
 - **learning sentence craft and paragraph development within the larger context of writing an essay.**
 - **becoming aware of your own processes of writing as well as the approaches and techniques used by other writers.**
 - **developing your own authentic writer’s voice and clear point of view.**
 - **writing different types of essays that fit your academic and professional purposes and audience.**
 - **helping you to communicate more clearly and logically not only in English class but in your other classes, the workplace, etc.**
- **Receive feedback from your instructor about your writing that**
 - **is given to you within two weeks from when you submitted the work.**
 - **encourages you to improve your writing and thinking.**
 - **emphasizes what you did well and also provides clear and constructive feedback on the areas that could be strengthened.**
 - **assigns grades based on evaluating essays as a whole and doesn’t penalize for each “error.”**
 - **helps you to identify patterns of error so you can learn to identify and revise on your own.**
 - **gives you opportunities to apply the feedback to your current and future drafts.**
 - **is ordered and clear and follows accepted and shared academic guidelines.**

When you complete a Skyline English class, you will be able to:

- **Achieve the shared English Department goals (also called Student Learning Outcomes—SLOs)**
 - **ESSAYS: Write focused, organized, well-developed, and text-based essays using effective paragraphs, which support a clear thesis statement, and demonstrate competence in standard English grammar and usage.**
 - **CRITICAL ANALYSIS: Demonstrate critical reading, writing, and thinking skills through analysis, synthesis, and evaluation of important ideas.**
 - **SOURCES: Effectively evaluate and fluidly integrate relevant sources, using appropriate research strategies and tools, and documenting them according to MLA guidelines.**
 - **LITERARY ANALYSIS (for literature classes): Demonstrate an understanding of a broad range of literary works from the period and/or genre by analyzing major themes and literary techniques.**

WHY A SHARED RHETORIC?

There are many writing textbooks to choose from so why spend so much time and energy creating our own?

We created this Rhetoric....

- to promote consistency amongst our English classes so that the fundamental writing and reading concepts are taught using shared definitions, philosophies and approaches.
- to avoid the possibility of giving students mixed messages and instead create clear and consistent academic standards and expectations with clear guidelines of how to achieve high quality work.
- to take advantage of and harness the rich pool of expertise and experience on our teaching staff using the strengths and benefits of our teachers who are fresh out of programs to other teachers who have been teaching for decades.
- to craft what we saw as the “perfect” combination of lessons, hands on skill application, and text-based writing instruction. We contextualized the teaching of writing by building into the chapters an example of how to create a text-based paper from the beginning stages to completion based on analyzing an excerpt from [Frederick Douglass' *Narrative in the Life of Frederick Douglass*](#).
- to save our students money! We know textbooks are expensive, so we created one that is free and can be used at all levels of English. If students want a print version of the textbook, they can get a copy through our bookstore and pay only the duplication costs.
- to appeal to different types of learning styles. Since we created all the materials, we were also able to adapt the lessons into PowerPoint and podcasts for students with more visual and auditory learning styles. Rhetoric website: <http://accounts.smccd.edu/skyenglish/>

HOW DOES IT WORK?

We used a consistent structure throughout the textbook to make it easy to learn a concept, to understand its relevance, and then to apply it. You can see that very structure used here in this introductory chapter, and it is reflected in the textbook title itself: ***What, Why, and How?***

The structure for each topic:

WHAT? Definition: What is a clear explanation of this concept?

WHY? Purpose and Rationale: Why is it important or beneficial? What are the reasons why this concept should be used?

HOW? Application: How can I see it applied in examples? How can I best apply it?

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Overview
of the 15 Concepts:
Getting a Good Start

WHAT DOES GETTING A GOOD START INVOLVE?

A good way to approach any academic text is to first preview and get to know the structure, purpose, and contents of the book you will be studying. This textbook is divided into 15 foundational concepts that will help you become a better writer. The best start would be to first familiarize yourself with these concepts before diving into the reading.

WHY START WITH AN OVERVIEW OF THE 15 CONCEPTS?

- Being prepared and knowledgeable about the concepts you will be learning will help you to better absorb, understand, and retain the information.
- You will have to start writing papers before you are able to go through all the chapters in this textbook, and yet as a college student, you will still be expected to include the foundational elements of writing in your essay, so start by reviewing and familiarizing yourself with these concepts and approaches.
- By looking at an overview of the 15 concepts, you can get a “big picture” of writing, see the connections between the ideas, and see how they work together to help you write unified essays.
- Getting to know a text gives you a level of comfort and ownership over that text and the confidence to navigate it well to later master its contents.

HOW CAN I BEGIN?

First, look through the entire textbook. Look at its structure. How is the **What? Why? How?** structure used in each chapter? Where are the examples and the practice exercises located? Are answer keys provided? Next, carefully read the following overview of the 15 concepts covered in this textbook. Then test yourself with the practice exam afterwards to see if you are retaining the information.

OVERVIEW OF THE 15 CONCEPTS:

Here's a brief description of the key concepts from each chapter in *What? Why? How?*

(1) CRITICAL READING:

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

- Use reading strategies BEFORE you read: learn effective reading habits; preview your text; determine purpose; draw on previous knowledge; predict what will happen.
- Use reading strategies WHILE you read: identify major plot/argument points, underline or highlight key points and quotes as you read; take notes in the margins; add your own views and questions; use word parts (prefixes, roots suffixes) and context clues to figure out unknown vocabulary.
- Use reading strategies AFTER you read: use discussion questions to explore the reading; use methods to organize and understand the reading; react to the reading through journaling and other focused writing and discussion activities.

(2) CRITICAL THINKING:

A good critical thinker...

- Considers all sides of an issue
- Judges well the quality of an argument
- Judges well the credibility of sources
- Creates convincing arguments using sound evidence and analysis
- Effectively recognizes and uses ethos (ethics), pathos (empathy) and logos (logic) in argument

(3) PAPER TOPICS:

Important to know:

- Skyline English classes focus on text-based writing which promotes an understanding and analysis of the reading as students argue their point of view on what they have read. Students will use evidence from the texts to support their claims, but summary should not take over the essays.
- General guidelines: meet page minimums, adhere to due dates, use paper formatting standards, follow the assignment, apply writing standards, seek additional assistance through tutoring and meeting with your instructor.
- Know how to successfully create your own paper topics and arguments: brainstorm issues, form questions, answer questions with opinion, ask “so what?,” gather evidence.
- Know how to successfully respond to assigned paper topics: read the assignment carefully, sum up the topic in a word or two, restate the assignment in your own words, circle/underline key words, count the parts, list the requirements.

(4) THE WRITING PROCESS:

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

- Freewriting: writing continuously letting thoughts unselfconsciously flow (often for about 10 to 20 mins) without regard to spelling, grammar, style etc., and no corrections are made. An excellent technique to push through writer's block and to explore a given topic.
- Brainstorming: is like freewriting in that you write down what comes to mind, but it is different because it is a list of words and phrases and not a string of sentences.
- Journalist questions: creating questions using: Who?, What?, When?, Where?, Why?, and How?. Then, write out sentences or phrases in answer as they fit your particular topic.

(4) THE WRITING PROCESS—Continued:

- Clustering/listing: methods used to organize ideas. *Clustering* is an informal map of ideas with the main idea at the center surrounded by the supporting ideas and evidence. *Listing* is an informal kind of outline with the main points followed by supporting points and evidence.
- Outlining: a formalized, logical overview of an essay in “skeletal” form consisting of the thesis, the main supporting points, and the specific evidence proving the supporting points.
- Drafting: using an outline and focusing on proving a main idea, compose the essay and include an introduction, body paragraphs and a conclusion. There will be multiple versions in the drafting stage as you get your ideas in the shape you want them to be.
- Revising: the larger elements of writing generally receive attention first—the focus, organization, paragraphing, content, and overall strategy. Deals with chunks of text longer than a sentence; whole paragraphs can be dropped or added; changes can be quite dramatic.
- Editing/Proofreading: checking such things as grammar, mechanics, and spelling. Don't edit your writing until the other steps in the writing process are complete.

(5) MLA CONVENTIONS:

Important to know:

- General formatting: double spaced, standard font, size 12, 1-inch margins on all sides.
- Title page: contains 4 pieces of information in top left corner: student name, instructor name, course title and date. Contains page number in the top right of each page: student's last name and page # (Smith 1). Also contains the student's essay title which is interesting and original centered over the introductory paragraph.
- Titles and Authors: italicize the titles of longer texts and titles of shorter texts go in quotes, capitalize all main title words, refer to authors by last name after you initially introduce them by full name.
- In-text Citations: the general MLA rule is that you will include the page number in parenthesis after each quote, and when the author is not clear from the context, include author last name too (Garcia 431).
- Works Cited: when writing about reading, always include a Works Cited page listing the text(s) you are writing on as well as any additional research you have done.

(6) EVALUATING WRITING:

Good practices:

- Workshopping: read the essay out loud, don't feel pressured, be tactful and never insulting, be honest, and balance your criticism with praise.
- Rubrics: use the departmental rubrics to have a consistent and shared set of standards to evaluate your own writing and the writing of others.
- Know the criteria for an A and strive to incorporate these elements in your essays:

An “A” Essay—Excellent: Essay is an enlightening, unified, convincing, and original response with larger implications/significance.

- **Assignment Fulfillment:** Thoroughly and effectively meets all requirements.
- **Thesis:** Makes a clear, complex and enlightening argument about the text(s).
- **Organization:** Presents a seamlessly fluid and unified structure that supports a central idea/thesis.
- **Development and Support:** Provides logical, original, well-developed, and relevant evidence and analysis.
- **Use of Text and MLA Guidelines:** Skillfully integrates relevant textual evidence demonstrating a deep use of the text(s) using proper format and documentation.
- **Sentence Style and Grammar:** Demonstrates sentence skill, clarity, and variety with few, if any, grammatical or proofreading errors.

(7) THESIS:

The thesis is the main point of an essay, a focused, arguable statement which allows the reader to make predictions about the reading.

Add your opinion to a topic to create a thesis: **Topic + opinion = thesis**

Add the significance to make a more complex thesis: **Topic + opinion + so what? = thesis**

Characteristics of an effective thesis (the 6 C's):

- The language is clear, straight-forward and can't be misunderstood.
- It is contestable and arguable. Ask yourself: Could someone disagree? The answer should be yes.
- It is concentrated on a focused point: not too broad and not too narrow, but the right size for the assignment.
- It is complex and delves into the larger significance or impact.
- It is compelling and draws in your readers' interest and makes them want to read more to see how you prove your claim.
- It is directly connected to the prompt/question/assignment for the essay.

(8) INTRODUCTIONS & CONCLUSIONS:

There are a variety of ways to both draw your reader into your argument and close out leaving them convinced of your points. Here are some ways to begin and end an essay but don't feel limited to these approaches:

Introductions:

- Provide a brief anecdote (a short amusing or interesting real-life story) or interesting example that is relevant to the topic.
- Incorporate a thought-provoking quote from the primary text or another outside source.
- Use a striking fact or statistic.
- Pose a relevant question that will get your reader thinking.
- State a problem that will be analyzed or solved.
- Connect your topic to a familiar experience the reader is likely to have had or a cultural reference they are likely to have shared.
- State a misconception and then correct it.
- Provide background information and/or history on the topic.

Conclusions:

- Reinforce the larger significance of the discussion showing your readers why the paper was important, meaningful and/or useful—answer the question “so what?”
- Propose a course of action.
- Make a prediction
- Challenge the reader to look to the future.
- Establish a sense of closure in your essay by linking the last paragraph to the first, perhaps by reiterating a word, phrase, reference or idea you used at the beginning.
- End with a quotation from or reference to a primary or secondary source, one that amplifies your main point or puts it in a different perspective.
- Offer opinions that your reader might not have accepted earlier.
- Consider the implications or outcomes of your argument.
- Try to solve a problem you have raised.

(9) PARAGRAPHS:

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

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

(10) INTEGRATING SOURCES:

Important to know:

- Plagiarism: always credit the sources that you are quoting or using ideas from. If you do not you can fail, be reported to the dean, and risk expulsion from college.
- Quoting: smoothly integrate quotes (do not drop them) by attaching each quote to a phrase that introduces it, and then follow quotes with the proper citation and your own analysis.
- Research: use good criteria to evaluate sources and effective search strategies. You should not use any source whose author/organization cannot be identified.

(11) TIMED WRITING:

Follow these steps:

- Review the elements of an essay (focus, organization, development, sentence crafting).
- Know how to successfully break down a prompt.
- Create a rough outline.
- Have a time management plan that includes prewriting, writing, and proofreading.
- Practice!

(12) LITERATURE:

Know the main types of literary forms, the terminology, and the theories used to analyze them:

- Fiction & Drama (plays): examine elements such as plot, characters, theme, symbolism, setting, tone, point of view, irony, climax, resolution.
- Poetry: examine elements such as speaker, imagery, diction (word choice), rhyme and rhythm, metaphor, stanza, turning points, tension, theme.
- Literary theories: historical/biographical criticism, new criticism, archetypal criticism, gender criticism, Marxist criticism, deconstruction, new historicism, cultural criticism, psychological/psychoanalytic criticism, reader-response criticism.

(13) STYLE:

Consider these different elements to make sentences that are clear, fluid and engaging:

- Simplicity: Trim the fat by eliminating wordiness to say what you want to say clearly and directly.
- Point of view: In academic writing, the 3rd person (he/she, they) is favored and appears more objective.
- Word Choice: Use concrete words that directly engage the senses and give precise meaning.
- Sentence Crafting: consciously create clear and focused sentences with energetic verbs and active voice.
- Sentence Combining: Joining sentences can convey your ideas more fluidly and logically.
- Parallelism: gives two or more parts of a sentence a similar form so as to give the passage a definite pattern and to give the ideas the same level of importance.

(14) GRAMMAR:

Review grammar concepts and target any topic you have struggled with. For each grammar concept, there are explanations, examples and practice exercises:

Adjectives & Adverbs Appositives Articles Commas	Contractions Coordinators Dangling Modifiers Fragments	Possessives Run-Together Sentences Subject-Verb Identification Subject-Verb Agreement	Subordinators Verb Tenses
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(15) NON-NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS:

For those whose native language is not English, our ESOL teachers have included materials to help you succeed in a mainstream English class:

- Parts of speech self-review
- Tips to improve reading
- Tips for addressing length in academic writing
- Turning spoken English into written
- Tips for reported speech
- Turning questions into statements
- Critiquing an author’s work
- Agreeing and Disagreeing with an author
- Proofreading tips for ESOL students

PRACTICE

Test what you have learned about the 15 concepts

100 points total

(1) CRITICAL READING (9 points):

Name one strategy to can use before reading, one strategy to use while reading, and one strategy to can use after reading.

(2) CRITICAL THINKING (9 points):

Name 3 characteristics of a good critical thinker.

(3) PAPER TOPICS (6 points):

Skyline English classes focus on text-based writing. What does text-based writing promote?

(4) THE WRITING PROCESS (6 points):

Define freewriting:

Define outlining:

(5) MLA CONVENTIONS (9 points):

What information goes in the top left corner of the title page?

What information goes in the top right corner?

What information goes in parenthesis after a quote?

(6) EVALUATING WRITING (6 points):

What are 2 good practices when workshopping a paper with your classmates?

(7) THESIS (6 points):

Define what a thesis is:

What is a good formula to use to create a complex thesis?

_____ + _____ + _____ = THESIS

(8) INTRODUCTIONS & CONCLUSIONS (6 points):

Name one possible approach for an introduction:

Name one possible approach for a conclusion:

(9) PARAGRAPHS (6 points):

What does PIE stand for regarding paragraphing?

P =

I =

E =

(10) INTEGRATING SOURCES (6 points):

What is a dropped quote and how can you avoid it?

(11) TIMED WRITING (6 points):

What are 2 of the recommended steps for timed writing?

(12) LITERATURE (6 points):

What are 3 fiction and drama terms we could use in analyzing a literary work?

(13) STYLE (4 points):

Which point of view is favored in academic writing? (1st person, 2nd person, 3rd person) and why?

(14) GRAMMAR (6 points):

Name 2 of the grammar topics covered in this textbook.

(15) NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS (4 points):

Name one of the topics a non-native speaker could use from this chapter.

BONUS (5 points): What are the 3 question-words that make up the name for this Rhetoric (and also reflect the structure for each chapter)?

What, Why, and How?

1

CRITICAL READING:

Before Reading Strategies

Habits of Highly Effective Readers

Pre-Reading Strategies:

- * **Activating Schema**
- * **PQPC: Preview, Question, Predict, Code**
- * **KWL+**
- * **KWHL**

WHAT ARE HABITS OF HIGHLY EFFECTIVE READERS?

1. Effective readers have adaptable reading strategies that match different reading tasks.

Effective readers are aware of and use different reading strategies based on the reading task, and they adapt and adjust these approaches as needed. Different types of reading strategies will be covered in this chapter.

2. Effective readers control time, place and atmosphere to suit their reading task.

What time of day are you most alert (first thing in the morning, midday, before dinner, later in the evening)? What environment suits you best (a quiet library, an active coffee shop, sitting outside)? What atmosphere is best for you to focus (complete isolation and quiet, music playing, a group setting where others are also studying)? Take note of when you are most alert and create optimal situations for when you read.

3. Effective readers spend some time previewing the material before they begin reading it.

Reading without previewing first is like driving into an unknown area without a map. Just like a map can prepare you with a sense of direction, street names and an idea of where things are located, previewing a chapter can give you clues as to what direction the reading will go and what the chapter will contain. Take time to skim:

<i>Titles</i>	<i>Headings/subheadings</i>
<i>Author and author qualifications</i>	<i>Pictures/graphs/tables</i>
<i>Outlines or introductions</i>	<i>End of chapter questions</i>
<i>Summaries or conclusions</i>	<i>Indexes, glossaries, and appendices</i>

4. Effective readers know their limitations of concentration and divide chapters into manageable groupings.

If you have a large reading assignment, break your reading into manageable chunks of time. If you find yourself drifting off or losing focus, take a break. Reading a textbook is hard work. Reward yourself with short breaks. You'll be refreshed and ready to read another chunk of material.

5. Effective readers improve their comprehension by trying to read faster.

The key is not to make reading a frenzied activity, just a focused and uninterrupted one. *A quick warning:* Texts with difficult or technical language may require you to read at a slower pace.

6. Effective readers interact actively with the text.

Active readers mark their texts as they read making notes, comments, and highlighting key concepts. Marking texts also helps put the information into long-term memory and improves comprehension.

7. Effective textbook readers use recitation to reinforce what they have just read.

Take just a few minutes to recite, out loud, some of the important points of the chapter and/or discuss the material with another person. Speaking about ideas from the reading out loud, allows you to add yet another active step to the process of learning.

WHAT IS ACTIVATING SCHEMA?

Schema is our prior knowledge and experience. In other words, it is what we already know on a topic; it is what we are familiar with. You activate your schema when you are presented with new information and you take a moment to think about or discuss what you already know on the subject.

WHY ACTIVATE YOUR SCHEMA?

Daniel Levintin, a cognitive psychologist and neuroscientist, said: “In a sense, schemas are everything. They frame our understanding; they’re the system into which we place the elements and interpretations of an object. Schemas inform our cognitive models and expectations.”

- Drawing on your previous knowledge places new information within a familiar framework which enables you to better understand it.
- As we learn and experience more, our schema expands and so does our ability to understand increasingly complex information.
- Our reading comprehension, and understanding of the world in general, is improved when we activate and build upon our schema (our base of knowledge).

HOW DO WE ACTIVATE SCHEMA?

- 1) **Previewing:** Looking over the title, the introduction, the summary, subheadings/ topic sentences, italicized or bold words, visual aids, and study questions, you are able to form ideas about what the text will address. Integral to this process is also taking inventory of what you already know about the topics: your preexisting schema.
- 2) **Predicting:** After previewing a text, predict what will be addressed in the text. When you predict, you are drawing from what you do know and forming expectations about what will follow.
- 3) **Coding:** As you read, list key words or terms that represent topics or main ideas that the text addresses.
- 4) **Visualizing:** Create mental pictures based on what you are reading.
- 5) **Comprehension Monitoring:** Check what you are doing while reading and also gauge whether or not the techniques you are using are working and why.
- 6) **Creating a Reading Plan:** Assess your needs before starting to read by determining how complex and how long the text is, what needs to be done, and how to go about doing it. Ask yourself what reading strategies would best work, what your purpose is for reading, how the material is organized and therefore, how it will best handled.
- 7) **Recalling:** Think about important points that you’ve have read, articulating to yourself why they’re important and connecting them to your own experiences and observations in order to increase retention.

WHAT IS PQPC?

PQPC is a 4-step reading strategy used to strengthen reading comprehension. The 4 steps are **preview, question, predict, and code**.

WHY USE PQPC?

This strategy will help you read faster, understand more, and remember more as you read.

HOW DO I DO IT?

(1) **Preview** a text before you read it. If you have a clearer sense of its structure and content, you will understand it better when you begin reading.

Get to know your text before you begin reading by looking at:

- * Title, table of contents, chapter titles, subheadings, words in italics or in bold
- * Author(s), author's background (can you speculate on the author's agenda/purpose?)
- * Number of pages, number of chapters, average pages per chapter
- * Index, glossary and appendix
- * End of chapter study questions, bibliography, essay questions
- * Visual aids like charts, graphs, pictures

(2) Generate **questions** from the topics or main ideas. What questions do you have about the topic? What questions do you hope will be answered?

(3) **Predict** what will happen or which conclusions will likely be drawn from the data.

(4) **Code** as you read by listing key terms which represent topics or main ideas that the selection addresses.

WHAT IS KWL+?

KWL+ is a chart of notes that includes all the stages in the reading process: previewing, active reading, and organizing. The “KWL+” chart is to be used before, during, and after reading a text.

WHY USE KWL+?

It can be done anywhere, anytime, with or without a computer, and provides a useful record of your interaction with the text.

HOW DO I DO IT?

To make a KWL+ Chart, make 4 squares for the main categories and consider the following for each:

<p>(Before reading): What do I KNOW?</p> <p>BEFORE YOU'VE READ:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Preview & Pre-read: Look at the title, the introduction, the conclusion, the subtitles (or topic sentences), and visual aids such as pictures, charts, and graphs.● Code: List key words & topics.● Assess what you know about the topic to tap into your schema.	<p>(Before reading): What do I WANT to learn?</p> <p>WHILE PREVIEWING:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Create questions relating to each of the main parts of the chapter or essay mentioned in the previous category, leading with different question words:<ul style="list-style-type: none">● Why?● Who?● What?● When?● How?● Where?
<p>(During and after reading): What did I LEARN?</p> <p>WHILE READING AND AFTER YOU'VE READ:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Provide answers for the questions you listed under “W.”● Summarize ideas that you consider significant to the reading and/or to you.● Define vocabulary in the text that is critical to your understanding of the text and/or the topic addressed in the text.	<p>(After reading): What MORE do I want to learn?</p> <p>AFTER YOU'VE READ:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● List questions from “W” that still need to be answered, and/or questions that the text generated.● Identify what parts that you're confused about or need further clarification.● Explain what further research and/or analysis could be done.

PRACTICE

KWL+ CHART

(Before reading): What do I **KNOW**?

(Before reading): What do I **WANT** to learn?

(During and after reading): What did I **LEARN**?

(After reading): What **MORE** do I want to learn?

PRACTICE

KWHL CHART

When the topic requires outside research, you can add a research section of inquiry:

<p>(Before reading): What do I KNOW?</p>	<p>(Before reading): What do I WANT to learn?</p>
<p>(Before and after reading): HOW can I find additional information on the issues raised?</p>	<p>(After reading): What did I LEARN from the text?</p>

What, Why, and How?

1

CRITICAL READING: *While Reading* Strategies

Identifying Topics, Main, Major and Minor Ideas
Annotating
Chunking
Words Parts and Context Clues

WHAT IS THE DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TOPIC, MAIN IDEA AND THE MAJOR/MINOR IDEAS IN A TEXT?

OVERVIEW:	DEFINITION:	QUESTIONS TO ASK YOURSELF:
TOPIC = WHAT THE TEXT IS ABOUT	The topic states the subject matter but <u>does not state an opinion</u> on it.	<i>What specific topic does this text focus on?</i>
MAIN IDEA = THESIS	The main idea is the thesis, also known as the <u>central argument</u> .	<i>What is the main idea the author wants me to learn or wants to convince me of in this text?</i>
MAJOR IDEAS = KEY SUPPORTING POINTS PROVING THE MAIN IDEA	Each major idea states <u>one reason</u> that supports and proves the thesis.	<i>What reasons did the author use to convince me of his/her thesis?</i>
MINOR IDEAS = EVIDENCE AND ANALYSIS ILLUSTRATING THE MAJOR IDEAS	Minor ideas are used to <u>illustrate</u> and <u>explain</u> the major ideas.	<i>What specific evidence (examples, data, etc) did the author use to illustrate the major ideas and did s/he add analysis or explanation to further convince me?</i>

WHY IDENTIFY THEM WHEN READING?

- You can fully understand a text when you can identify all its elements.
- It removes any confusion about the purpose of a text.
- When you can clearly see the different parts of a text, you can make a more educated assessment of the text and directly respond with your own viewpoints.

HOW DO I IDENTIFY THEM?

Here is a 4-step process to identify these different elements in a text:

- (1) **Note the topic as you're reading.** To figure out the topic, note what all the sentences in the text are centered on and use the guiding question: *What specific topic does this text focus on?*
- (2) **Label the main idea when you find it.** To locate it, use the guiding question: *What is the main idea the author wants me to learn or wants to convince me of in this text?* If the thesis is implied (not directly stated), examine the clues in the text and then write in your own words what you think the author's main purpose or central argument is.
- (3) **Label the major ideas when you read them** (sometimes you can even number the reasons as you identify them). To locate them, use the guiding question: *What reasons did the author use to convince me of his/her thesis?*
- (4) **Note the minor ideas when you read them.** To locate them, use the guiding questions: *What specific evidence (examples, data, etc) did the author use to illustrate the major ideas and did s/he add analysis or explanation to further convince me?*

PRACTICE

Using the second paragraph of Chapter VII in the excerpt from *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, locate the topic and main idea as well as the major and minor ideas:

My mistress was, as I have said, a kind and tender-hearted woman; and in the simplicity of her soul she commenced, when I first went to live with her, to treat me as she supposed one human being ought to treat another. In entering upon the duties of a slaveholder, she did not seem to perceive that I sustained to her the relation of a mere chattel, and that for her to treat me as a human being was not only wrong, but dangerously so. Slavery proved as injurious to her as it did to me. When I went there, she was a pious, warm, and tender-hearted woman. There was no sorrow or suffering for which she had not a tear. She had bread for the hungry, clothes for the naked, and comfort for every mourner that came within her reach. Slavery soon proved its ability to divest her of these heavenly qualities. Under its influence, the tender heart became stone, and the lamblike disposition gave way to one of tiger-like fierceness. The first step in her downward course was in her ceasing to instruct me. She now commenced to practise her husband's precepts. She finally became even more violent in her opposition than her husband himself. She was not satisfied with simply doing as well as he had commanded; she seemed anxious to do better. Nothing seemed to make her more angry than to see me with a newspaper. She seemed to think that here lay the danger. I have had her rush at me with a face made all up of fury, and snatch from me a newspaper, in a manner that fully revealed her apprehension. She was an apt woman; and a little experience soon demonstrated, to her satisfaction, that education and slavery were incompatible with each other.

WHAT IS ANNOTATING?

Annotating is an organized method to take notes as you read and involves marking up a text as you read it. It usually involves adding your own thoughts, questions and observations in the margins, circling unknown terms and vocabulary, underlining or highlighting main points and good quotes, and coding (briefly summing up passages in a few key words).

WHY IS ANNOTATING IMPORTANT?

- It turns you into an active reader engaging closely with the text.
- Being an active reader improves comprehension and retention of what you read.
- You can use your notes to select material to include in a more formal paper.
- It can help you better understand complex texts through breaking them down.
- You can circle unknown terms and then look them all up after you are finished reading (looking them up as you read will disrupt your understanding and enjoyment of the text)
- You can navigate a well-marked text quickly to find quotes and evidence for papers and open book exams.
- You can refresh your memory of the text easily by re-reading your notes and what you have highlighted without having to re-read the entire text.

HOW DO I ANNOTATE?

There are different methods for marking a text. Often you will use a variety of the following methods AS YOU READ:

- In the text margins, write your own questions and comments that come up.
- Underline and/or highlight the main points and good quotes (don't over highlight—be selective).
- Circle unknown vocabulary and after you read, look up the words and write in the definitions.
- Code as you read which means to write a one-to-three word description that captures the essence of large chunks or paragraphs of text. This will create an easy to follow summary in the margins.
- If the thesis (main argument or purpose of the text) is stated, write "thesis" next to it or if it is implied (not stated) use the clues from the text to figure it out and then write out the thesis in your own words.

PRACTICE

PRACTICE ANNOTATING YOUR TEXT:

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

- (1) In the left margin, write your own **QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS**, adding your own reactions, observations and queries as you read.
- (2) Throughout the text, **UNDERLINE OR HIGHLIGHT** the main points and good quotes.
- (3) Throughout the text, **CIRCLE** unknown vocabulary and after you read, look up the words and write in the definitions.
- (4) In the right margin, **CODE**, meaning write a one-to-three word description that captures the essence of large chunks of text. This will create an easy to read summary in the right margin.
- (5) After reading the entire text, go back and see if you can locate and **LABEL THE THESIS**. If it is not directly stated, write out the thesis in your own words.

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

Frederick Douglass was born in slavery as Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey near Easton in Talbot County, Maryland. He was not sure of the exact year of his birth, but he knew that it was 1817 or 1818. As a young boy he was sent to Baltimore, to be a house servant, where he learned to read and write, with the assistance of his master's wife. In 1838 he escaped from slavery and went to New York City, where he married Anna Murray, a free colored woman whom he had met in Baltimore. Soon thereafter he changed his name to Frederick Douglass. In 1841 he addressed a convention of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society in Nantucket and so greatly impressed the group that they immediately employed him as an agent. He was such an impressive orator that numerous persons doubted if he had ever been a slave, so he wrote **NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS**. During the Civil War he assisted in the recruiting of colored men for the 54th and 55th Massachusetts Regiments and consistently argued for the emancipation of slaves. After the war he was active in securing and protecting the rights of the freemen. In his later years, at different times, he was secretary of the Santo Domingo Commission, marshal and recorder of deeds of the District of Columbia, and United States Minister to Haiti. His other autobiographical works are **MY BONDAGE AND MY FREEDOM** and **LIFE AND TIMES OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS**, published in 1855 and 1881 respectively. He died in 1895.

CHAPTER VII

I lived in Master Hugh's family about seven years. During this time, I succeeded in learning to read and write. In accomplishing this, I was compelled to resort to various stratagems. I had no regular teacher. My mistress, who had kindly commenced to instruct me, had, in compliance with the advice and direction of her husband, not only ceased to instruct, but had set her face against my being instructed by anyone else. It is due, however, to my mistress to say of her, that she did not adopt this course of treatment immediately. She at first lacked the depravity indispensable to shutting me up in mental darkness. It was at least necessary for her to have some training in the exercise of irresponsible power, to make her equal to the task of treating me as though I were a brute.

My mistress was, as I have said, a kind and tender-hearted woman; and in the simplicity of her soul she commenced, when I first went to live with her, to treat me as she supposed one human being ought to treat another. In entering upon the duties of a slaveholder, she did not seem to perceive that I sustained to her the relation of a mere chattel, and that for her to treat me as a human being was not only wrong, but dangerously so. Slavery proved as injurious to her as it did to me. When I went there, she was a pious, warm, and tender-hearted woman. There was no sorrow or suffering for which she had not a tear. She had bread for the hungry, clothes for the naked, and comfort for every mourner that came within her reach. Slavery soon proved its ability to divest her of these heavenly qualities. Under its influence, the tender heart became stone, and the lamblike disposition gave way to one of tiger-like fierceness. The first step in her downward course was in her ceasing to instruct me. She now commenced to practise her husband's precepts. She finally became even more violent in her opposition than her husband himself. She was not satisfied with simply doing as well as he had commanded; she seemed anxious to do better. Nothing seemed to make her more angry than to see me with a newspaper. She seemed to think that here lay the danger. I have had her rush at me with a face made all up of fury, and snatch from me a newspaper, in a manner that fully revealed her apprehension. She was an apt woman; and a little experience soon demonstrated, to her satisfaction, that education and slavery were incompatible with each other.

From this time I was most narrowly watched. If I was in a separate room any considerable length of time, I was sure to be suspected of having a book, and was at once called to give an account of myself. All this, however, was too late. The first step had been taken. Mistress, in teaching me the alphabet, had given me the *inch*, and no precaution could prevent me from taking the *ell*.

The plan which I adopted, and the one by which I was most successful, was that of making friends of all the little white boys whom I met in the street. As many of these as I could, I converted into teachers. With their kindly aid, obtained at different times and in different places, I finally succeeded in learning to read. When I was sent on errands, I always took my book with me, and by going one part of my errand quickly, I found time to get a lesson before my return. I used also to carry bread with me, enough of which was always in the house, and to which I was always welcome; for I was much better off in this regard than many of the poor white children in our neighborhood. This bread I used to bestow upon the hungry little urchins, who, in return, would give me that more valuable bread of knowledge. I am strongly tempted to give the names of two or three of those little boys, as a testimonial of the gratitude and affection I bear them; but prudence forbids;—not that it would injure me, but it might embarrass them; for it is almost an unpardonable offence to teach slaves to read in this Christian country. It is enough to say of the dear little fellows, that they lived on Philpot Street, very near Durgin and Bailey's ship-yard. I used to talk this matter of slavery over with them. I would sometimes say to them, I wished I could be as free as they would be when they got to be men. "You will be free as soon as you are twenty-one, *but I am a slave for life!* Have not I as good a right to be free as you have?" These words used to trouble them; they would express for me the liveliest sympathy, and console me with the hope that something would occur by which I might be free.

I was now about twelve years old, and the thought of being *a slave for life* began to bear heavily upon my heart. Just about this time, I got hold of a book entitled "The Columbian Orator." Every opportunity I got, I used to read this book. Among much of other interesting matter, I found in it a dialogue between a master and his slave. The slave was represented as having run away from his master three times. The dialogue represented the conversation which took place between them, when the slave was retaken the third time. In this dialogue, the whole argument in behalf of slavery was brought forward by the master, all of which was disposed of by the slave. The slave was made to say some very smart as well as impressive things in reply to his master—things which had the desired though unexpected effect; for the conversation resulted in the voluntary emancipation of the slave on the part of the master.

In the same book, I met with one of Sheridan's mighty speeches on and in behalf of Catholic emancipation. These were choice documents to me. I read them over and over again with unabated interest. They gave tongue to interesting thoughts of my own soul, which had frequently flashed through my mind, and died away for want of utterance. The moral which I gained from the dialogue was the power of truth over the conscience of even a slaveholder. What I got from Sheridan was a

bold denunciation of slavery, and a powerful vindication of human rights. The reading of these documents enabled me to utter my thoughts, and to meet the arguments brought forward to sustain slavery; but while they relieved me of one difficulty, they brought on another even more painful than the one of which I was relieved. The more I read, the more I was led to abhor and detest my enslavers. I could regard them in no other light than a band of successful robbers, who had left their homes, and gone to Africa, and stolen us from our homes, and in a strange land reduced us to slavery. I loathed them as being the meanest as well as the most wicked of men. As I read and contemplated the subject, behold! that very discontentment which Master Hugh had predicted would follow my learning to read had already come, to torment and sting my soul to unutterable anguish. As I writhed under it, I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing. It had given me a view of my wretched condition, without the remedy. It opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out. In moments of agony, I envied my fellow-slaves for their stupidity. I have often wished myself a beast. I preferred the condition of the meanest reptile to my own. Anything, no matter what, to get rid of thinking! It was this everlasting thinking of my condition that tormented me. There was no getting rid of it. It was pressed upon me by every object within sight or hearing, animate or inanimate. The silver trump of freedom had roused my soul to eternal wakefulness. Freedom now appeared, to disappear no more forever. It was heard in every sound, and seen in everything. It was ever present to torment me with a sense of my wretched condition. I saw nothing without seeing it, I heard nothing without hearing it, and felt nothing without feeling it. It looked from every star, it smiled in every calm, breathed in every wind, and moved in every storm.

EXAMPLE

PRACTICE ANNOTATING YOUR TEXT:

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

- (1) In the left margin, write your own **QUESTIONS AND COMMENTS**, adding your own reactions, observations and queries as you read.
- (2) Throughout the text, **UNDERLINE OR HIGHLIGHT** the main points and good quotes.
- (3) Throughout the text, **CIRCLE** unknown vocabulary and after you read, look up the words and write in the definitions.
- (4) In the right margin, **CODE**, meaning write a one-to-three word description that captures the essence of large chunks of text. This will create an easy to read summary in the right margin.
- (5) After reading the entire text, go back and see if you can locate and **LABEL THE THESIS**. If it is not directly stated, write out the thesis in your own words.

Dates of slavery
↓
About 1619 to 1865 - 246 years!
They thought he was lying??
Died at 77 years old

FREDERICK DOUGLASS

Frederick Douglass was born in slavery as Frederick Augustus Washington Bailey near Easton in Talbot County, Maryland. He was not sure of the exact year of his birth, but he knew that it was 1817 or 1818. As a young boy he was sent to Baltimore, to be a house servant, where he learned to read and write, with the assistance of his master's wife. In 1838 he escaped from slavery and went to New York City, where he married Anna Murray, a free colored woman whom he had met in Baltimore. Soon thereafter he changed his name to Frederick Douglass. In 1841 he addressed a convention of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society in Nantucket and so greatly impressed the group that they immediately employed him as an agent. He was such an impressive orator that numerous persons doubted if he had ever been a slave, so he wrote NARRATIVE OF THE LIFE OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS. During the Civil War he assisted in the recruiting of colored men for the 54th and 55th Massachusetts Regiments and consistently argued for the emancipation of slaves. After the war he was active in securing and protecting the rights of the freemen. In his later years, at different times, he was secretary of the Santo Domingo Commission, marshal and recorder of deeds of the District of Columbia, and United States Minister to Haiti. His other autobiographical works are MY BONDAGE AND MY FREEDOM and LIFE AND TIMES OF FREDERICK DOUGLASS, published in 1855 and 1881 respectively. He died in 1895.

Escaped slavery
activist
writer

CHAPTER VII

spiteful - she stopped others too
 I lived in Master Hugh's family about seven years. During this time, I succeeded in learning to read and write. In accomplishing this, I was compelled to resort to various stratagems. learns to read and write
Are people trained to be cruel? Racist?
 I had no regular teacher. My mistress, who had kindly commenced to instruct me, had, in compliance with the advice and direction of her husband, not only ceased to instruct, but had set her face against my being instructed by anyone else. It is due, however, to my mistress to say of her, that she did not adopt this course of treatment immediately. She at first lacked the depravity indispensable to shutting me up in mental darkness. It was at least necessary for her to have some training in the exercise of irresponsible power, to make her equal to the task of treating me as though I were a brute. mistress blocks education

Interesting how power corrupts so quickly
 My mistress was, as I have said, a kind and tender-hearted woman; and in the simplicity of her soul she commenced, when I first went to live with her, to treat me as she supposed one human being ought to treat another. In entering upon the duties of a slaveholder, she did not seem to perceive that I sustained to her the relation of a mere chattel and that for her to treat me as a human being was not only wrong, but dangerously so. Slavery proved as injurious to her as it did to me. When I went there, she was a pious, warm, and tender-hearted woman. There was no sorrow or suffering for which she had not a tear. She had bread for the hungry, clothes for the naked, and comfort for every mourner that came within her reach. Slavery soon proved its ability to divest her of these heavenly qualities. Under its influence, the tender heart became stone, and the lamblike disposition gave way to one of tiger-like fierceness. The first step in her downward course was in her ceasing to instruct me. She now commenced to practise her husband's precepts. She finally became even more violent in her opposition than her husband himself. She was not satisfied with simply doing as well as he had commanded; she seemed anxious to do better. Nothing seemed to make her more angry than to see me with a newspaper. She seemed to think that here lay the danger. I have had her rush at me with a face made all up of fury, and snatch from me a newspaper, in a manner that fully revealed her apprehension. She was an apt woman; and a little experience soon demonstrated, to her satisfaction, that education and slavery were incompatible with each other. mistress was kind turned cruel by slavery

When else in history has this happened?
Why so angry? Fear? Guilt?

From this time I was most narrowly watched. If I was in a separate room any considerable length of time, I was sure to be suspected of having a book, and was at once called to give an account of myself. All this, however, was too late. The first step had been taken. Mistress, in teaching me the alphabet, had given me the inch, and no precaution could prevent me from taking the ell. watched too late
 length of an arm
 Similar saying: "five an inch, they'll take a mile."

At least
there were
some
kind
people

The plan which I adopted, and the one by which I was most successful, was that of making friends of all the little white boys whom I met in the street. As many of these as I could, I converted ^{changed} into teachers. With their kindly aid, obtained at different times and in different places,

poor
white
boys
help

Are
children
kinder
because
they
haven't
yet
learned
prejudice?

I finally succeeded in learning to read. When I was sent on errands, I always took my book with me, and by going one part of my errand quickly, I found time to get a lesson before my return. I used also to carry bread with me, enough of which was always in the house, and to which I was always welcome; for I was much better off in this regard than many of the poor white children in our neighborhood. This bread I used to bestow upon the hungry little urchins ^{youngsters}, who, in return, would give me that more valuable bread of knowledge. I am strongly tempted to give the names of two or three of those little boys, as a testimonial of the gratitude and affection I bear them; but

bribes
with
bread

Isn't
Christianity
about
kindness
and
brotherhood?

prudence ^{carefulness} forbids;—not that it would injure me, but it might embarrass them; for it is almost an unpardonable offence to teach slaves to read in this Christian country. It is enough to say of the dear little fellows, that they lived on Philpot Street, very near Durgin and Bailey's ship-yard. I used to talk this matter of slavery over with them. I would sometimes say to them, I wished I could be as free as they would be when they got to be men. "You will be free as soon as you are twenty-one, but I am a slave for life! Have not I as good a right to be free as you have?" These words used to trouble them; they would express for me the liveliest sympathy, and console me with the hope that something would occur by which I might be free. logic.

questions
his
right to
be free

can't
dispute
this
simple

comfort

I was now about twelve years old, and the thought of being a *slave for life* began to bear heavily upon my heart. Just about this time, I got hold of a book entitled "The Columbian Orator." Every opportunity I got, I used to read this book. Among much of other interesting matter, I found in it a dialogue between a master and his slave. The slave was represented as having run away from his master three times. The dialogue represented the conversation which took place between them, when the slave was retaken the third time. In this dialogue, the whole argument in behalf of slavery was brought forward by the master, all of which was disposed of ^{put to rights} by the slave. The slave was made to say some very smart as well as impressive things in reply to his master—things which had the desired though unexpected effect; for the conversation resulted in the voluntary emancipation of the slave on the part of the master. freeing

re-reads
book

power
of
being
able
to
argue
well

shows
slavery
flawed

Benefits of
reading:
helps
him see
the
injustice
he
suffers

In the same book, I met with one of Sheridan's mighty speeches on and in behalf of Catholic emancipation. These were choice documents to me. I read them over and over again with unabated interest. They gave tongue to interesting thoughts of my own soul, which had frequently flashed through my mind, and died away for want of utterance ^{saying}. The moral which I gained from the dialogue was the power of truth over the conscience of even a slaveholder. What I got from Sheridan was a

reading
forms his
thoughts

moral sense

bold ^{condemnation} denunciation of slavery, and a powerful ^{defense} vindication of human rights. The reading of these documents enabled me to utter my thoughts, and to meet the arguments brought forward to ^{uphold} sustain slavery; but while they relieved me of one difficulty, they brought on another even more painful than the one of which I was relieved. The more I read, the more I ^{hate} was led to abhor and detest my ^{begins to hate} enslavers. I could regard them in no other light than a band of successful robbers, who had left their homes, and gone to Africa, and stolen us from our homes, and in a strange land reduced us to slavery. I ^{despised} loathed them as being the meanest as well as the most wicked of men. As I read and contemplated the subject, behold! that very ^{unhappiness} discontentment which Master Hugh had predicted would follow my ^{education as a curse} learning to read had already come, to torment and sting my soul to unutterable ^{agony} anguish. As I writhed ^{distort/struggle} under it, I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing. It had given me a view of my ^{hopeless} wretched condition, without the remedy. It opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out. In moments of agony, I envied my fellow-slaves ^{tortured by} for their stupidity. I have often wished myself a beast. I preferred the condition of the meanest ^{powerlessness} reptile to my own. Anything, no matter what, to get rid of thinking! It was this everlasting thinking of my condition that tormented me. There was no getting rid of it. It was pressed upon me by every object within sight or hearing, animate or inanimate. The ^{trumpet?} silver trump of freedom had ^{awoken} roused my soul to eternal wakefulness. Freedom now appeared, to disappear no more forever. It was heard in every sound, and seen in everything. It was ever present to torment me with a sense of my wretched condition. I saw nothing without seeing it, I heard nothing without hearing it, and felt nothing without feeling it. It looked from every star, it smiled in every calm, breathed in every wind, and moved in every storm.

Drawback of reading: once educated he can't tolerate his situation

Is ignorance bliss?

Are uneducated people easier to control?

Irony of living in "the land of the free."

How was this allowed for 2 1/2 centuries? slavery ended relatively not that long ago.

Thesis: Becoming educated when in a hopeless situation, like Douglass, can be more detrimental to a person who is forced to helplessly bear full witness to their own unjust suffering and powerlessness.

WHAT IS CHUNKING?

Chunking is visually grouping interrelated words as you read as opposed to reading one word at a time. You want to make meaningful groups of words and the point of fixation should be in the middle of the unit of words.

WHY IS CHUNKING IMPORTANT?

- Chunking speeds up your reading rate.
- Chunking enables you to process whole ideas rather than laboring word by word.
- Chunking improves comprehension by letting you get a “bigger picture” of the text.

HOW DO I DO IT?

Through practice, you can train your eye and your brain to focus on groups of words instead of individual words. Look at the following examples to see what this type of grouping looks and feels like as you read and then try applying the technique.

PASSAGE ONE: Slow Reader

A very slow reader who often also has poor comprehension fixates or stops at every single word and even divides words into syllables if the words seem too long. He is the word by word reader who plows through print with little understanding of what he reads.

PASSAGE TWO: Average Reader

The average reader, on the other hand, tries to see a few words each time his eyes stop but does so in a helter-skelter way and does not get much better comprehension than the slow reader. The average reader stops at every few words and tries to get meaning from them.

PASSAGE THREE: Good Reader

The efficient reader usually fixates in the middle of a group of words and reads thought units during each fixation. The better reader does not read single words. He does not look at the printed material in a helter-skelter way. He has trained his eyes to work in such a way that he perceives ideas in chunks or groups. He has become a smooth, rhythmical reader. He reads in clusters, connecting ideas naturally.

WHAT ARE WORD PARTS?

Words parts come in a few different forms:

Prefix: An affix placed at the <u>beginning</u> of a word which changes its meaning.	Root: The <u>base</u> of a word (with all affixes removed) that contains the core meaning of the word.	Suffix: An affix placed at the <u>end</u> of a word and indicates the form of the word (i.e. noun, verb, adjective).
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Each word parts serves to build meaning, so learning word parts can dramatically expand your vocabulary because if you know part of an unknown word, you can make a quick and educated guess as to its meaning without having to consult a dictionary.

WHY FOCUS ON WORD PARTS?

- Learning word parts (rather than memorizing lists of vocabulary words) is more efficient for expanding your vocabulary because learning one word part can potentially help you figure out hundreds of words that contain that word part.
- Knowing word parts helps you quickly identify the function of a word in a sentence (i.e. if the word is a noun, a person, an action, an adjective).
- Having a broader vocabulary builds reading speed and comprehension.

HOW DO I USE WORD PARTS?

The first step is memorizing a series of word parts and applying that knowledge so that what you learn stays in your long-term memory. You can then apply this knowledge of word parts whenever you're reading to figure out unfamiliar words quickly.

Prefixes – Set One

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

Prefixes – Set Two

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

Roots – Set One

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

Roots – Set Two

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

Suffixes

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

WHAT ARE CONTEXT CLUES?

Knowing word parts is one way to figure out the meaning of an unknown word. Another approach you can employ is using context clues. You can often unlock the meaning of a new word by analyzing the context of the sentence and paragraph in which it is used. The context is the part of a text or statement that surrounds a particular word or passage and determines its meaning.

WHY USE CONTEXT CLUES?

- Your reading isn't slowed down by having to look words up in the dictionary.
- Paying more attention to context clues means you are reading on a more active and engaged level which will improve comprehension and retention of what you read.
- Your reading confidence increases as you can figure out complex language on your own.

HOW DO I USE CONTEXT CLUES?

Use different types of clues to help unlock the meaning of new words:

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

Also use word parts:

- **Prefixes:** An affix placed at the beginning of a word which changes its meaning.
- **Roots:** The base of a word (with all affixes removed) that contains the core meaning of the word. The roots that we use in English are derived primarily from Latin and Greek.
- **Suffixes:** An affix placed at the end of a word and indicates the form of the word (i.e. noun, verb, adjective).

PRACTICE

Figuring Out Words in Context: Prefixes—Set One

Read the paragraph below which contains prefixes from “Prefixes—Set One.” Afterwards, without using a dictionary give the definition of the italicized words using the context clues. Also give the definition of the prefix used.

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

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

PRACTICE

Figuring Out Words in Context: Prefixes—Set Two

Read the paragraph below which contains prefixes from “Prefixes—Set Two.” Afterwards, without using a dictionary give the definition of the italicized words using the context clues. Also give the definition of the prefix used.

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

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

PRACTICE

Figuring Out Words in Context: Roots—Set One

Read the paragraph below which contains prefixes from “Roots—Set One.” Afterwards, without using a dictionary give the definition of the italicized words using the context clues. Also give the definition of the root used.

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

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

PRACTICE

Figuring Out Words in Context: Roots—Set Two

Read the paragraph below which contains prefixes from “Roots—Set Two.” Afterwards, without using a dictionary give the definition of the italicized words using the context clues. Also give the definition of the root used.

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

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

ANSWERS

DISTINGUISHING MAIN, MAJOR AND MINOR IDEAS

Using the second paragraph of Chapter VII in the excerpt from *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, locate the topic and main idea as well as the major and minor ideas:

- (1) **Note the topic as you're reading.**
- (2) **Label the main idea when you find it (or put it in your own words).**
- (3) **Label the major ideas when you read them.**
- (4) **Note the minor ideas when you read them.**

TOPIC: Influence of slavery (“slavery” for example, would be too general for this paragraph and “slaves learning to read” would be a more appropriate topic for all of Chapter VII)

MAIN IDEA/THESIS: “Slavery proved as injurious to her as it did to me.”

MAJOR IDEAS (REASONS) PROVING THE MAIN IDEA/THESIS:

- (1) “She was a pious, warm, and tender-hearted woman.”
- (2) “Under [slavery’s] influence, the tender heart became stone, and the lamblike disposition gave way to one of tiger-like fierceness.”

MINOR IDEAS (EVIDENCE AND ANALYSIS) ILLUSTRATING THE MAJOR IDEAS:

Supporting major idea #1: “She was a pious, warm, and tender-hearted woman.”

- (a) “There was no sorrow or suffering for which she had not a tear.”
- (b) “She had bread for the hungry, clothes for the naked, and comfort for every mourner that came within her reach.”

Supporting major idea #2: “Under [slavery’s] influence, the tender heart became stone, and the lamblike disposition gave way to one of tiger-like fierceness.”

- (a) “The first step in her downward course was in her ceasing to instruct me. She now commenced to practise her husband’s precepts.”
- (b) “She finally became even more violent in her opposition than her husband himself. She was not satisfied with simply doing as well as he had commanded; she seemed anxious to do better.”
- (c) “Nothing seemed to make her more angry than to see me with a newspaper. She seemed to think that here lay the danger. I have had her rush at me with a face made all up of fury, and snatch from me a newspaper, in a manner that fully revealed her apprehension.”
- (d) “She was an apt woman; and a little experience soon demonstrated, to her satisfaction, that education and slavery were incompatible with each other.”

What, Why, and How?

1

CRITICAL READING: *After Reading* Strategies

Creating Text-Based Questions:

- * **Open-Ended Discussion Questions**
- * **Questioning Circles**

Understanding a Text:

- * **Mapping/Clustering a Text**
- * **Summarizing a Text**
- * **Organizational Charts**
- * **Levels of Comprehension**

Reacting to a Text:

- * **Contextualizing, Reflecting, Evaluating and Comparing**
- * **Journaling (double-entry, reading response)**
- * **Academic Speed Dating**

WHAT ARE DISCUSSION QUESTIONS?

After you have finished reading a text, whether it is an article, a chapter, or an entire book, you can pose open-ended questions based on what you have read. Open-ended means that the questions do not have only one answer and are not factual questions, but instead they invite discussion and multiple opinions.

WHY USE THEM?

Discussion questions are useful in helping readers explore different levels of meaning and interpretation in a text. Because there isn't one answer, discussion questions trigger many different angles and perspectives, promoting critical thinking and enhancing your engagement with the subject matter. Also, answering good, complex questions can lead to strong and interesting thesis statements.

HOW DO I CREATE THEM?

- Start by reviewing the text you have just read, using your annotation and marginal notes as well as any notes you may have from classroom activities or from your own reading.
- Next, focusing on the main ideas and events in the text, think about what you don't know but would like to understand better and/or what you have an idea or a hunch about, but would like to explore further.
- Then, start writing a series of questions that do not have one answer and are open-ended. Make sure you are not asking factual questions; make sure they are questions that inspire more than one perspective or opinion to answer.
- Use these words to begin your questions: Why, How, What, If. You can begin a question with Who if there can be more than one answer.
- You can use these questions to deepen your own understanding by thinking about the way you would answer them. You can share them with other students in the class in pairs or in groups.

EXAMPLE

Here are some examples of open-ended discussion questions based on Chapter VII in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*:

Why didn't Fredrick Douglass accept his role as a slave and stop trying to learn to read and write?

How did Frederick Douglass create changes in his life?

If Fredrick Douglass hadn't read Sheridan, would he have been a different person?

What makes a person decide to break out of a system that is oppressing him/her?

Who do you think was the most influential person in Douglass' life?

WHAT ARE QUESTIONING CIRCLES?

Questioning circles are used to create complex, open-ended questions that involve different levels of critical thinking.

WHY USE QUESTIONING CIRCLES?

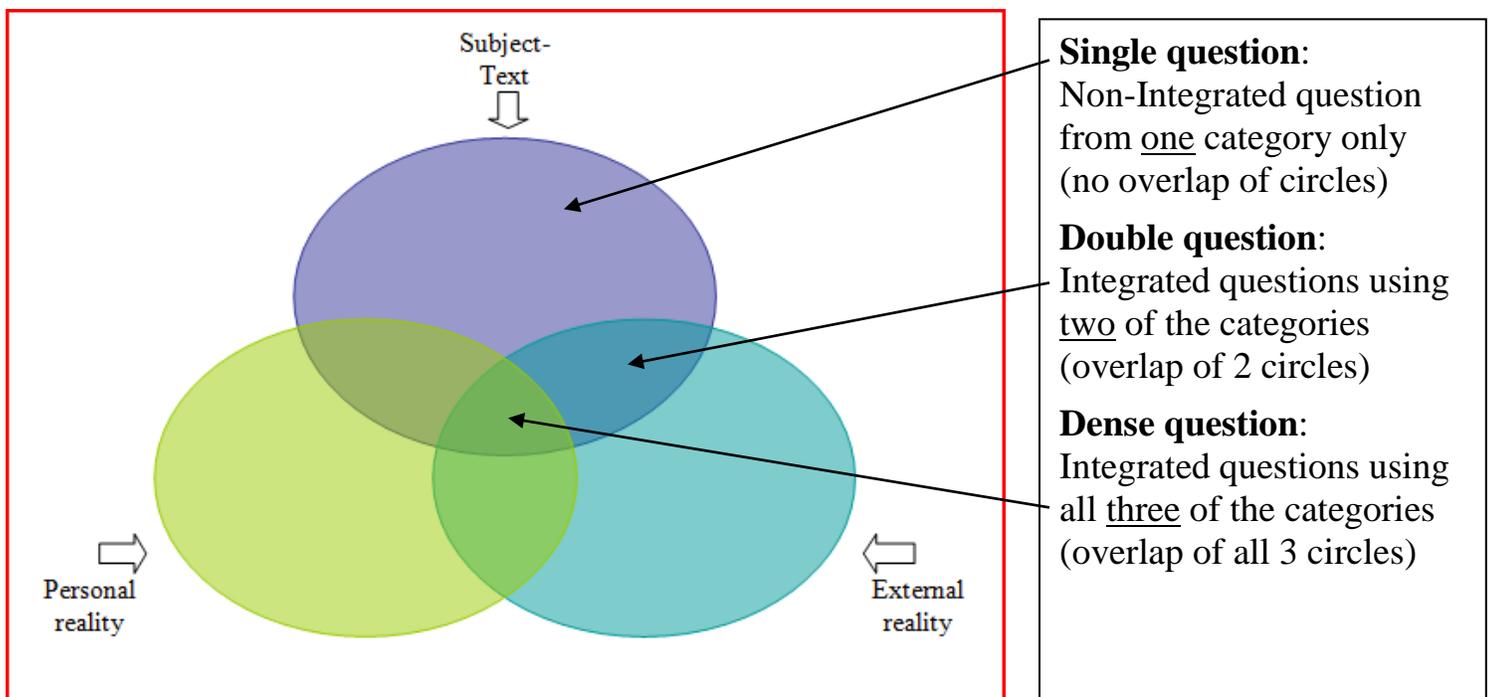
When discussing a text/topic or when preparing to write an essay, beginning with a question has several advantages:

1. Good questions lead to rich discussions that can strengthen understanding of a text/topic.
2. Questions require answers. Answering questions with opinion forms thesis statements and leads you to look for evidence which is necessary to prove a thesis.
3. A clear open-ended question calls for real investigation and thinking. Asking a question with no direct answer makes research and writing more meaningful to you and your audience.

HOW DO YOU CREATE THEM?

There are 3 areas to include when forming questions. Each of these areas is represented by a circle:

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



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

EXAMPLE

Using *The Adventures of Huckleberry Finn*

Single Questions

- Subject-Text:** What does Huck say when he decides not to turn Jim into the authorities?
Personal reality: When would you support a friend when everyone else thought s/he was wrong?
External reality: What was the responsibility of people who found runaway slaves?

Double Questions

- Subject-Text/ Personal reality:** Would you, like Huck, break the law for a friend?
Personal reality/External reality: Given the social and political circumstances in the U.S during slavery, to what extent would you have gone against the law?
Subject-Text /External reality: What were the issues during that time which caused both Huck's and Jim's action to be viewed as wrong?

Dense Question

Subject-Text/Personal reality/External reality: When do you think it is right to go against social and/or political rules as Huck did when he refused to turn Jim in to the authorities and what issues of morality should be considered?

Using *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*

Single Questions

- Subject-Text:** What strategies did Douglass use after he was forbidden to read?
Personal reality: Do you think that educating someone can make them dangerous?
External reality: When else has denial of education been used to control people?

Double Questions

- Subject-Text/ Personal reality:** Would you, like Douglass, use the same methods to get your freedom?
Personal reality/External reality: Do you think that education in all circumstances is a positive thing or can it in some cases lead to a less stable society?
Subject-Text /External reality: Why did Douglass risk so much to learn to read and why did slave owners forbid slaves to read?

Dense Question

Subject-Text/Personal reality/External reality: Why was Douglass so determined to learn to read and how do you think reading and education connect to self-realization and breaking free from societal control?

PRACTICE

I. IN-CLASS EXERCISE: In groups, on a separate sheet of paper, create **ONE** question type for each category but only write the question down and do not state what question type it is.

Single question:

(Subject-text or personal reality or external reality)

Double question:

(subject-text/personal reality or personal reality/external reality or subject-text/external reality)

Dense question:

(subject-text/personal reality/external reality)

II. When you are finished, pass your questions to another group for them to:

- (1) Guess the category type (i.e. if it's a single question which area does it address? Subject-text? Personal? External? Or if it's double, which two areas does it blend?)**
- (2) The group will then answer your questions and your group will answer the questions from another group.**
- (3) Take notes of good questions and answers as you can use these to create your own thesis on the topic.**

WHAT IS MAPPING/CLUSTERING?

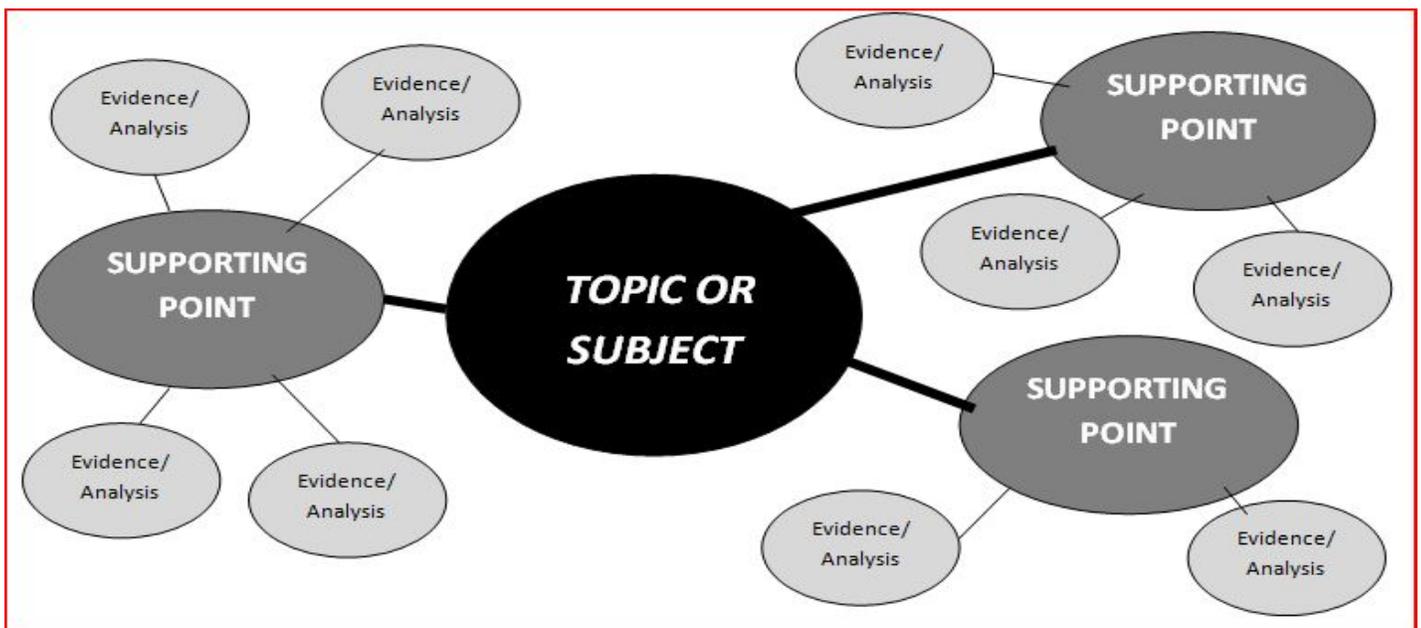
Mapping/clustering is a visual system of condensing ideas after you read a text to show relationships and importance. A map/cluster is a diagram of the major points in a text along with their significant sub-points that support a topic.

WHY MAP/CLUSTER A TEXT?

Mapping/clustering offers a visual organization that appeals to learners with a preference for spatial representation, as opposed to the linear mode offered by other strategies, such as outlining and note-taking. The purpose of mapping/clustering as an organizing strategy is to improve memory by grouping material in a highly visual way. A map/cluster provides a quick overview of an article or a chapter.

HOW DO I MAP/CLUSTER FOR A TEXT?

- 1) Draw a large circle in the middle of a page and in it write the subject or topic of the material.
- 2) Draw medium circles for each main supporting point that proves or illustrates the topic, and connect these circles to the central circle.
- 3) Draw small circles for the significant evidence and analysis that prove each supporting point, and connect these circles to their related supporting point. The number of details you include will depend on the material and your purpose.



WHAT IS A SUMMARY OF A TEXT?

A summary is a brief, concise statement in your own words of a text's thesis and major ideas. A summary can possibly include a few significant supporting details. The first one or two sentences should state the thesis, and subsequent sentences should incorporate the major ideas and, when appropriate, the significant details.

WHY SUMMARIZE A TEXT?

Learning to summarize a text helps you to grasp its meaning, recognize its thesis and to distinguish important details from less essential details. It also helps you to practice writing in a concise and focused way.

HOW DO I CREATE A SUMMARY?

- Establish a purpose for your summary; your purpose will determine which details are important enough to include.
- Write in paragraph form.
- The first sentence should include the title and the author
- The first sentence should also include the author's thesis or controlling idea. Try to limit your restatement of the thesis to one sentence, two at the most. Then add the ideas that lend insight or support to the thesis.
- Use appropriate transitional words and phrases to show relationships between ideas (i.e., compare/contrast words such as but, though, however...).
- Delete irrelevant or repeated information in your summary.
- Delete your personal opinion; summaries are only the author's ideas.
- Review your summary to make sure you haven't included too many details and that your summary is focused and brief.

WHAT ARE ORGANIZATIONAL CHARTS?

An organizational chart helps readers to organize information from texts like concepts, key terms, characters, and/or arguments. They can also be used to compare ideas from multiple texts.

WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

Organizational charts can help readers synthesize information, get better overviews of complex material, see thematic connections between texts, and they are excellent study guides.

HOW DO I DO IT?

To make an organizational chart, choose the categories of information you want to focus on. These will depend on your text and writing or studying task. Below are some sample organizational charts to give you an idea of what they could look like:

EXAMPLE

“Just Say No to Drug Legalization” from *Drugs*

“Against Legalization of Drug” (49) by James Q. Wilson	“Should Drugs be Legalized?” (63) by William Bennett	“Legalizing Drugs: A Dangerous Idea” (73) by Charles B. Rangel	“Just Say ‘No!’ to Proposal to Make Drug Use Legal” (75) by Joseph R. Biden Jr.
Thesis:	Thesis:	Thesis:	Thesis:
Key Arguments:	Key Arguments:	Key Arguments:	Key Arguments:
Your views, reaction and analysis:	Your views, reaction and analysis:	Your views, reaction and analysis:	Your views, reaction and analysis:

EXAMPLE

Who's who is Terrence Poppa's *Drug Lord*?

For each character describe his/her actions, personality, motivations, and your analysis of his/her significance in the story—include page numbers where appropriate:

Terrence Poppa	Young Pablo Acosta	Fermin Arevalo and family
Ojinaga (the town as a character in the story)	Older Pablo Acosta (after becoming Drug Lord)	Sammy Garcia
Manuel Carrasco	Shorty Lopez	Becky
Acosta family	Victor Sierra	Marco DeHaro

PRACTICE

Here is a blank organization chart you can label and adapt to your own reading assignment.

WHAT ARE LEVELS OF COMPREHENSION?

To use critical thinking to examine a text, you want to apply different levels of comprehension in your analysis from a basic level (summary) to the more complex (interpretation, analysis).

WHY EXAMINE DIFFERENT LEVELS OF COMPREHENSION IN A TEXT?

This will better enable you to react to and understand the complexities of a text. This will also help you think of interesting and more complicated ways to discuss, analyze, and write about the material.

HOW DO I DO IT?

First, you want to get a firm understanding of some of the different levels of comprehension:

Literal Level—What did the author say?

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

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

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

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

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

Divergent Level— Are there other perspectives that have not been considered or addressed?

This level requires you to move out of the author's and your own point of view and look at the text from other perspectives. Are there points of views that have not been addressed? Are there other ways of looking at the issues raised that have not been considered?

PRACTICE

Applying different levels of comprehension to a text

Literal Level—What did the author say?

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

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

Divergent Level—Are there other perspectives that have not been considered or addressed?

WHAT IS CONTEXTUALIZING, REFLECTING, EVALUATING, AND COMPARING?

Here is what each of these concepts means when responding to a text:

Contextualizing: *Placing a text in its historical, biographical, and cultural contexts*

When you read a text, you read it through the lens of your own experience. Your understanding of the words on the page and their significance is informed by what you have come to know and value from living in a particular time and place. But the majority of the texts you read are written in the past, sometimes in a radically different time and place. To read critically, you need to recognize the differences between your contemporary values/attitudes and those represented in the text.

Reflecting on challenges to your beliefs and values: *Examining your personal responses*

The reading that you do in college might challenge your attitudes, your unconsciously held beliefs, or your positions on current issues. As you read a text for the first time, mark an X in the margin at each point where you feel a personal challenge to your attitudes, beliefs, or status. Make a brief note in the margin about what you feel or about what in the text created the challenge. Now look again at the places you marked in the text where you felt personally challenged. What patterns do you see?

Evaluating an argument: *Testing the logic of a text as well as its credibility and emotional impact*

All writers make assertions that they want you to accept as true. As a critical reader, you should not accept anything on face value but to recognize every assertion as an argument that must be carefully evaluated. An argument has two essential parts: a claim and support. The claim asserts a conclusion -- an idea, an opinion, a judgment, or a point of view -- that the writer wants you to accept. The support includes reasons (shared beliefs, assumptions, and values) and evidence (facts, examples, statistics, and authorities) that give readers the basis for accepting the conclusion. When you assess an argument, you are concerned with the process of reasoning as well as its truthfulness (these are not the same thing). At the most basic level, in order for an argument to be acceptable, the support must be appropriate to the claim and the statements must be consistent with one another.

Comparing and contrasting related readings: *Exploring likenesses and differences between texts to understand them better*

Fitting a text into an ongoing larger discussion helps increase understanding of why an author approached a particular issue or question in the way he or she did. Looking at other texts on the same or similar topic can help you see a different or perhaps a broader range of viewpoints on the topic that may not have been expressed in looking at a single author's text.

WHY USE THESE APPROACHES?

When working with a text, you can use these approaches to deepen your understanding and advance your own critical thinking of what you are reading.

PRACTICE

HOW DO I DO IT?

Complete the following chart based on the text you are currently reading:

<p>Contextualizing: <i>Placing a text in its historical, biographical, and cultural contexts.</i></p> <p>Questions: When was the text published and/or when does the story take place? What were the most influential historical events of this time? Who is the author and what is his/her personal history? Political agenda? What is the cultural climate of the text? Where is it set?</p>	<p>Reflecting on challenges to your beliefs and values: <i>Examining your personal responses.</i></p> <p>Questions: Did you agree with the arguments, attitudes or behaviors described in the text? Were there areas that shocked, challenged or threatened your belief system? Do you think the author consciously tried to evoke a reaction in his/her reader?</p>
<p>Evaluating an argument: <i>Testing the logic of a text as well as its credibility and emotional impact.</i></p> <p>Questions: Does the author use fairness, reasonableness, and logic? Does the author provide details and evidence to prove or illustrate assertions? How is emotion used and what is the intended or unintended impact on the reader?</p>	<p>Comparing and contrasting related readings: <i>Exploring likenesses and differences between texts to understand them better.</i></p> <p>Questions: Have you read other texts that addressed similar issues? What approaches or arguments did those authors use that this one did not? Were there any similarities? What can you learn by comparing this text to others?</p>

WHAT ARE DOUBLE-ENTRY JOURNALS?

A double-entry journal is a writing-to-learn strategy using a simple two-column format. The left side of the journal often comes from the “text.” This can include anything from an unknown vocabulary word, a short quote, what stands out for you as a reader, or passages that you find difficult or important. The text can be copied word for word or paraphrased. The right-hand of the entry is often used for the reader’s “response.” Readers can record interpretations, questions, reactions, or difficulties in response to the text.

WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

A double-entry journal keeps track of your learning. It can help you accomplish many reading goals. By regularly using a double-entry journal you can:

- keep track of what stands out for you and what confuses you about your reading.
- react to a writer’s main claim and arguments.
- identify significant passages and then interpret those specific passages.
- seek answers to your own questions.
- make personal connections to the reading.

HOW DO I DO IT?

Simply divide your paper into two columns. Below are some options you can use for each side of the double-entry journal:

TEXT	RESPONSE
Details from the text - (I saw, read, heard in the text)	Interpretation (I wondered, I made a connection, I thought)
What do I know or can infer?	What do I still want to know
A specific quote	Connections to major themes that a text addresses Predictions Questions Reflections Comparisons Interpretations
Details, facts, and statistics	Connections to major themes that a text addresses Predictions Questions Reflections Comparisons Interpretations

EXAMPLE

Double-entry Journal Example:

TEXT	RESPONSE
Douglass observes, “she had bread for the hungry, clothes for the naked, and comfort for every mourner” (1).	Can’t tell if this is all literal. But at least it shows what a generous-hearted woman she was to start What sparks her reversal?
“Mistress had given me the inch, and no precaution could prevent me from taking the ell,” explained Douglass (2).	Just a little bit of learning was enough to start him on his path to self-sufficiency and intellectual freedom. What’s an ell? Like a mile? How does a little freedom lead to unlimited freedom?
Douglass’ story of the neighborhood white kids	Shows how cunning he is – realizing that he can take something he has a lot of (bread) and get something he wants (learning – and later, freedom) What about reading compelled him to learn more about how to read?

NOTE: Some instructors may ask you to write a more extended response to a key passage. To analyze or respond to the key passage, you will have to consider questions like:

- What insights do you gain about the theme from the quote?
- Why do you find the passage to be thought provoking?
- What do you think about the idea expressed in the quote? Do you agree or disagree? Why or why not?

PRACTICE

Using your currently assigned text, create a double-entry journal using some of the approaches described:

TEXT	RESPONSE

WHAT ARE READING RESPONSE JOURNALS?

A Reading Response Journal is a companion to your reading and a way to promote active, rather than passive, reading. It helps you to remember what you have read and to come up with content that you can use for class discussions and essay assignments.

WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

Reading Response Journals can provide the template for an essay assignment. You can use ideas, quotes, examples and even whole sections of writing from your RRJ in an essay rather than starting from scratch. Because RRJs are more informal than essay assignments, students are often more relaxed when working on them. For this reason, the writing and generation of ideas often flows more freely than at the beginning stages of writing an essay, thus providing a great first step in the essay writing process.

HOW DO I DO IT?

Each professor will have his or her own format for a Reading Response Journal. Here is one method of doing a RRJ:



PRACTICE

- (1) Freewrite a response to your assigned reading – not a summary -- but your thoughts after reading the text. You can include personal experiences, opinions and/ or connections to other readings or events.**
- (2) Write down 3 short quotes from the text and your responses.**
- (3) Write down 3 questions you have after completing the reading.**
- (4) Paraphrase in 1-2 concise sentences one main idea in the text that interests you.**
- (5) Wild card! Draw a picture, find a graphic – cartoon, drawing, etc. – bring in a poem or song lyrics etc. that connect to the text in some way. Write a one-sentence explanation of why you included it.**

EXAMPLE

Reading Response Journal Example for Chapter VII of Frederick Douglass

1. **Freewrite a response to the chapter – not a summary -- but your thoughts after reading the chapter. You can include personal experiences, opinions and/ or connections to other readings or events.**

After I read this chapter I thought about the burden of ideas, how once you know something, it weighs on you and it can be painful until you move to the next step, which is to do something about what you know. Frederick Douglass felt tortured by what he realized about slavery. He almost wished to not know, but he couldn't go back. But he saw the light of freedom under the dark clouds of oppression and that drove him forward. I like the way he learned – how he started with being taught by the mistress, then tried to read the newspaper and then sought help from the neighborhood kids who could already read and write. I like his resourcefulness, how he used everything around him to learn.

2. **Write down 3 short quotes from the text and your responses.**

“Slavery proved as injurious to her as it did to me.”

This shows that slavery is so inhuman that it hurts even the people in power, the slave owners themselves. The mistress changed from being kind and generous to becoming mean and hard-hearted.

“The moral which I gained from the dialogue was the power of truth over the conscience of even a slaveholder.”

In the text by Sheridan that Douglass read, he learned a great thing: that the truth can be so powerful it can even change a slaveholder's consciousness. The arguments he read had a huge impact on Douglass because he saw the power of truth and ideas.

“Anything, no matter what, to get rid of thinking!”

Douglass is tortured by what he has learned about slavery and its dehumanizing system. At times he wishes he were still ignorant because of the painful truth of his knowledge.

3. **Write down 3 questions you have after completing the reading.**

Why did the mistress allow herself to change so dramatically?

Did other slaves at that time learn to read and write or is Douglass an exception?

Who is Sheridan and when did he write “The Columbian Orator”?

4. **Paraphrase in 1-2 concise sentences one main idea in the chapter that interests you.**

People's consciousness can change radically. The mistress changed from being kind to being oppressive. On the other hand, the slave owner in the Sheridan dialogue changed from thinking he had the right to own slaves to voluntarily emancipating his slaves.

5. **Wild Card! Draw a picture, find a graphic – cartoon, drawing, etc. – bring in a poem or song lyrics etc. that connect to the text in some way. Write a one-sentence explanation of why you included it.**

WHAT IS ACADEMIC SPEED DATING?

Academic speed dating is a method to facilitate discussion of a text and allows you to quickly get multiple points of view by rotating through focused discussion with your classmates.

WHY DO IT?

This approach breaks up the traditional sitting-down-in-desks set up of the classroom, it gets everyone up and out of their seats, and this brings a different kind of engagement and energy to the discussion. It also involves every person so even the quieter students get to share their perspectives, and we all benefit from hearing a wider range of viewpoints.

HOW DO I DO IT?

The class is divided in half and then half of the class stands with their backs to the wall around the room. The other half of the class then matches up to the students along the wall facing them. The students then have 2 minutes of focused discussion on the text. After 2 mins, the instructor calls out or turns the lights in the class on and off, and then the inner ring rotates right for another 2 minutes. This happens for the number of rounds that the instructor indicates.

EXAMPLE

Academic Speed Dating: *undun by The Roots*

Round 1: Who is the main character, Redford Stevens, whose story is told throughout this album? How is he portrayed? What do you think of him?

Round 2: Why do you think the Root's chose to reverse the time order in telling Redford's life? What is the effect? How would it have changed things to tell his story in chronological order?

Round 3: What did you find out about *undun* from your Internet research?

What, Why, and How?

1

CRITICAL READING: Faculty texts

“Learning to Read” by Jessica Powers

“What Happened to the African-American Middle Class” by Nathan Jones

“Salute” by James Tipton

Excerpt from *Samba Dreamers* by Kathleen de Azevedo Feinblum

Learning to Read

by Jessica Powers

Jessica Powers has a Master of Fine Arts in Creative Writing (U. Texas-El Paso) and two master's degrees in African History from SUNY-Albany and Stanford University. She writes under the name J.L. Powers and is the author of several award-winning books, including *The Confessional* (2007), *This Thing Called the Future* (2011), and *Amina* (2013). She is the editor of *Labor Pains and Birth Stories* (2009) and *That Mad Game: Growing Up in a Warzone* (2012). She has published hundreds of articles, stories, poems, essays, and book reviews in a variety of print and online publications and is editor and founder of The Pirate Tree (www.thepiratetree.com), Mother Writer Mentor (www.motherwritermentor.com) and The Fertile Source (www.fertilesource.com). She served as a visiting scholar for Stanford's African Studies Center in 2008-2009 and as a curriculum consultant for Stanford's Program on International and Cross-Cultural Education and African Studies Center in 2011-2012. Jessica has taught at Skyline College since 2007.

Activating Schema Questions (before reading)

- (1) Do you have any strong memories of learning to read or being a beginning reader in school?
- (2) Was there one particular book you remember reading that had a strong influence on you when you were in elementary school? Why?

My second-grade teacher Mrs. Pecille grouped students by how well we read. The kids with the green reader were the best readers. The kids with the blue reader—my group—were the second best readers.

I badly wanted to be in the green reader group. I knew I could read better than anybody in the blue group. Certainly, I could read better than Todd, who stuttered. And then there was Michael, who read as if saliva gathered in his mouth, as if he was sucking on a large piece of candy and couldn't swallow the sweet liquid and spit that accumulated in his mouth. Without a doubt, I read better than Michael, and I told him so. When Mrs. Pecille periodically tested us to see how well we read—whether we could pass into the next reader—I read as fast as I could, cramming as many words into the 120 second time period during which she listened to us to see if we had improved. I ran my sentences together, not pausing for breath, reading reading reading until I had to pause with a great big

GASP

and then I would be back at it again because I wanted to prove to her how well I read and reading fast was a big part of reading well. I knew it. I just knew it.

When Mrs. Pecille inevitably told me, at the end of each testing, that I needed to slow down and I would do better, I never believed her. "But my brother has the green book at home," I'd say. "And I read it, Mrs. Pecille. I read it all the time. I don't have any problems reading it."

Mrs. Pecille would smile, wisely, nod her head with its curly brown hair. She sat straight in front of me, posture firm, in her gray skirt, and even though she was getting old and had gray in her hair, she was beautiful. During Show and Tell one time, I wanted to impress her, and I wanted to impress the other kids, so I informed the class, "My mother speaks in tongues."

Nobody knew what "speaking in tongues" meant. I didn't really know what it meant either, except that my mother had told me about it, but she had also said it was a very private thing, a very private type of prayer, and she would never speak in tongues in front of everyone. But Mrs. Pecille went to the Lutheran Church down the street from us, so I figured she'd know what speaking in tongues was, and she would be impressed, kind of the same way she would be impressed if I said, "My mother heals the sick and the lame, she casts out demons from the oppressed. The deaf have heard, the dumb spoken!" Anyway, speaking in tongues was way better than dumb Michael's story about his cat that got stuck in a tree and yowled all night and that was why he was so tired, because he hadn't slept. He told us this story without standing up because, he said, he was too tired. Still, Mrs. Pecille treated my tongues story with the same grace she treated Michael's cat story, and I felt dumb.

Later that year, the school had a fund-raising drive for multiple sclerosis. I was supposed to enlist the aid of neighbors and family members, who would pledge a certain number of dollars for each book I read. I had three sponsors, my mom and my dad and my next-door neighbor. Three days before the due date, I panicked. I looked at my list and realized I hadn't read a single book for the drive.

So I went to the bookcase, and I started writing down the authors and titles of books on the shelf, books that looked to be in the children-ish range but had seemed too boring to actually *read*. Things like *The History of Rome* and *Life of an Ant*. I wrote all those titles down on my multiple sclerosis fundraising list, and I went to my mom and said, "These are the books I read, ten books." And my mother said, "Really? Did you really read *The History of Rome*?" And I nodded my head and said, "Yeah." So my mother and father and the next-door neighbor, who had pledged a dollar for each book I read, gave me thirty dollars, which I took to school the next day, proudly. The kid who had read the most books won a prize, I don't remember what, but I do remember that he had read a lot more books than I had read. Or said I'd read.

I didn't really know what MS was anyway.

Sometime after the multiple sclerosis incident, I picked up a book on Harriet Tubman, the escaped slave who became Moses to her people when she returned South over and over to help her people escape to Canada via the Underground Railroad. I don't know what happened to me that afternoon, when I curled up on the dark green sofa in our den, with the sunlight coming in through the screen door, and Mom in the kitchen making supper, but it changed my life forever. I couldn't

stop thinking about slavery, and how wrong it was, and how brave Harriet Tubman was for rescuing herself and then going back and rescuing other people.

When I told Mom that I had read that book, she looked very surprised, and she said, “Why, Jessica! You read *that* book? That’s a difficult book. You can really read now!” Maybe she had known I was lying during the Multiple Sclerosis fund-raising drive after all.

Soon after, Mrs. Pecille passed me to the green group.

Discussion questions:

- (1) What is Jessica’s attitude about the fact that she lied in the contest? Why do you think she feels this way, and what does this reveal about her motivations?
- (2) Why do you think reading the book about Harriet Tubman changed Jessica’s life?

Writing about reading:

- (1) Comparing yourself to Jessica in the story, write about your experiences learning to read in and/or out of school.
- (2) Explore Jessica’s motivations for getting into the green reading group. Look at her feelings for her teacher, the way she compares herself to her classmates and the hints we get about her personality.

What Happened to the African-American Middle Class?

by Nathan Jones

Nathan A. Jones has a BA in Sociology (California State University, East Bay), an MA in Ethnic Studies, (San Francisco State University), a TESOL Certification from Oxford House College (Barcelona, Spain), an MFA in Creative Writing and English (Mills College), and a Certificate for the Teaching of Post Secondary Reading (San Francisco State University). He is a poet, essayist, spoken word artist, book publisher, musician, and the author of *Revolutionary Erotica* (2003), *Black Man In Europe* (2005, 2008), and *Excerpts From My Soul: Read Without Prejudice* (2010). He has published numerous articles, poems, and essays for online publications and is featured in a variety of poetry anthologies. He has taught at Skyline College since 2010.

Activating Schema Questions (before reading)

- (1) Discuss your experiences during the most recent recession. Did it feel like a recession or a depression?
- (2) What do you already know about the African-American experience in the U.S. from slavery to the present day? How has this shaped the economic realities for African-Americans?

In 1931, James Truslow Adams coined the term “American Dream” in his book *The Epic of America*. Since its inception, this theoretical and intangible ideology has plagued the American psyche. Politicians invoke it and toss it around like a badge of honor, immigrants pursue it, and despite tirelessly negative economic news, citizens embrace it like a mythical relic. This so-called “American Dream” purports “that [the] dream of a land in which life should be better and richer and fuller for everyone, with opportunity for each according to ability or achievement.” Unfortunately, the myth of the “American Dream” feels more like a candid reality check of “dreams deferred” which one can find in between the pages of the Swedish economist Gunnar Myrdal’s *An American Dilemma*.

Millions of Americans have endured financial catastrophes in the recession since December 2007 and are rapidly continuing on a downward spiral. Many in the middle class are economically brittle, barely able to preserve their lifestyle, and are disillusioned by the illusive “American Dream”. However, the situation seems to be unbearably dire within the African-American community, specifically. Due to a steady loss of jobs, homes in foreclosure, loss of 401Ks, loss of retirement plans, and a lack of resources, many African-Americans who once enjoyed the spoils of a quasi-Cosbyesque “standard of living” have been commandeered by a depressed economy, forcing them into poverty and into homelessness in some cases. Is the African-American middle class experiencing a “recession” or “depression” and if so, is it over?

According to Algernon Austin, the Director of the Economic Policy Institute’s Program on Race, Ethnicity and the Economy, “The recession is not over for black folks.” In fact, the layoffs for African-Americans are only the latest piece of unwarranted bad news for a struggling middle class. In 2007, the Brooking Institution found that fewer than one-third of blacks born to middle-class parents went on to earn incomes greater than their parents, compared with more than two-thirds of whites from the same income bracket. Regrettably, the foreclosure crisis secured, shattered and wiped out a large section of a generation of African-American homeowners.

In 2004, the median net worth of white households was \$134,280, compared with \$13,450 for African-American households, according to an analysis of *Federal Reserve* data by the Economic Policy Institute. Within a five-year period, there was a decline in incomes earned by both ethnic groups. By 2009, the median net worth for white households had fallen 24 percent to \$97,860; and the median net worth for African-American households had fallen 83 percent to \$2,170, according to the institute.

What will the history of America look like, as the reversal of fortune knocks at the door of African-Americans who have fought hard to win economic success, which took decades to achieve, just to see their efforts for a better life dissipate in a shaky economic system? How will the decimation of the African-American middle class be justified, under the Obama Administration? What will be the long-term effects on consumerism, if a sector of the populace has no purchasing power? Will African-Americans once again, ask the questions that Langston Hughes posed, "what happens to a dream deferred"? Can African-Americans really buy into the narrative of the so-called "American Dream" or will the dream of a "quality of life" be found in the matrix of the American Dilemma? Poor people do not have recessions, poor people have depressions.

Discussion questions:

- (1) What is the author's attitude towards the "American Dream"? Why does he feel this way? Does this dream still exist for everyone?
- (2) What is some of the evidence that Jones uses to support his thesis that African Americans are suffering a depression rather than a recession? Which evidence do you think is most compelling and why?

Writing about reading:

- (1) If the trend described in the essay persists, what will happen if the African American middle class disappears? How would this change the African-American community? What would be the larger ramifications for our society as a whole?
- (2) The Langston Hughes quote of the dream deferred is referenced twice in the essay. This quote comes from the poem by the same name by Hughes. Read the poem and analyze how you feel it connects to the arguments made in the essay and the larger African-American experience:

What happens to a dream deferred?

Does it dry up
like a raisin in the sun?
Or fester like a sore--
And then run?
Does it stink like rotten meat?
Or crust and sugar over--
like a syrupy sweet?

Maybe it just sags
like a heavy load.

Or does it explode? --Langston Hughes

Salute

by James Tipton

James Tipton is the author of *Annette Vallon, A Novel of the French Revolution* (HarperCollins, 2008), which was a San Francisco Chronicle Bestseller and a Barnes & Noble Discover Pick. He has also published short fiction and a book of poetry, *Sacred Places* (1989). He holds a PhD in English, a Masters Degree in Creative Writing, and has been a full time Lecturer at University of California, Davis, and at the University of Bordeaux, France. For over twenty years he has taught literature and writing in the Bay Area, where he lives in Marin County with his family. James first started teaching at Skyline College in the fall of 1990.

Activating Schema Questions (before reading)

- (1) What was your earliest experience with death as a child – of a pet or a person?
- (2) What are some ways in which a parent can create strong bonds with a child?

The hamster was dying. I knew that but I also knew that dying people or plants could be brought back to life. They needed a lot of help from an expert, but it could be done. The hamster, my dad said, had eaten something, perhaps the green sports page, and the dye had not been good for him. Or maybe it was something else. He was going round and round in his wheel last night, I said. He was keeping me up as usual before I went to sleep and once I woke in the night and there he was, going round and round.

It happened fast, my dad said. No way of knowing. But he phoned the vet's emergency evening number and got some vitamin mixture he put in water, and now my dad sat on the edge of the bed and had the little hamster in his big hand. I didn't know any man bigger than my dad. All my friends' dads were short in comparison. I felt sorry for my friends. My dad could lift anything—this was before he hurt his back picking plums. I never knew anyone stronger than my dad. Everyone knew he had been a first lieutenant in the war, and his uniform was still hanging up, with plastic over it, in my parents' closet. Now, in his big palm, the near lifeless figure of my hamster, who had turned the wheel round and round with his running just last night, lay dwarfed by that hand.

I sat beside my dad and watched. There was just a small light on, attached to the wall. I sat in the half-dark in my pajamas and watched my dad take an eye-dropper, fill it with the liquid that the vet had recommended, and feed it gently to my hamster. We didn't say anything. I saw the hamster seem to sip from the dropper gently inserted into its mouth. My dad stroked my hamster as if it were a feather, with one finger. He tried to make that hamster come alive. He tried for a half hour, or

more. I got sleepy sitting there, but I wasn't going to move, if my father wasn't. Here, you stroke him a bit, he said to me. And I tried, but the hamster didn't move, as I wanted him to. All that energy, going round in the wheel, and now he was still, and even the eye-dropper and the vitamins and my dad's patient stroking didn't help him to move. But my dad had sat there with him, even when I was too tired and lay down, and pulled the covers up. There was my dad, a big man, with the eye-dropper in his hand.

Some years later we were playing catch in the back yard. There was a little lift of the ground at one end, and I stood there and pitched the ball. My dad squatted down, a catcher and umpire combined, and called the pitches. We struck out or walked imaginary players many times. Sometimes we went several innings. This evening the fog was blowing in—which put it in the summer in the Bay Area—and it was getting late for dinner, but we had to finish the inning. There was only one out, and I had thrown three straight balls. Then my dad walked out to the mound. Look, he said, when this game is over we'll go get a hamburger and milkshake. What flavor do you want? Chocolate, I said. Deal, he said; now this guy is no problem, just throw it down the middle and think about that milkshake. All the time he was talking he had his hand on my shoulder. We were part of the invisible team. I knew very well that we would go to no hamburger joint, that my mom was waiting dinner for us. I saw my dad squat down again and threw a perfect strike. Then he held his mitt for one on the inside corner, and I got that one too. They all went like that, and in no time we were walking toward the back porch. You just needed to relax, he said, to think of something else.

Many years, decades, later, we walked slowly along the narrow asphalt path that ran along the Napa River. My dad used his cane, although he didn't want to. We didn't walk very far, but far enough to leave the parking lot well behind. Before us the flat river, wide here, made a bend that my dad liked. You could see boats going up and down the river. Across the river were marshes with birds flying into them, waving grasses, and, way beyond that, my dad's new residence at a retirement community. He beat everyone at horseshoes, he said, because his father had taught him how to throw the shoe so it curved entirely around in midair and came in with a satisfying clink. Have I showed you how to throw it like that, he asked me. I said I think he had but I had forgot. He'd have to show me again.

I asked him then about Nebraska, where he grew up, for I thought this slow river would remind him of the Platte, which it did. A mile wide and an inch deep in the summer, he said. So you'd wade across, I said. On the other side, he said, you could still see the wagon ruts of the hundreds and hundreds of wagons that had gone this way on the Oregon Trail, and had crossed at that shallow spot. And sometimes—much more when my dad was a boy, he said-- you'd see a rusty cast iron pot or skillet, or a drawer of an old dresser that someone had thrown out to lighten the load. They realized here, they couldn't continue with all those things. They didn't need all those things. Maybe they loved them. Maybe they had been in the family for generations, but they had to let them

go. Imagine those women, he said, throwing those things out of the wagon that they had carried all the way, say, from Iowa.

It was at that time that a white egret, wings spread, flew up the river from the direction of the bay and disappeared into the marshes. For a moment his wings had been filled with sunlight, his shadow following below him on the slowly flowing river.

A couple years after that he was back in his old house. The bushes that surrounded the back yard had grown well out over it, and, when I went out there to prune roses that no one had pruned for several years, I thought someone needed to cut those bushes back. Sitting up in his bed, my dad gave me a thumbs up when I had told him I was pruning. He couldn't talk much, but he acknowledged that I was doing something important. That night I sat next to his bed and through the big window we watched the late winter sun set over the blue bay. I sang him an old forties song, an early Sinatra. Sometimes he would drift; then he would come back and stare at me, as if he were trying to memorize me.

He seemed to be drifting again just before I left, so I said, "Lieutenant," and he opened his eyes and gave me his full attention. His caregiver then caught on and called him that a few times while I was getting ready to go. Now I stood at the end of his bed, in the living room where my wife and I had moved it, so he could look out the window and see the bay and the mountain. When he had moved back in I had cut some of the pine tree branches that had grown out over the front deck, blocking the view. I got them as far as I could reach.

I stood at the end of his bed now, called him by his rank to say goodbye, and saluted. He slowly brought his big hand from under the covers, raised it, and saluted back.

Discussion questions:

- (1) Why does the writer include the specific details of the pots and drawers thrown off the wagons on the Oregon Trail and the white egret on the river? How do these details act as symbols, connecting to the theme(s) of the essay?
- (2) How does the father's service in the war play a key role in this essay? Think about the title of the story and the way the author ends it.

Writing about reading:

- (1) Examine how love is expressed between father and son in the different short scenes in the essay. Identify and discuss the most important descriptive details that illustrate their close relationship.
- (2) In the beginning, the father cares for the son; later in the story the son cares for the father. Write about the cycle of life, the ways in which a child can learn how to be nurturing from a parent.

Excerpt from the novel *Samba Dreamers*

by Kathleen de Azevedo

Kathleen was born in Rio de Janeiro Brazil but lived most of her life in the United States. In her spare time she writes and rewrites. Her novel, *Samba Dreamers* of which this selection is excerpted, began as a poem, then as a story, then, went through five major drafts and many minor ones. The book won the 2007 Pen Oakland Josephine Miles Award, given to books that address human rights themes. It also won a Latino Books into Movies Award. Kathleen has published articles in magazines and newspapers and online, but she says her secret comes down to this – “I rewrite until the piece is as close to perfect as I can make it. So of course, when I tell students they must revise their essays, I’m treating them like writers all around the world!” Kathleen started teaching at Skyline College in 1995.

Activating Schema Questions (before reading)

- (1) What do you know about the L.A. gang scene? Has it changed over the years?
- (2) Why do people feel compelled to break the law, even putting themselves in danger?

Rosea drove over to East L.A. to look up Geezer Ortiz, who sold guns from his house. She used to carry a gun on her street forays, but never used it. A parolee should not use a gun. Shouldn't have one. Rosea knew this. She wasn't stupid. Shouldn't be in the garden in the first place. But she was going to buy a gun, even though it was the worst thing she could do. For all she knew, someone had heard her in the garden when she screamed and fell. Maybe the police would find a piece of her clothes or her flesh, snagged on thorns. Or maybe the dogs were speaking dogs, the kind in children's TV shows, real snitches, real puxa sacos, as Joe would say. But life couldn't just be a job, an apartment, a happy parole officer. The garden made her feel pure, clean. Like Joe, pure and clean and sweet. As pure as when God first made Brazil.

Some of her compañeros were married, but Geezer had a long way to go to get straightened out. Oh, it had been hot back then! Her love for Mexicans started when her mother told her of the pachucos and how elegant they looked in their linen suits woven with sparkly thread, their sleeky baggy pants, the thick silk ties and matching handkerchiefs. And the knives that appeared out of nowhere---a breast pocket, their girlfriends' beehive hairdos---knives surprising someone like a slippery, deadly eel. Carmen had told her about the action at the Sleepy Lagoon, where some cop killed a Mexican, causing one grandissimo fracas, and Rosea, in love with defiance, grew to seek the fire that went with it.

Many people considered this neighborhood a flick-of-the-knife, fuck-you-gringo sort of place, and so of course the kids today acted like it was scary, too. Instead of the smashing zoot suits, though, they dressed in black Ben Davis pants and buttoned-up flannel shirts, big blue jackets puffed like bruises, peaked hats like wooly elves. They looked like corpses left in a ditch somewhere. The pride and the snazz had disappeared.

Rosea was older now, her heaviness had softened, and she carried more tragedy around. She looked at these street kids and wondered what she had wanted here, way back when. What drove her from the Hollywood Hills to the barrio? She seemed out of place now, in her sweatshirt and jeans, her thick ponytail, no lipstick, and dangly earrings. She hoped Geezer Ortiz, her old boyfriend, was still in the gun business. Once Geezer had brought a gun to her house and had shot coconuts from the trees in her mother's yard; the coconuts had shattered and splashed cool, sweet milk, and she and Geezer had stood under the trees with their mouths open and tongues out, trying to taste the exotic rain as it splashed down.

Rosea remembered the two-story apartment, and she wondered if he still lived there. She drove to the apartment and pulled to the curb. Nothing had changed: not the faded green paint, the rusted rain pipe along the side of the building, the brown water oozing from cracks in the plaster. More graffiti on the wall in front, though. Rosea sat in the car, getting up the nerve to go in. She didn't want to just go up to the front door, have a stranger open it, and say, "What in the hell do you want with us? We are a clean family; we are tired of your element." But oh, Geezer had been swell in his burst of glory, still young, with a gorgeous beard shadow on his ruddy face, his skin white like a güero, and boot-black hair. Jesus, he had been cute and a chingón to the max.

She got the nerve to get out of the car, climb up the concrete steps, and wander down the corridor until she found the metal number 10 nailed over the door. Rosea knocked. She could hear a loud TV and a bunch of children chattering. The door opened, and a small boy with large eyes and a dirty Sesame Street T-shirt stood hanging onto the doorknob. Rosea asked, "Ortiz?" The boy ran away from the door. Rosea stood at the doorway. From the dark hall, she could see the blue glow of the TV in the living room and could hear cartoons with their thump-ti-dump of frantic characters running around and slamming into walls. The little boy who answered the door ran back to the two other kids watching TV, lolling on blankets and pillows scattered on the floor.

A young man came from the lighted kitchen, stood halfway down the hall, and called out, "¿Quién es?"

Rosea tried to get a better look. His features danced before her in the shadows, the side of his face lit by the pulsating light of the TV. She guessed it was Geezer's brother. "You Scooter?" she said.

"Yeah."

"You don't remember me, Rosea Socorro Katz. I used to go with Geezer, remember?"

There was a long pause from the skinny, dark figure. Old cooking oil sizzled in the kitchen. "Geezer's dead," he said.

"Shit."

"Shot. Long time ago."

"Too bad." Rosea was not surprised.

"What do you want?"

Rosea asked then if someone had taken over Geezer's business. Scooter turned abruptly and walked toward the kitchen, and Rosea hung back, not knowing whether she should enter or leave, but Scooter stood at the doorway of the kitchen and called, "You coming? Close the front door behind you."

Rosea stepped inside, made her way to the kitchen, and sat at the table. A large stack of dirty dishes climbed out of the sink, and a pile of wrinkled clothes lay bunched on a chair. An old woman stirred some chorizo in a pan but didn't look up. Scooter went into the pantry, brought out a shoe box, and put it on the table. "Two hundred dollars. Look first." Rosea pulled the box toward her and opened the lid just enough to peer inside. A gun lay there, a .22, with a handful of loose bullets rolling around in the box.

Rosea felt sweat on her upper lip. She wished all this could happen outside in the fresh air, but of course it couldn't. A small girl, about four, came in, took one look at her, then at the shoebox, and she knew. The girl, so fragile and tiny, wore a small T-shirt and floral panties. She said something to Scooter, who told her to shut up. Then the little one turned and left, unaffected by the harsh words, and her skinny feet pattered back over to the cartoon room. Rosea pulled out her wallet and counted out a bunch of twenties, saved up from Hollywood Celebrity Tours. Jesus. Innocent tourist dollars smelling like perfume and Certs and midwestern innocence. She slid the money over. Scooter counted it and nodded, pointing to the box. "Be careful," he said, "it bites."

"I know." Then Rosea remembered her and Geezer shooting coconuts in the backyard. She turned to the old woman at the stove. "I'm sorry about Geezer. I was a good friend of his."

The old woman didn't even look up. Rosea suddenly felt sick about the whole thing, made worse by the mixture of smells from fried chorizo and rotten fruit and stale kitty litter. This place was a filthy dump, and she was a nobody. Scooter frowned. "Life is tough here, Rosea. Always was."

Rosea nodded and slipped the box under her arm, then she turned and left. She used to think it was so cool going with Geezer and being a chola tough chick and a part of his fully Mexican family, instead of everything in her life being "not quite Brazilian." She used to ride behind him on his motorcycle and snuggle her face into his neck smelling of hair tonic, her long hair snapping freely in the wind. She used to think she needed nothing else, but, remembering Geezer's face floating in the apartment window and his sardonic wave to her as she headed toward home in Beverly Hills, she realized now how his family must have despised her.

Discussion questions:

- (1) What do we know about the main character Rosea? From the information in the opening paragraph, what could have happened previously that caused Rosea to seek out a gun?
- (2) How do the past and the present work together and/or collide in this story?
- (3) What is Geezer's family like? Does the final line of this story seem accurate?

Writing about reading:

- (1) Rosea appears to have tried on the lifestyle of the barrio for a time. What would be alluring about this for a girl from Hollywood Hills? How does class play a role? Had she been a true part of this world? What can we learn from examining her attitudes and observations upon her return there?
- (2) How do we see undercurrents of violence threaded throughout the story? How does it shape the setting, the action and the characters? What is the effect or outcome for the reader?

What, Why, and How?



CRITICAL THINKING

Definition and rationale

Breaking down critical thinking into categories

Bloom's Taxonomy

Applying higher and lower levels of thinking in writing

WHAT IS CRITICAL THINKING?

- Critical thinking is a set of skills designed to help the thinker analyze, assess and question a given situation or reading.
- Critical thinking skills push the thinker to reject simplistic conclusions based on human irrationality, false assumptions, prejudices, biases and anecdotal evidence.
- Critical thinking skills give thinkers confidence that they can see issues which are complex and which have several answers and points of view and that opinions and insights can change with new information.

WHAT DO CRITICAL THINKERS DO?

- Consider all sides of an issue
- Judge well the quality of an argument
- Judge well the credibility of sources
- Create convincing arguments using sound evidence and analysis
- Effectively recognize and use ethos (ethics), pathos (empathy) and logos (logic) in argument

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

People will listen to and respect critical thinkers with these abilities because...

- **Considering all sides of an issue** means they are open-minded, informed, and mindful of alternatives and other points of view.
- **Judging well the quality of an argument** means they can effectively identify and evaluate another's reasons, assumptions and conclusions and not be fooled into believing false or unsubstantiated claims.
- **Judging well the credibility of sources** means they can recognize and present the most reputable, trustworthy and convincing evidence.
- **Creating convincing arguments using sound evidence and analysis** means they can formulate plausible hypotheses and draw conclusions which are thoughtful and verifiable.
- **Effectively recognizing and using ethos, pathos and logos in argument** means they construct well-crafted points using a balance of morality and ethics, consideration and empathy for others, as well as sound and logical reasoning.

HOW DO I USE CRITICAL THINKING?

Breaking down into categories how to analyze a topic or text (one written by you or another author) will help you examine it thoroughly and critically. Use these questions to assist you:

Clarity: Is it understandable and can the meaning be clearly grasped?

- Is the main idea clear?
- Can examples be added to better illustrate the points?
- Are there confusing or unrelated points?

Accuracy: Is it free from errors or distortions—is it true?

- Do I need to verify the truth of the claims?
- Is credible evidence used correctly and fairly?
- Is additional research needed?

Precision: Is it exact with specific details?

- Can the wording be more exact?
- Are the claims too general?
- Are claims supported with concrete evidence?

Relevance: How does it relate to the topic or assignment?

- Does it help illuminate the topic or assignment?
- Does it provide new or important information?
- Who does the content have the most relevance for?

Depth: Does it contain complexities and delve into the larger implications?

- What are some of the complexities explored?
- What are some of the difficulties that should be addressed?
- What are the larger implications or impact?

Breadth: Does it encompass multiple viewpoints?

- Do I need to look at this from another perspective?
- What other people would have differing viewpoints?
- Do I need to look at this in other ways?

Logic: Do the parts make sense together and are there no contradictions?

- Do all the points work together logically to prove one clear argument?
- Does one paragraph follow logically from the next?
- Does the evidence directly prove the main points?

Significance: Does it focus on what is important?

- Is this the most important aspect to consider?
- Which of the facts or points are the most important?
- Does it examine a larger significance?

Fairness: Is it justifiable and not self-serving or one-sided?

- Do I have any vested interest in this issue that can affect my reaction?
- Is personal bias or a hidden agenda driving the point?
- Are the viewpoints of others sympathetically represented?

PRACTICE

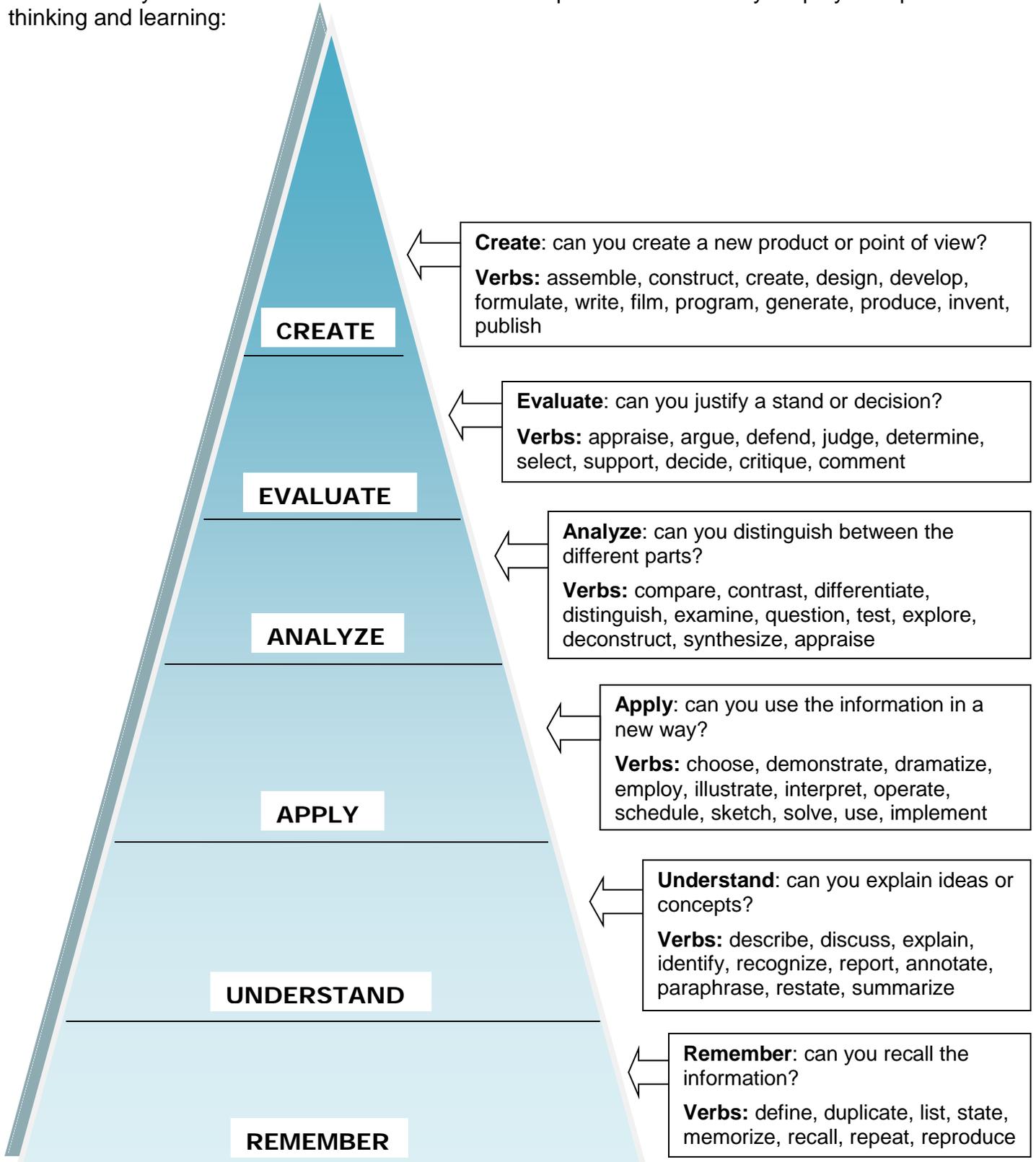
Use this chart to help you apply these critical thinking categories to a particular text or topic:

<p>Clarity: Is it understandable and can the meaning be clearly grasped?</p> <p>Is the main idea clear? Can examples be added to better illustrate the points? Are there confusing or unrelated points?</p>	<p>Accuracy: Is it free from errors or distortions—is it true?</p> <p>Do I need to verify the truth of the claims? Is credible evidence used correctly and fairly? Is additional research needed?</p>	<p>Precision: Is it exact with specific details?</p> <p>Can the wording be more exact? Are the claims too general? Are claims supported with concrete evidence?</p>
<p>Relevance: How does it relate to the topic or assignment?</p> <p>Does it help illuminate the topic or assignment? Does it provide new or important information? Who does the content have the most relevance for?</p>	<p>Depth: Does it contain complexities and delve into the larger implications?</p> <p>What are some of the complexities explored? What are some of the difficulties that should be addressed? What are the larger implications or impact?</p>	<p>Breadth: Does it encompass multiple viewpoints?</p> <p>Do I need to look at this from another perspective? What other people would have differing viewpoints? Do I need to look at this in other ways?</p>
<p>Logic: Do the parts make sense together and are there no contradictions?</p> <p>Do all the points work together logically to prove one clear argument? Does one paragraph follow logically from the next? Does the evidence directly prove the main points?</p>	<p>Significance: Does it focus on what is important?</p> <p>Is this the most important aspect to consider? Which of the facts or points are the most important? Does it examine a larger significance?</p>	<p>Fairness: Is it justifiable and not self-serving or one-sided?</p> <p>Do I have any vested interest in this issue that can affect my reaction? Is personal bias or a hidden agenda driving the point? Are the viewpoints of others sympathetically represented?</p>

Bloom's Taxonomy

Benjamin Bloom, a well-respected American educational psychologist, headed a group who developed a classification of levels of intellectual behavior important in learning. The image of the pyramid gives a visual of how **lower level thinking builds up to higher level thinking**.

This hierarchy shows how a critical thinker can build upon and consciously employ multiple levels of thinking and learning:



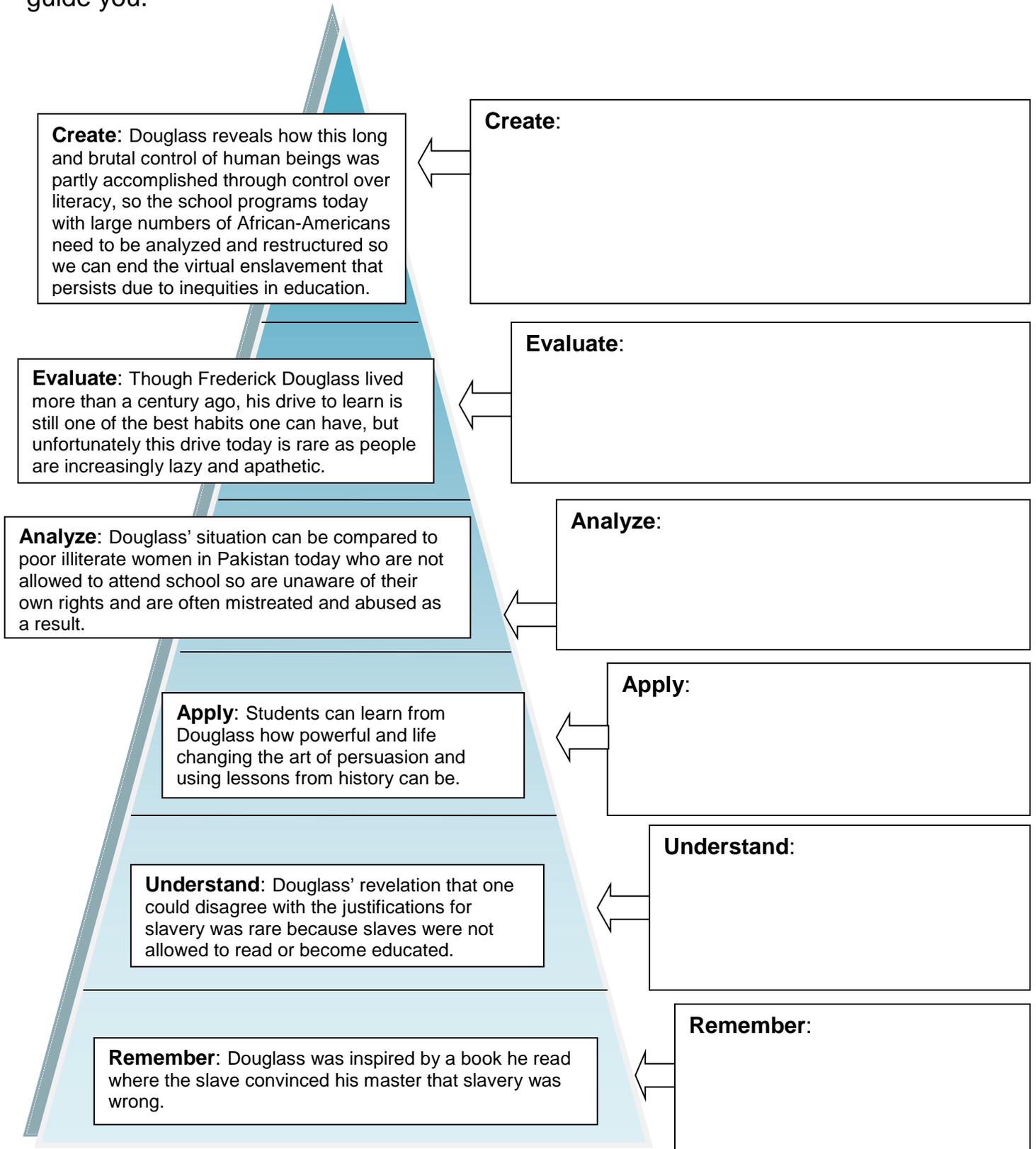
PRACTICE

Using Bloom's Taxonomy to Analyze a Text

When you analyze a text, you want to be able to employ all of the levels of thinking. Let's take a look at a passage from *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*.

I was now about twelve years old, and the thought of being *a slave for life* began to bear heavily upon my heart. Just about this time, I got hold of a book entitled *The Columbian Orator*. Every opportunity I got, I used to read this book. Among much of other interesting matter, I found in it a dialogue between a master and his slave. The slave was represented as having run away from his master three times. The dialogue represented the conversation which took place between them, when the slave was retaken the third time. In this dialogue, the whole argument in behalf of slavery was brought forward by the master, all of which was disposed of by the slave. The slave was made to say some very smart as well as impressive things in reply to his master—things which had the desired though unexpected effect; for the conversation resulted in the voluntary emancipation of the slave on the part of the master.

Either using this passage from *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* or your current reading assignment, fill in an example sentence (in the white boxes below) that demonstrates each level of thinking. An example has been included for each level to guide you.



APPLYING THE LEVELS OF THINKING IN YOUR WRITING

Now that we have looked at the hierarchy of low level to high level thinking, you as an academic writer want to make sure that your writing includes and is lead by the higher-level skills of analyzing, evaluating and creating and does not get stuck solely in the lower levels of remembering (defining and repeating) and understanding (reporting and summarizing).

In academic writing, you want a balance of higher and lower order thinking but be sure to LEAD the paper with higher order thinking so reporting and summarizing does not take over your paper.

EXAMPLE

Here is a paragraph from the sample essay on *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*. The higher levels of thinking are in bold and the lower levels of thinking are not:

After secretly learning to read and write on his own, Douglass discovered that freeing his mind led to anguished torment as he was unable to free himself from the entrenched institutions of slavery, but change at least was set in motion. Initially, being awakened to the stark realities of his condition served to plunge Douglass into despair: “As I read and contemplated the subject, behold! that very discontentment which Master Hugh had predicted would follow my learning to read had already come, to torment and sting my soul to unutterable anguish” (84). Once Douglass’s eyes were opened, he invariably suffered: “... I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing. It had given me a view of my wretched condition, without the remedy. It opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out. In moments of agony, I envied my fellow-slaves for their stupidity” (84). **So is ignorance bliss? The answer for us to live in a fair and decent world has to be no, never. To be ignorant allows others not only to make choices for you but to limit your choices without you even realizing it. Not knowing the factors and people who shape your life, enables those in power to act in their own self-interest and have no accountability when doing so. It also makes people unable to recognize when they are victimized by unjust situations, and if you cannot see the problem, then you can never demand change.** After Douglass understood the evils of slavery, he suffered initially and even entertained thoughts of suicide, but later he escaped to the north and became an influential leader in the abolitionist movement and spent the remainder of his life fighting for the equality and rights of blacks as well as women.

Higher levels of thinkin

lower levels of thinking

Higher levels of thinkin

lower levels of thinking

PRACTICE

Identifying Higher and Lower Levels of Thinking

Using this paragraph from an essay written on *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*, underline the parts that demonstrate higher order thinking:

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

ANSWERS

Using this paragraph from an essay on Malcolm X's autobiography, underline the parts that demonstrate higher order thinking:

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

What, Why, and How?

3

PAPER TOPICS

Text-Based Approach

General Paper Guidelines

Paper Topics:

- Creating your own**
- Breaking down assignments/prompts**

WHAT IS A TEXT-BASED APPROACH TO PAPER TOPICS?

Paper topics are an instructor's way to provide guidelines for writing essays. At Skyline College, the English composition classes are designed to teach **text-based writing** (also known as reading-based writing). Therefore, the paper topics are generally text-based which **promote an understanding and analysis of the assigned reading**. This means that students create essays that argue a point of view about the reading. In text-based writing, if you write an essay that does not mention the reading or directly examine the reading, it is off topic. However, text-based writing is **not simply summarizing** what you read. You will summarize parts of the reading to support your arguments, but summary should not take over your paper. In text-based writing, you will center the paper on an argument (thesis) that gives your opinion on and analyzes what you read. The body of the paper then provides evidence (from the assigned reading as well as other sources) and your own reasoning to prove and illustrate that argument.

WHY THIS APPROACH?

Text-based writing...

- applies what you read putting the information into long-term memory.
- promotes higher order critical thinking as it involves processing complex information and forming educated well-reasoned opinions on it.
- promotes advanced critical reading by requiring close, interactive reading.
- adds a scholarly authority to your writing as you react to, assess, and incorporate the views of others.
- develops confidence in forming your own position on the human condition and societal issues.
- helps writers relate texts to other texts and to their lived experiences applying the valuable skills of synthesis which allows readers to see important commonalities, patterns, and trends.
- makes you a better thinker, stronger reader, clearer writer, and more sophisticated scholar.

HOW DO I APPLY IT?

To be able to effectively respond to paper topics, you should know the following:

I. Follow standard paper guidelines and know expectations.

Paper topics come in all shapes and sizes, but in general for an English class, you can expect to find the following requirements:

- **Meet stated page length requirements.** Turning in papers that are under the required page length sends a message that the assignment was not taken seriously and that a lack of time, effort, and consideration was put into the project.
- **Adhere to due dates.** Plan ahead and break down the project into manageable stages, so you don't cause yourself undue stress by doing things "last minute" or by hurting your grade through missing due dates and not being able to turn in assignments.
- **Use the stated paper formatting standards.** In an English class, the most common paper formatting approach is MLA. See [Chapter 5 on MLA Conventions](#).
- **Follow the assignment.** It is essential that you follow the guidelines of the assignment or else you risk receiving little to no credit for your work. English classes are also teaching students how to successfully complete college-level tasks, so take some time in the beginning to ensure you are doing what was asked.
- **Apply writing standards in your paper.** This Rhetoric walks you through the fundamental essay components, so apply these concepts to your writing. There is also an [Essay Checklist](#) in Chapter 4 that you can use to ensure you have covered all the bases your instructor will be expecting in an academic paper:
- **Seek opportunities for additional help.** Writing can be an isolating experience but it does not have to be. Use campus resources to help you formulate your writing plan and to get outside perspective and feedback on your writing. You can visit your instructor during office hours at any stage in the writing process. You can also use the tutoring services offered in the Learning Center: <http://www.skylinecollege.edu/learningcenter/index.php>. Getting feedback is one of the most effective ways to focus and improve your writing.

II. Be prepared for different types of writing assignments.

When responding to and analyzing the written work of others, sometimes you will be asked to form your own response and to create your own paper topic on what you read. Other times, you will be given a writing assignment (also known as a writing prompt) by your instructor. It is important to have the skill of developing your own paper topic as well as being able to breakdown and follow the paper topics given to you. What follows is information on how to do both.

(1) Creating your own paper topics in response to texts:

If you are asked to create your own paper topic in response to the assigned reading, here are some easy steps you can follow to come up with an argument (thesis):

CREATING YOUR OWN ARGUMENT:

To arrive at a good topic and a strong thesis try this process:

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

This process is covered in more detail and with an example in the section “[How Can I Create a Thesis?](#)” in Chapter 7.

(2) Breaking down and understanding writing assignments/prompts:

If you are given a writing assignment (also known as a writing prompt) then be sure to use techniques to effectively break down and fully understand that prompt before you begin the writing task. This will ensure you do not write off topic or miss important elements of the assignment.

It is essential to understand and identify key words within any writing prompt. Here are some commonly used command verbs used in prompts. It is not guaranteed these words will be used, but if they are, be sure you understand what each command is asking you to do:

Key Words Commonly Used in Writing Assignments/Prompts:

Describe: Write about the subject so the reader can easily visualize it; tell how it looks or happened. Use adjectives, adverbs and descriptive language to paint a mental image for you reader.

Compare: Analyze the similarities *and* the differences between two or more items.

Contrast: Look only at the differences between two or more items.

Explain: Give the meaning of something often answering the question “why”?

Discuss: Provide a broader range of possibilities that critically explore your topic.

Argue: Present a point of view or take a position and prove it. Don’t be concerned about taking the “right” or “wrong” position; just support a position soundly and consistently.

Analyze: Break the subject down into parts, and explain and critically examine the various parts.

Criticize/Critique: Point out both the positive and negative aspects of the topic.

Evaluate: Give your opinion of the value of the subject; discuss its strengths and weaknesses.

Illustrate: Make the point or idea by giving examples.

Trace: Tell about an event or process in chronological (time) order.

Prove: Show that something is true by giving facts or logical reasons.

State: Give the main points in a brief, clear form.

BREAKING DOWN A PROMPT: An approach for linear thinkers

- (1) Read the prompt carefully and several times.
- (2) Sum up the topic in a few words (What is the focus of the prompt?)
- (3) Restate the prompt in your own words to help you fully understand it.
- (4) Circle and/or underline the key words.
- (5) Identify and count the required steps in the writing task.
- (6) Make a list of the paper requirements.

EXAMPLE

English 100

WRITING ASSIGNMENT #1: Position Paper (Argumentative)

DUE DATES: Tuesday, January 28th– First Draft

Tuesday, February 4th– Second Draft

Tuesday, February 18th-Final Draft

Your first major essay assignment of this semester involves responding to and taking a position on an idea that Michelle Alexander presents in her book, *The New Jim Crow, Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*. Your essay must be a minimum of 4-5 double-spaced pages and must specifically address the topic given below. Refer to your “Formal Essay Guidelines” handout for details about essay policies and formatting guidelines.

Carefully reread Chapters 1-6 in *The New Jim Crow, Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, and prepare yourself to use information from those chapters to help you support and clarify your own points and ideas. To help you with developing and organizing ideas for your essay, plan out your ideas on your Planning & Prewriting Worksheet (handout) before writing your first draft. Feel free to discuss your ideas and drafts with me and/or a tutor, and go to the Writing/Reading Lab in the Learning Center (Bldg. 5) to get additional assistance on your essay.

ESSAY TOPIC

In *The New Jim Crow, Mass Incarceration in the Age of Colorblindness*, author Michelle Alexander argues that it is important for us to understand that The New Jim Crow is the Prison Industrial Complex system which has disproportionately incarcerated black men at an alarming rate in the United State. She writes: “Like Jim Crow (and slavery), mass incarceration operates as a tightly networked system of laws, policies, customs, and institutions that operate collectively to ensure the subordinate status of a group defined largely by race (Alexander, 13).

Carefully consider the four key points that Alexander raises in the passage above. In your essay of 4-5 pages, discuss whether or not you support Alexander’s position on her insights about mass incarceration in the Age of Obama. Remember to do the following in your essay: state your own position in your thesis statement, and support your thesis by discussing specific points that address Alexander’s main arguments. All in all, your essay will include a combination of your own ideas, analysis, observations, and examples/details as they relate to the main points that Alexander makes.

Looking again at the step-by-step process, let's do the tasks and apply them to this assignment:

Breaking down a writing assignment/prompt:

- (1) Read the prompt carefully and several times.
- (2) Sum up the topic in a few words (What is the focus of the prompt?)
- (3) Restate the prompt in your own words to help you fully understand it.
- (4) Circle and/or underline the key words.
- (5) Identify and count the required steps in the writing task.
- (6) Make a list of the paper requirements.

- (1) Read the prompt carefully and several times.

As you read, highlight, take notes, and ask questions in the margins.

- (2) Sum up the topic in a few words (What is the focus of the prompt?).

Mass incarceration of black men

- (3) Restate the prompt in your own words to help you fully understand it.

Do I agree with Alexander that the U.S. prison system operates as a new Jim Crow system that oppresses black men? Do I agree that “mass incarceration operates as a tightly networked system of laws, policies, customs, and institutions” that guarantees the subordinate status of black males in our society?

- (4) Circle and/or underline the key words.

Carefully **consider the four key points** that Alexander raises in the passage above. In your essay of 4-5 pages, **discuss** whether or not you support Alexander's position on her insights about mass incarceration in the Age of Obama. Remember to do the following in your essay: **state** your own position in your thesis statement, and **support** your thesis by discussing specific points that address Alexander's main arguments. All in all, your essay will **include** a combination of your own ideas, analysis, observations, and examples/details as they relate to the main points that Alexander makes.

- (5) Identify and count the required steps in the writing task.

1. **Consider** Alexander's **four key points**: laws, policies, customs, and institutions
2. **State** whether I support Alexander's position about mass incarceration.
3. **Discuss** and **support** my position using Alexander's main points
4. **Include** a combination of my own ideas, analysis, observations, and examples/details

- (6) Make a list of the paper requirements:

- * **Use Chapters 1-6 in Alexander's book**
- * **Plan out ideas on “Planning & Prewriting Worksheet” before writing first draft**
- * **Length should be 4-5 pages**
- * **First draft due 1/28, second draft due 2/4, final draft due 2/18**
- * **Refer to “Formal Essay Guidelines” for essay policies and formatting**
- * **Not required but good idea: meet with tutor or instructor to discuss ideas and drafts**

BREAKING DOWN A PROMPT: An approach for visual thinkers

Using a graphic organizer, you can make a visual breakdown of an assignment/prompt:

Topic	Breakdown of Writing Task	Requirements
State the topic in its most basic form. <i>What is this prompt about?</i>	Describe the writing task or tasks in your own words. <i>What is the prompt asking you to do? How many parts/tasks are there?</i>	Make a list of key essay requirements. <i>What are the main requirements of this essay?</i>

EXAMPLE

ESOL 400

Essay #1: Intelligence and Mindset

What is intelligence, anyway? So far this semester, we have touched on the themes of intelligence in Isaac Asimov's "What Is Intelligence, Anyway?" and Carol Dweck's "Brainology." These authors challenge our traditional notion of intelligence and discuss different ways of thinking about intelligence.

In this essay, you will explore new ideas about intelligence and argue your own beliefs about intelligence and mindset.

Please choose ONE of the essay topics:

1.) Isaac Asimov's "What is Intelligence, Anyway?"

What does Asimov believe about the nature of intelligence? Do you agree or disagree with his ideas about intelligence, and why or why not? Explain the **significance** of his ideas about intelligence in terms of education and to your life. Give specific examples to support your opinion.

2.) Carol Dweck's "Brainology"

What does Dweck believe about the different types of intelligence? Do you agree or disagree with her ideas about intelligence/mindset, and why or why not? Explain the **significance** of her research in terms of education and to your life. Give specific examples to support your opinion.

In this essay, you should first **SUMMARIZE** the article and then give your response to the essay question.

Requirements:

- Length should be approximately **2 pages** (no shorter than 1 ½ pages, no longer than 2 ½)
- Essay should be typed in 12-point standard font (such as Times New Roman or Arial)
- Use **MLA format** (double spaced, with proper heading)
- You should incorporate ONE quotation in your paper using MLA format
- Essay should have a creative title (centered in the middle of the page)
- You need to turn in a **signed tutor feedback form** with your rewrite
- **All essays must be turned in on the Turnitin link on WebAccess** (due the same day as the rewrite)

Due dates:

- Outline, typed, one page, due: **Wed., Feb. 5**
- Rough draft, typed, one page, due: **Wed., Feb. 5** (be ready for peer review)
- Final Draft due: **Wed., Feb. 12**

Using the graphic organizer, you can visually separate the different parts of the assignment to better understand it and to break it down into manageable tasks:

Topic	Breakdown of Writing Task	Requirements
<p><i>What is this prompt about?</i></p> <p>New and different ways to think about Intelligence.</p>	<p><i>What is the prompt asking you to do? How many parts/tasks are there?</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Choose Asimov OR Dweck as my paper topic. 2. Summarize the author's position on the nature or types of intelligence. 3. Agree or disagree with the author. Provide specific examples to support my position. 4. Explain the significance in terms of education and my life. 	<p><i>What are the main requirements of this essay?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Due dates: outline (2/5), draft (2/5), final (2/12) • 2 pages, 12pt font • MLA format • 1 quotation • Creative title • Meeting with tutor required • Use Turnitin

PRACTICE

Using the step-by-step process, break down the following assignment:

Breaking down a writing assignment/prompt:

- (1) Read the prompt carefully and several times.
- (2) Sum up the topic in a few words (What is the focus of the prompt?)
- (3) Restate the prompt in your own words to help you fully understand it.
- (4) Circle and/or underline the key words.
- (5) Identify and count the required steps in the writing task.
- (6) Make a list of the paper requirements.

ART HISTORY TERM PAPER

OBJECTIVE:

A very basic objective of this course has been to learn how to examine the culture and social structures of a civilization during a particular period in order to understand the artwork. This approach to the study of Art History is called "iconology." To make this process of investigation a little more personally meaningful, you are to prepare a term paper about any artwork produced in any time period we cover in this course. *Therefore, select one work from your textbook as the subject of the paper.*

The major theme of your term paper is try to explain why the selected artwork fits within its culture and time period. For instance, if the work is from the ancient Egyptian culture, what makes the work "ancient Egyptian?" How does one identify the work from that time and place as opposed to similar works made elsewhere? What reasons are given as to what the artists were doing at the time that was different from the styles before their time? What was the artwork for? Thus, how does the artwork reflect the time and place (the culture) in which the works was produced?

In the attempt to explain the "why" it will be necessary to discuss many aspects of the culture that influenced the choices made for the design and look of the artwork. For example, what possible choices were made because of the religious or spiritual ideals held by the culture? Or what social structures influenced the artwork (i.e. class distinctions based upon sex, wealth, heritage, or any other differences used to separate peoples in the same society)? Was the art made to honor the culture from which it emerged, or was it done to demonstrate a rejection or disapproval of some element of the culture? *It will be your choice as to how you want to discuss culture and the artwork.*

The objective of this research effort is to present the important factors which influenced the appearance of a specific art work. Thus, your paper should include the following:

- Identification of an artwork (what is it, who made it, when, where, etc,? and a detailed description of the work (what does it look like?)
- Why was it made, or what is thought to be the most reasonable function of the work? Why does it look the way it does?

WHAT TO SUBMIT:

The paper must be typed, double spaced, two to three pages, not including title and bibliography pages. The sources must be properly cited. *Be sure you include footnotes or end notes and a bibliography.*

PRACTICE

Using a graphic organizer, make a visual break down of the following assignment:

English 110

ESSAY #2 (Mini-Research Paper) : Sula

DUE DATES: October 23rd– Preliminary Citations Worksheet (20 pts.)

October 25th-- First Draft (6 pages-20 pts.)

November 6th– Final Revision

ESSAY TOPICS

Like many other short stories and novels, *Sula* functions as a literary commentary that offers insight and/or criticism about the society and individuals that it describes. In an essay of at least 6 pages, discuss a specific, primary issue/concern that the novel conveys about race, class, gender, or identity. What is this issue/concern that you've identified, and why do you think it is significant enough to explore and discuss in your essay? Lastly, how do the details and specifics in the novel help to convey your ideas about it?

Along with citations and information from the novel itself, you will be required to include information, ideas, and quotes from a minimum of 3 academic sources in your essay. The information from these sources should help to support and supplement your own ideas and should add insight to the points that you have made about the issue/concern you have chosen to write about.

Topic	Breakdown of Writing Task	Requirements
State the topic in its most basic form. <i>What is this prompt about?</i>	Describe the writing task or tasks in your own words. <i>What is the prompt asking you to do? How many parts/tasks are there?</i>	Make a list of key essay requirements. <i>What are the main requirements of this essay?</i>

PRACTICE

Here's a blank step-by-step process for you to use in breaking down an assignment/prompt you have been given:

Breaking down a writing assignment/prompt:

- (1) Read the prompt carefully and several times.
- (2) Sum up the topic in a few words (What is the focus of the prompt?)
- (3) Restate the prompt in your own words to help you fully understand it.
- (4) Circle and/or underline the key words.
- (5) Identify and count the required steps in the writing task.
- (6) Make a list of the paper requirements.

(1) Read the prompt carefully and several times.

(2) Sum up the topic in a few words (What is the focus of the prompt?)

(3) Restate the prompt in your own words to help you fully understand it.

(4) Circle and/or underline the key words (*rewrite the command portion of the assignment below and mark the key words*).

(5) Identify and count the required steps in the writing task.

(6) Make a list of the paper requirements.

PRACTICE

Here are some blank graphic organizers for you to use in breaking down assignments/prompts you have been given:

Topic	Breakdown of Writing Task	Requirements
<p>State the topic in its most basic form.</p> <p><i>What is this prompt about?</i></p>	<p>Describe the writing task or tasks in your own words.</p> <p><i>What is the prompt asking you to do? How many parts/tasks are there?</i></p>	<p>Make a list of key essay requirements.</p> <p><i>What are the main requirements of this essay?</i></p>

Topic	Breakdown of Writing Task	Requirements
<p>State the topic in its most basic form.</p> <p><i>What is this prompt about?</i></p>	<p>Describe the writing task or tasks in your own words.</p> <p><i>What is the prompt asking you to do? How many parts/tasks are there?</i></p>	<p>Make a list of key essay requirements.</p> <p><i>What are the main requirements of this essay?</i></p>

ANSWERS

Possible answer for USING THE LINEAR APPROACH:

Breaking down the assignment/prompt for the ART HISTORY TERM PAPER

- (1) Read the prompt carefully and several times.
- (2) Sum up the topic in a few words (What is the focus of the prompt?)

Understanding art by examining its cultural and social context

- (3) Restate the prompt in your own words to help you fully understand it.

Choose one artwork from the book, describe it, and explain how it fits within and reflects its culture, social structures, and time period.

- (4) Circle and/or underline the key words (*rewrite the command portion of the assignment below and mark the key words*).

The objective of this research effort is to present the important factors which influenced the appearance of **a specific art work**. Thus, your paper should include the following:

- **Identification** of an artwork (what is it, who made it, when, where, etc.? and a **detailed description** of the work (what does it look like?)
- **Why** was it **made**, or **what** is thought to be the **most reasonable function** of the work?
Why does it **look** the way it does?

- (5) Identify and count the required steps in the writing task.

- (1) Choose **one artwork** we have studied from the textbook.
- (2) Give a **detailed description** of it.
- (3) Explain its **purpose/function** and **why it looks the way it does** (examine the culture, social structures, and time period when it was created using the guiding questions in prompt)

- (6) Make a list of the paper requirements.

- * Paper typed and double-spaced
- * 2-3 pages plus a title page and bibliography
- * Footnotes within the paper



Possible answer for USING THE VISUAL APPROACH:

Breaking down the assignment/prompt for the ENGLISH LITERATURE *SULA* ASSIGNMENT

Topic	Breakdown of Writing Task	Requirements
<p>State the topic in its most basic form.</p> <p><i>What is this prompt about?</i></p> <p>How novel offers insight and/or criticism of the society in regards to race, gender, class, or identity</p>	<p>Describe the writing task or tasks in your own words.</p> <p><i>What is the prompt asking you to do? How many parts/tasks are there?</i></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none">1. Choose to write on ONE specific, primary issue/concern about race, class, gender OR identity in <i>Sula</i>.2. Why is this issue significant?3. How do the details in the novel help convey my ideas about it?	<p>Make a list of key essay requirements.</p> <p><i>What are the main requirements of this essay?</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Due dates: citations (10/23), draft (10/25), final (11/6)• 6 pages• Quotes/ideas from 3 academic sources

What, Why, and How?

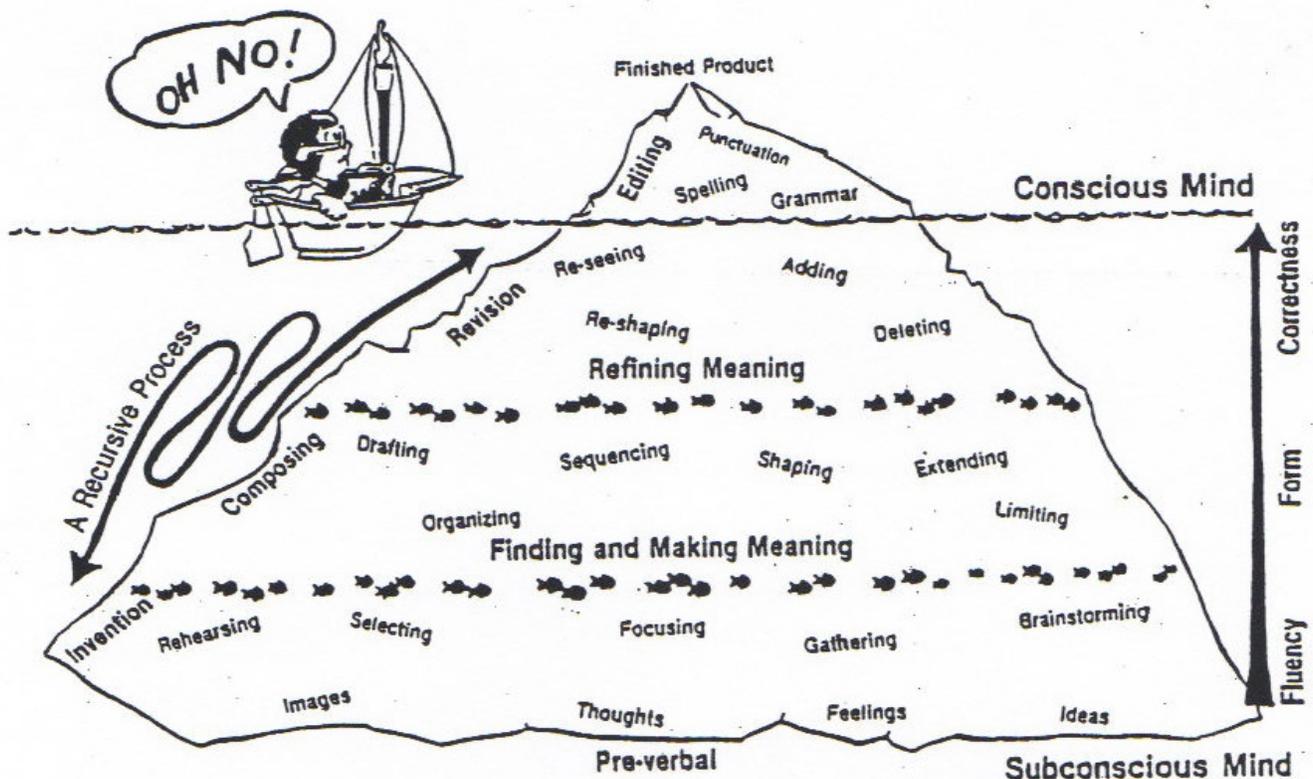
4

THE WRITING PROCESS: Prewriting

Writing as a Process
Freewriting
Brainstorming
Journalist Questions
Listing
Clustering/Mapping

WHAT IS THE WRITING PROCESS?

No writer can generate a perfect draft on the first attempt. Most employ a **writing process**, in which they begin with **prewriting and invention, then outlining, composing, revising and editing**. Though the aforementioned might suggest a linear process, it is usually recursive. For instance, you might end up going back to the prewriting phase and do some brainstorming even while writing the actual draft. The general rule of thumb is to invest some time brainstorming and writing a rough outline before writing the essay. Also, save editing for last. Sometimes it may be too difficult to juggle developing your ideas along with attending to grammar so save editing for the very last step.



WRITING AS A PROCESS NOT A PRODUCT:

The iceberg diagram gives a visual image of the writing process. Above the water line is the final product your instructor sees, and below the water line are all the less visible yet important steps that went into building a good essay. Unfortunately, many writers “wreck” themselves by just focusing on the final product rather than the process. This can give you writer's block. Also, following a process, rather than last-minute writing, will help you to produce your strongest and best essays.

WHAT IS PREWRITING?

The prewriting stage is when you begin generating ideas on your topic without focusing too much on organization and correctness. Prewriting allows you to begin creatively and to truly explore the scope and potential of your topic. Also, breaking the writing process down into stages makes it less stressful and more manageable and gives you time to figure out exactly what you want to develop and explore in your paper.

Here are some **successful prewriting strategies**:

- Freewriting
- Brainstorming
- Journalist Questions
- Listing
- Clustering/Mapping

In this chapter, we will look at the WHAT, WHY and HOW of each of these prewriting strategies.

WHAT IS FREEWRITING?

Freewriting is a technique that helps you generate content for an essay. Freewriting is writing continuously, letting thoughts unselfconsciously flow (often for about 5 to 10 minutes) without regard to spelling, grammar, style etc., and no corrections are made. Because there are no restrictions on structure/format or length, freewriting allows you the freedom to discover what you want to write about without worrying about rules or expectations.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

- It provides you with the raw material to help you start writing an essay.
- It helps you to bypass your “internal critic” who can make it difficult for you to explore your thoughts and ideas.
- It gives you confidence in your ability to explore a topic.
- It helps you develop your own unique writing voice and promote a solid flow, or rhythm, to your sentences.
- It gives you an easy way to begin any piece of writing and helps you surpass writer’s block.

HOW DO I DO IT?

Start with a blank piece of paper or blank computer screen. Give yourself a minimum of five minutes of uninterrupted time to freewrite. Write a few words at the top of the page to get you started and keep you focused, such as the general topic of your essay assignment or a quote from the text that is significant to you. Now begin writing whatever comes into your head when you think about this quote, the topic and/or the assignment that you have been given.

Try to keep writing without stopping, crossing-out, or erasing. Even if what you are writing seems like it isn't "correct" or "perfect," keep going. This is the key to freewriting – to write freely! Go for five minutes without stopping. If you have more to say, keep going for as long as you can. Don't evaluate what you are writing, or you will stop the free flow of thoughts and ideas.

Once you have a page or more of freewriting, read back over it and look for ideas or points that you might include in your essay. Underline or circle sentences or groups of sentences that you especially like and think you may be able to use in your essay. Use your freewriting as a springboard for your thinking about this assignment, directing you toward further reading, research and the writing of the first draft of the essay.

EXAMPLE

Freewriting sample

In response to Chapter VII in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, do the following:

Write a quote, or part of a quote, from the text by Frederick Douglass at the top of a blank piece of paper or a blank computer screen (or your most recently assigned text). For approximately five minutes, write anything and everything that is triggered by the quote.

Selected quote: "I have often wished myself a beast. I preferred the condition of the meanest reptile to my own. Anything, no matter what, to get rid of thinking!"

Frederick Douglass has learned to read and after he reads a speech by Sheridan, he sees that his human rights have been taken away by slavery. He began to hate his enslavers. He says they are robbers who took Africans from their homes and brought them to America to enslave them and take away their human rights. Once Douglass can read, his thinking skills are stronger because he is exposed to ideas beyond his own experiences, and his understanding of the oppressive nature of slavery is even stronger. He says that his Master Hugh was right – he feels a powerful feeling of discontentment that is so painful that he almost wishes he were illiterate

and didn't know how to read and think. He is overwhelmed by what he realizes and says he wishes at times he was ignorant because he is tormented by the horror of slavery. It is ironic because slavery is dehumanizing and Douglass says he almost wishes he didn't know what he knows and could stay ignorant. This makes me think about how reading and thinking help to liberate and enlarge our minds, and that is why in many countries run by dictators there is a high rate of illiteracy. If people are kept illiterate, they can be oppressed more easily. Being exposed to ideas can promote consciousness, which can lead to action. Frederick Douglass was changed forever by his ability to read, write and think about his situation as a slave. This makes me think how all of us are enslaved in one way or another, and that by reading and thinking about it, we can free ourselves.

Ideas for an essay topic drawn from this example of freewriting:

- How learning to read, write and think about ideas is a liberating experience
- How anger and discontentment can fuel awareness and action
- The power of ideas to build consciousness
- The irony of Frederick Douglass wishing to be a "beast" because of the painful truths he realizes about the dehumanization of slavery



PRACTICE

Freewriting

Analyze the following quote from Chapter VII in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (or analyze a quote or aspect of your most recently assigned text). For approximately five minutes, write anything and everything that is triggered by the selected text.

Douglass Quote: "My mistress was, as I have said, a kind and tender-hearted woman; and in the simplicity of her soul she commenced, when I first went to live with her, to treat me as she supposed one human being ought to treat another. In entering upon the duties of a slaveholder, she did not seem to perceive that I sustained to her the relation of a mere chattel, and that for her to treat me as a human being was not only wrong, but dangerously so. Slavery proved as injurious to her as it did to me" (31).

WHAT IS BRAINSTORMING?

Brainstorming is like freewriting in that you write down whatever comes to mind without stopping, but it is different because it looks more like a list of words and phrases than a string of sentences.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

- It is easier to see the main ideas when “boiled down” in a brainstorm
- It helps you summarize the main concepts in the reading
- It helps you see the main ideas that captured your interest in the reading
- It can make complex reading more accessible
- You can see many choices of paper topics emerging
- It is fast and easy

HOW DO I DO IT?

Look back at your freewrite and capture the important concepts into words and phrases. Also, look back at the text and pull out the main ideas and concepts.

EXAMPLE

Brainstorming sample

Here’s an example of brainstorming in response to Chapter VII in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*:

forbidden to read and write
humans treated as beasts
depravity of slave owners
abuse of power
slavery turning good people bad
reading and writing as dangerous
education and slavery incompatible
fear of rebellion
dehumanization
used white boys as teachers

impressive determination
bread for knowledge—both feeding
Christian country?
rights to freedom
emancipation—liberation
slavery as indefensible
reading a curse or blessing?
wretched condition—no remedy
ignorance is bliss?
building consciousness

PRACTICE

Brainstorming

In response to the quote from Chapter VII in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (or your most recently assigned text), look at your freewrite and brainstorm the important concepts into words and phrases and then add to it.

WHAT ARE JOURNALIST QUESTIONS?

“Journalist questions” are the “5Ws and the 1H”—who, what, when, where, and especially why and how. The who, what, when, and where are relevant to summaries while the how and why prompt you to examine the “so what?!” Use ideas from the text, your freewrite and your brainstorm and form them into questions. Through answering these questions, you can discover interesting information that you can use for writing.

WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

You may be asked to write about a topic or book, in which case you will need a means to generate the questions that most intrigue you. While who, what, when, and where questions are an effective means of gauging your comprehension, the why and how questions lend themselves to analysis, which is integral to any essay. After generating a list of questions, answer them. You may discover that a question generates multiple answers, some of them contradictory. Such controversy is often ripe for exploration and can lead to thought-provoking interpretations of texts. Answering complex questions is a way to form thesis statements.

HOW DO I CREATE THEM?

Look back at the text and then at your prewriting and think of the questions that were raised for you, or circle concepts or ideas you would like to know more about, and then form questions around them.

EXAMPLE

Journalist Questions sample

Here are some examples of the journalist questions using Douglass:

Who were the main advocates of slavery?

What were the writings that most affected Douglass?

When was the period in which Douglass lived?

Where was slavery the most prevalent?

Why was reading considered such a threat to slave-owners?

How did the slave-owners maintain control over human beings for so long?

PRACTICE

Creating Journalist Questions

In response to Chapter VII in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (or your most recently assigned text), create questions:

Who

What

When

Where

Why

How

WHAT IS LISTING?

Generating ideas on a topic through freewriting, brainstorming, and creating questions has a purposeful messiness to it. It is the time to let your creativity run riot and to push your thinking in new and sometimes unexpected directions. Once you have generated a lot of material on your topic, however, it is time to take stock and begin to narrow down and organize your ideas as you move towards writing a focused essay. Listing helps you to **select certain ideas** and **organize** them by grouping related concepts together. This is the most informal kind of outline in which you jot down your main supporting points and possible evidence and analysis. This kind of outline is for you only, and you don't need to worry about making it more comprehensive if it does the job for you. Many students find this kind of outline helpful in taking timed essay exams because it is brief, and it doesn't take much time to produce.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

When you are just beginning to write an essay, rather than making a formal outline, you can make a list. A list is a very user-friendly technique because you don't yet need to craft full sentences but instead select your most promising ideas and start to look for connections between them. Listing is important because it takes all the free-form ideas you generated and helps you to see how you could narrow and focus the material to present a convincing, logical argument.

HOW DO I DO IT?

Start with a blank piece of paper or computer screen. Stay focused by keeping your essay assignment and/or the annotated text you are analyzing next to you. Begin making a list of everything you think you would like to write about to fulfill the assignment or to respond to in the text. Use keywords or phrases; it's not necessary to write in complete sentences when listing. Using a bullet-list format is helpful.

Once you have made your list, go back and organize it into logical units; for example, you can use a numbering system to indicate what you want to include in your introductory paragraph, your body paragraphs and your conclusion. Arrange the ideas in the body paragraphs into a logical order. To illustrate your body paragraph points, you can add quotes, examples, or information to further research. You may find it useful to make a second, more detailed list or you may decide to turn your list, once it is full enough, into an outline.

EXAMPLE

Listing sample

Here are some examples of listing using Douglass and the ideas that came from the stages of freewriting, journalist questions, and brainstorming:

IDEA: Slavery harmed the mistress as much as it did the slaves

- the mistress changed – “tender-hearted” to mean-spirited
- she took the newspaper away from him so he couldn’t read

IDEA: Learning to read changed Douglass forever — became intolerant of slavery

- read Sheridan and saw good arguments against slavery
- saw slave owners as robbers stealing his people from Africa
- he came to hate (“abhor and detest”) his enslavers

IDEA: Reading as dangerous

- slave masters feared rebellion
- reading caused Douglass awareness but also despair
- “silver trump of freedom had roused my soul to eternal wakefulness”

IDEA: Denial of literacy is still used to control people

- poor urban neighborhoods with subpar schools and lack of supplies
- women in certain places in the middle east not allowed to learn to read and write

PRACTICE

Listing

In response to Chapter VII in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (or your most recently assigned text), do the following:

Make a list of main points in the reading. Leave space under each main point for 2-3 examples that support the idea. You can put the examples in after you’ve come up with at least 3-5 main points. Afterwards, look at how the ideas connect to one another to form a possible unifying thesis or argument:

WHAT IS CLUSTERING/MAPPING?

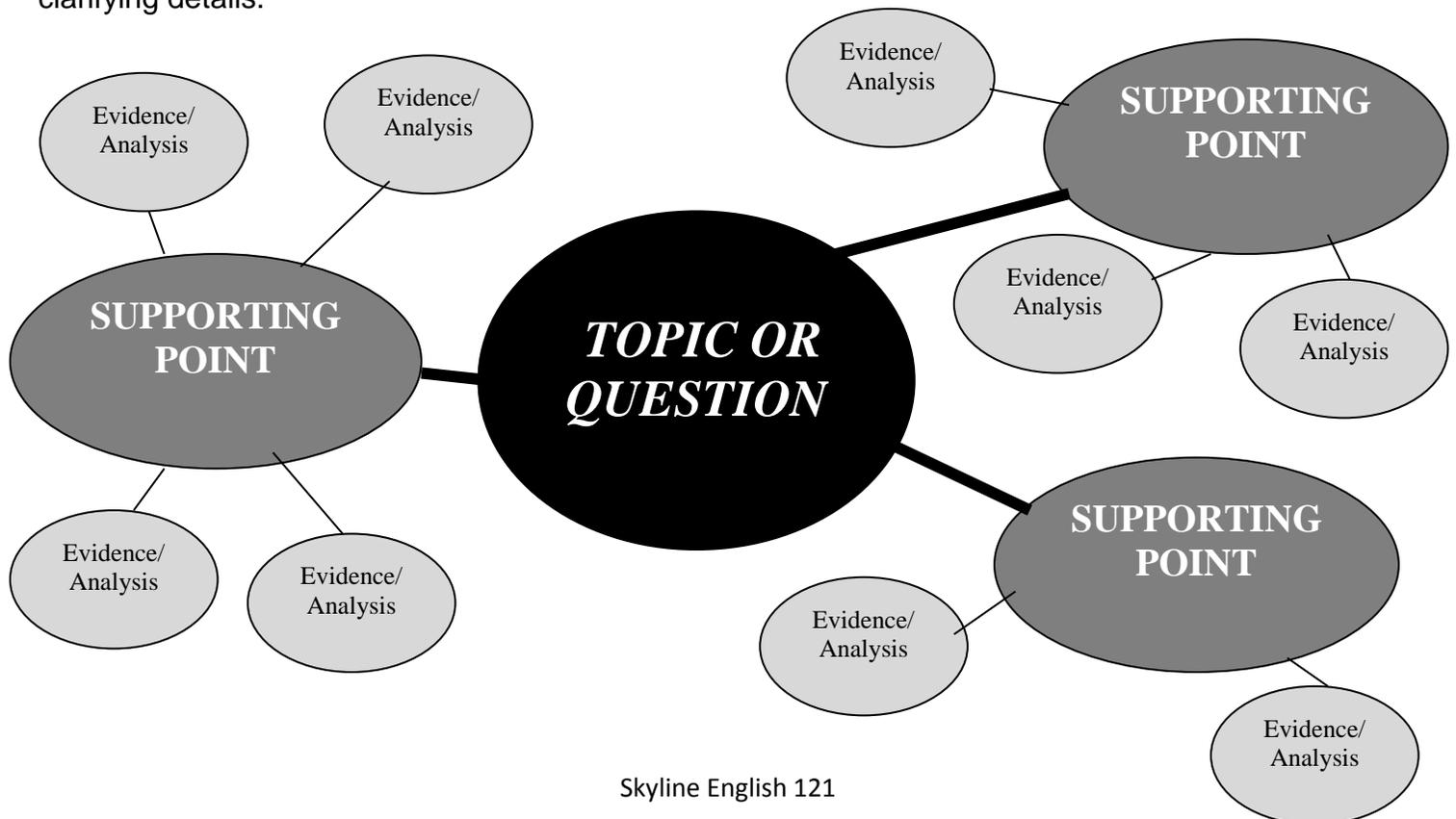
Clustering, also known as mapping, is like listing in that you narrow down and begin to organize your ideas. Cluster/mapping provides a mental picture of the ideas you generate and how they connect to each other. Where you place ideas on the page shows their relationship to each other. Ideas placed closer to the middle are the overarching key concepts that unify seemingly disparate ideas and details.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

- It works particularly well for visual learners.
- It helps you to see the most important ideas.
- It helps you to see how ideas are related.
- It helps you organize your ideas.
- It helps you start to see potential paragraphs forming.

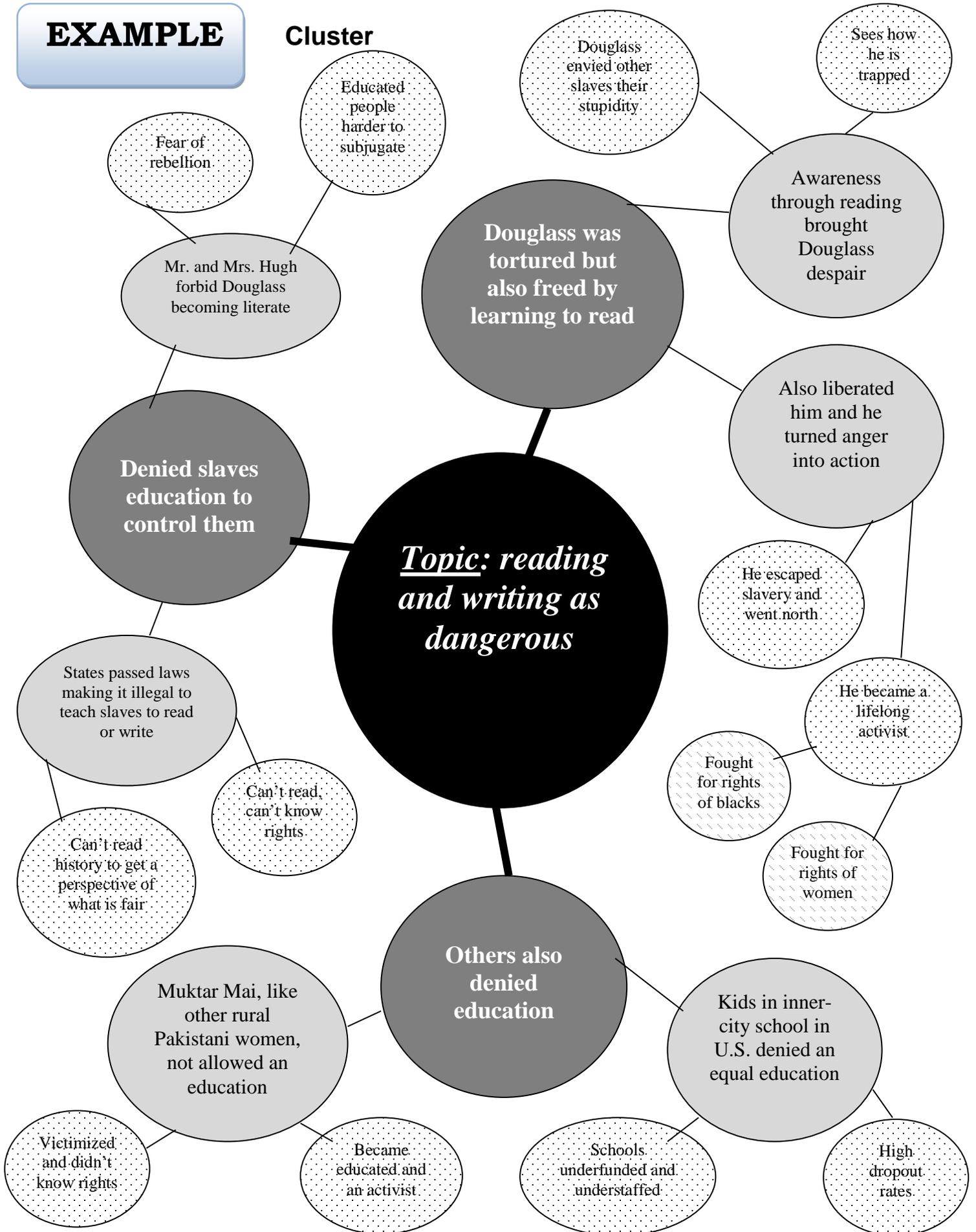
HOW DO I DO IT?

To create a cluster, first write your topic or question in the middle of the page and draw a large circle around it. Then in medium circles, write the supporting points that respond to the writing task, drawing lines linking each to the main center circle. Then, in small circles, write the evidence and analysis that illustrate each supporting point, drawing lines that link each to the appropriate supporting point. You can add additional levels of smaller circles as you provide more specific clarifying details.



EXAMPLE

Cluster



PRACTICE

Clustering

In response to Chapter VII in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass* (or your most recently assigned text), create a cluster/map:

Main topic or question:

What, Why, and How?

4

THE WRITING PROCESS: Outlining

Definition and rationale
Writing a formal outline
Outline template
Outline example
Outline peer response

WHAT IS OUTLINING?

Outlining is the road map for the essay. American writer Tom Wolfe said, “By writing an outline you really are writing in a way, because you’re creating the structure of what you’re going to do. Once I really know what I’m going to write, I don’t find the actual writing takes all that long.”

Critical thinkers use outlines to organize their ideas and check the organization of their drafts throughout the writing process. Outlines represent an important element of the writing process not only for English essays, but also for essays in history, philosophy, economics, political science, etc.

As the “road map” of the essay, outlines should do the following:

- Provide the thesis and most important details of the essay.
- Demonstrate a clear, logical organization of main ideas and supporting details.
- Include topic sentences but not *every* sentence in the essay/paragraphs.

WHY OUTLINE?

Just like we need a road map when traveling to an unfamiliar destination, good writers create preliminary or rough outlines after they have generated enough ideas through prewriting to organize and develop their essays. Strong, thorough prewriting should develop more ideas than you can actually use in your essay so that you are able to select the most relevant and convincing ideas for your essay.

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

- Your main points are on-topic and directly support your thesis.
- Your main points are logically organized.
- Your most important ideas are emphasized and your less important ideas are subordinated.
- Your main points have sufficient and relevant supporting evidence.

Outlines also help writers:

- Make the writing process easier since you have a road map for your essay to follow.
- Break through writer’s block—for people who struggle with writer’s block, it helps to first set up a structure with lower stakes and less pressure.
- Save time writing your essay since you have a clear, focused plan to follow for your essay.
- Ensure each part of your essay relates to the essay prompt.

HOW DO I DO IT?

- Put the thesis statement at the top: it should be polished and be a complete sentence.
- Use Roman numerals (I, II, III, IV, V, etc.) to indicate the main points/topic sentences which should be written in specific phrases or complete sentences (this is the “P” or Point of PIE).
- Use capital letters (A, B, C, D, E, etc.) for the major supporting details; typically, writers should have at least two main supporting details for each point/topic sentence (the “I” or information of PIE providing evidence and the “E” or explanation of PIE providing analysis).
- Use numbers (1, 2, 3, 4, 5, etc.) for sub-details clarifying and specifying your main supporting details.

Thesis:

- I. (Main Idea 1)
 - A. (Supporting Detail 1)
 - 1. Sub-detail 1
 - 2. Sub-detail 2
 - B. (Supporting Detail 2)
 - 1. Sub-detail 1
- II. (Main Idea 2)
 - A. (Supporting Detail 1)
 - 1. Sub-detail 1
 - 2. Sub-detail 2
 - B. (Supporting Detail 2)
 - 1. Sub-detail 1
 - 2. Sub-detail 2
- III. (Main Idea 3)
 - A. (Supporting Detail 1)
 - 1. Sub-detail 1
 - 2. Sub-detail 2
 - B. (Supporting Detail 2)
 - 1. Sub-detail 1
 - 2. Sub-detail 2
- IV. (Main Idea 4)
 - A. (Supporting Detail 1)
 - 1. Sub-detail 1
 - 2. Sub-detail 2
 - B. (Supporting Detail 2)
 - 1. Sub-detail 1
 - 2. Sub-detail 2

Outline Organization

When deciding how to order your points, your first consideration should be logic. How does one point lead up to or build upon another? Here are some different ways to logically organize your points:

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

ways:

<p>Block style: look first at one item and then the next, using the same criteria each time. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">I. Frederick Douglass<ul style="list-style-type: none">A. PhilosophiesB. ActivismC. AccomplishmentsII. Martin Luther King, Jr.<ul style="list-style-type: none">A. PhilosophiesB. ActivismC. Accomplishments	<p>Point-by-point: Look at the two items simultaneously, comparing them using the same criteria. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">I. Philosophies<ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Frederick DouglassB. Martin Luther King, Jr.II. Activism<ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Frederick DouglassB. Martin Luther King, Jr.III. Accomplishments<ul style="list-style-type: none">A. Frederick DouglassB. Martin Luther King, Jr.
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EXAMPLE

It can be difficult to create a formal outline without some help. Here is a first step towards creating a more formal outline. Use this template and answer the guiding questions. After, revise what you produce into a formal outline.

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

Slaves like Douglass were controlled by not being able to read and write and this denial of education is still happening in the United States as well as other parts of the world.

PARAGRAPH 1:

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

Slave-owners would not allow slaves to learn to read and write because they were afraid they would rebel.

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

From text: Mr. and Mrs. Hugh forbid Douglass to learn to read and write. Mrs. Hugh became furious if she would ever see him holding the paper (page 84).

Outside research: See if there were actual laws passed making it illegal to teach slaves to read and write.

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

If you can't read, you won't know the laws that govern you so you won't know your rights. Also, you can't get a clear historical perspective so can't know what is just and reasonable and what is not.

PARAGRAPH 2:

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

Learning to read caused Douglass unexpected pain as he better understood his own enslavement but it also set in motion his desire to create change and bring awareness to end slavery.

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

From text: Douglass speaks of his "unutterable anguish" (84) and how reading became a curse and that he wished he could return to the "stupidity" (84) of his fellow slaves.

Outside research: Research what Douglass later did after he escaped to the North and became an activist.

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

Being able to read and write gives you the tools to call out oppression, gather other people to support making needed changes, and to liberate yourself and others from unfair institutions.

PARAGRAPH 3:

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

Denying people equal access to education is happening today in places like rural Pakistan in the case of women.

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

Outside research: Muktar Mai in her memoir *In the Name of Honor* tells how women in her region were not allowed to be educated so when she was gang-raped, she could not write down her account at the police station so her story was changed and she lost her case in court. Later she learned to read and write and became a strong advocate for women's rights and started a school for girls in her village. Quote on poor treatment of women, page 46.

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

Becoming literate helped Mai navigate the complex legal systems, bring international awareness of the plight of women in her region, and enabled her to help others.

CONCLUSION:

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

So what? The denying of certain groups an education didn't just happen long ago or far away. It is happening now in the United States with our inner-city schools which are underfunded and understaffed. With the high dropout rates, large numbers of blacks and Latinos are being denied equal access to education and literacy.

PRACTICE

This is a template to help you on the first step towards making a formal outline. Adjust for how many body paragraphs you decide to include. **Please note:** If your instructor has asked you to create a formal outline, you are *not going to turn in this template*. This template is designed to help you generate and organize the ideas you can then put into a formal outline.

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

PARAGRAPH 1:

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

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

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

PARAGRAPH 2:

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

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

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

PARAGRAPH 3:

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

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

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

PARAGRAPH 4:

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

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

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

CONCLUSION:

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

EXAMPLE

Sample formal outline on *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*:

Thesis: The control and limitations over reading and writing during slavery sought to make slaves like Douglass ignorant, powerless, and therefore more easily controlled, and this control over literacy and education is still happening in the world today.

Introduction

- A. Lead in with George Orwell quote: “Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past.”
 - B. Compare to the band Rage Against the Machine and how they used Orwell’s warning.
 - C. Connect discussion of control to Fredrick Douglass and controlling slaves through denying them an education.
 - D. State thesis.
- I. In his narrative, Douglass exposes how being denied education was one of the main tactics used to keep so many blacks trapped within generations of enslavement.
 - A. Mr. and Mrs. Hugh forbid Douglass from learning to read and write.
 - 1) Mrs. Hugh became furious anytime she would catch Douglass reading.
 - 2) This shows their realization that educated people are harder to control.
 - B. Many slave states passed laws making it illegal to teach slaves to read and write.
 - 1) Use quote North Carolina law and list the punishments for breaking the law.
 - 2) This shows how to control people you have to do so not just physically but mentally.
 - II. Douglass discovered that freeing his mind led to anguished torment as he was unable to free himself from the entrenched institutions of slavery but change was set in motion.
 - A. Being awakened to the stark realities of his condition served to plunge Douglass into despair.
 - 1) Use quote showing how Master Hugh knew discontent would follow (page 84).
 - 2) Use quote showing Douglass’s anguish and despair as his eyes are opened (page 84).
 - B. Insert discussion of how ignorance is not bliss.
 - 1) Those who are ignorant get taken advantage of, they are powerless, are controlled by others.
 - 2) Douglass eventually gains power over his life from learning to read and becomes an activist fighting for the equality of blacks and women.
 - III. Unfortunately, when slavery was abolished in 1865, that did not end the practice of denying certain groups of people an education in order to control them, but it also did not end people’s ability to go against societal norms, educate themselves, and fight for change.
 - A. Muktar Mai, a poor rural woman in Pakistan, tells in her memoir *In the Name of Honor* how she was denied an education so when she was brutalized, she was helpless in the legal system.
 - B. Mai learned to read and write, pursued her attackers legally, brought national awareness to the plight of women in her country, started a school for girls, and also an organization that advocates for the rights of women.

Conclusion: Denial of education is happening now and closer to home in the U.S as inner-city schools are underfunded and understaffed so many of our youth are dropping out and are not given access to an equal education and this puts them in a powerless and invisible state.

HOW CAN I CHECK AN OUTLINE?

Outline Peer response

Answer questions like the following to evaluate your peer's outline as well as your own outline.

1. Thesis:

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

2. Supporting Points:

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

3. Evidence:

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

PRACTICE

Using the guiding questions on Outline Peer Response, provide constructive feedback on the following outline on **Chapter VII in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass***:

Thesis: Slavery in the United States damaged many lives.

Introduction

- A. Lead in with statistics on how many people in the U.S. were enslaved.
- B. Connect to how Mrs. Hugh changed for the worse and how Fredrick Douglass felt despair.
- C. State thesis.

I. Douglass taught himself to read and write even though he was forbidden to do so.

- A. At first Mrs. Hugh was teaching him to read but she changed her mind.
 - 1) Her husband told her not to teach him.
 - 2) She became harsher than her husband is stopping Douglass from learning.
- B. Douglass got the young poor white boys in his neighborhood to teach him.
 - 1) He took a book with him on errands to use.
 - 2) He bribed the boys with bread.

II. Slavery changed people.

- A. Mrs. Hugh was once a kind woman and then she became cruel and inhumane because of slavery.
 - 1) She used to be charitable.
 - 2) She became mean.
- B. Douglass became anguished and trapped in slavery and even considered suicide.
 - 1) The more he read, the more miserable he became.
 - 2) Douglass fought for the rights of others.

Conclusion: Slavery hurt a lot of people and ruined many lives.

EXAMPLE

A sample of outline peer response on the Douglass outline:

1. Thesis:

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

Thesis: Slavery in the United States damaged many lives.

I like where you are going with this but this statement is very general. Whose lives exactly were damaged? The story talks about how it hurt Douglass and also his slave masters so perhaps be more specific and say who you mean. Also, how were they damaged? So what can we learn from this? It seems like this is telling us something about abuse of power. Is this a lesson that we should apply to any situations today? Lastly, in the outline, you say you are going to lead up to the thesis by including statistics on how many people were enslaved but you might want to connect this to your argument about being damaged.

2. Supporting Points:

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

This entire second point summarizes how Douglass learned to read but it's not clear how this connects to the argument about people being damaged by slavery. I'd remove this. Section three is good as it directly connects to your thesis about being damaged by slavery. The topic sentence is a bit general though. You say: "Slavery changed people." How did it change people? For better or worse? Also, you discuss how it changed Mrs. Hugh, the slave master, first and then you discuss how it changed Douglass after that. I think it would make more sense to discuss Douglass first because he is the one obviously damaged by slavery. Then after that you can present Mrs. Hugh, the less obvious one who is also harmed by slavery. Finally, the conclusion just repeats your thesis.

3. Evidence:

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

You show how Douglass and Mrs. Hugh were damaged by slavery, but I think you could include a separate more developed section for each and include quotes from the text too. Douglass makes some strong statements about how he wishes he could lose his humanity and become an unthinking beast instead. You can also use the descriptions of how Mrs. Hugh's kindness turned to "tiger-like fierceness." Then include your own analysis of why it's important to see how these two were changed? So what does this reveal about people and having this much power over others?

EXAMPLE

Here's an example of providing feedback directly on the outline.

Thesis feedback: This statement is very general. Whose lives exactly were damaged? How? So what?

Thesis: Slavery in the United States damaged many lives.

I like the idea of including statistics but how does this connect to the argument about being damaged?

Introduction

- A. Lead in with statistics on how many people in the U.S. were enslaved.
- B. Connect to how Mrs. Hugh changed for the worse and how Fredrick Douglass felt despair.
- C. State thesis.

I. Douglass taught himself to read and write even though he was forbidden to do so.

- A. At first Mrs. Hugh was teaching him to read but she changed her mind.
 - 1) Her husband told her not to teach him.
 - 2) She became harsher than her husband is stopping Douglass from learning.
- B. Douglass got the young poor white boys in his neighborhood to teach him.
 - 1) He took a book with him on errands to use.
 - 2) He bribed the boys with bread.

This entire second point summarizes how Douglass learned to read but it's not clear how this connects to the argument about people being damaged by slavery. I'd remove this.

II. Slavery changed people.

- A. Mrs. Hugh was once a kind woman and then she became cruel and inhumane because of slavery.
 - 1) She used to be charitable.
 - 2) She became mean.
- B. Douglass became anguished as he sees how he is trapped in slavery and even considered suicide.
 - 1) The more he read, the more miserable he became.
 - 2) Douglass fought for the rights of others.

Good, section three directly connects to your thesis about being damaged by slavery. The topic sentence is a bit general though. How did it "change" people? For better or worse? Then you show how Douglass and Mrs. Hugh were damaged, but I think you could include a separate more developed section for each and include quotes from the text too. You could also include your own analysis of why it's important to see how these two were changed? So what does this reveal?

Conclusion: Slavery hurt a lot of people and ruined many lives.

It's good you stay on topic but this just repeats your thesis. In your conclusion, you want a larger "so what?" So what can we learn by realizing that both the enslaved and the enslavers were hurt by slavery? Can we apply this lesson elsewhere? Is this a danger now in a less obvious form that we should be concerned about? Are those who have unchecked power over others always harmed by it?

EXAMPLE

Here's a potential revision of the outline based on the feedback received:

Originally the thesis said slavery damaged “many” lives. Now it states who (slaves and slave-owners), how (damaged psyches and destroyed humanity), and so what (unchecked power corrupts)

Thesis: Douglass’s narrative reveals how slavery in the U.S. not only damaged the psyche of the slaves but destroyed the humanity of the slave owners showing how no human being should ever have unchecked power over another as it inevitably leads to corruption.

Introduction

- A. Lead in with statistics on how many people in the U.S. were enslaved and connect to how many families this means were separated and destroyed and how many people were maimed, raped and murdered.
 - B. Introduce the idea of how absolute power corrupts absolutely.
 - C. Connect to how Fredrick Douglass felt despair and Mrs. Hugh changed for the worse.
 - D. State thesis.
- I. Slavery slowly destroyed Douglass’s psychological well-being.
- A. Douglass who is highly intelligent and motivated is held back by slavery.
 - 1) He is eager to learn but is unjustly forbidden by his slave-masters.
 - 2) He has to settle for an inferior, secretive education learning from young white kids between his errands.
 - 3) Speculate on the incredible loss of potential of someone this motivated and intelligent denied during his formative years. Connect to all the lost potential of poor kids in bad schools today.
 - B. Douglass became anguished as he sees how he is trapped in slavery and even considered suicide.
 - 1) Douglass comes to see something as potentially liberating as education as something destructive “I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing” (84).
 - 2) As time goes on, Douglass feels only more anguish and despair and even wishes his own humanity were taken away, “I have often wished myself a beast” (84).
- II. Slavery also destroyed the humanity of Mrs. Hugh who was once kind became cruel.
- A. Mrs. Hugh was once a kind woman: “she was a pious, warm, and tender-hearted woman. There was no sorrow or suffering for which she had not a tear” (82).
 - B. Slavery made her a despicable person: “Slavery soon proved its ability to divest her of these heavenly qualities. Under its influence, the tender heart became stone, and the lamblike disposition gave way to one of tiger-like fierceness” (82).
 - C. Examine how absolute power corrupts and cite other examples in history (Hitler, Stalin) when this has been true.

The reasoning behind the statistics is now clearly connects to the damage caused. Then adding the corrupting influence of power now introduces the second part of the thesis about slave-owners being corrupted too. And now the order has been changed to talk about Douglass first (the obvious one damaged) and then the less obvious, the slave-owners.

More detail, quotes and “so what?” analysis has been added to the discussions of Douglass and Mrs. Hugh.

Conclusion: We must be aware of any case when a person or group is allowed too much power over another group as this will lead to a corrupt and an unhealthy society. Examine how this is happening with corporations globally today who act in their own interest for profit and we all suffer as a result.

A larger “so what?” has been added looking at how this lesson can be applied

What, Why, and How?

4

THE WRITING PROCESS: Writing

Drafting
Revising
Creating Essay Titles
Editing/Proofreading
Sample final essay
Essay Checklist

WHAT IS DRAFTING?

After you do some good prewriting and write up an outline, it's time to start writing the paper; the first writing stage is called drafting. In this stage, get your ideas down as quickly as possible and don't focus too much on grammar, punctuation or spelling. This is the ideas stage. Focusing too much on "correctness" can bog your ideas down and give you writer's block. At this stage, you start getting ideas down on paper, extending some ideas, limiting others that aren't panning out. Many writers say that they didn't know what they thought until they saw what they thought. You might discover what you think as you write on a topic and your argument might change and evolve as you write.

WHY DRAFT?

It takes the pressure off to think of your initial writing as "drafting" which is more low stakes. It doesn't have to be perfect because no one is reading it at this stage but you, so drafting allows you to explore your topic using your creativity and analysis. Writing the first draft also gives you the opportunity to see how well your arguments support your tentative thesis and how the differing perspectives or opposing viewpoints will affect your position.

HOW DO I DO IT?

- Post your tentative thesis and paper assignment prominently above your work space, so you can refer to them as you write.
- Review your outline and the notes you have made on the text/topic you are writing on.
- In a draft, you want a clear beginning, middle and end even if they aren't set in stone.
- In drafting, some use a linear approach starting with the introduction and writing sequentially to the conclusion. Others prefer a more recursive approach where they work on one section for a time, move on to another part of the essay, and then return to the earlier section. Use the approach that works best for you.
- Once you feel you have covered what you want to cover, read through again to make sure that the organization and development are logical. One strategy for doing this is to note in the margin in a few words the point of each paragraph. Take those brief phrases and look at them to see whether they follow logically or require reorganizing. Is anything necessary omitted? Make any appropriate changes to your organization and development.
- As you look over your draft, try reading it out loud. It will help you "hear" what flows and what does not.

When you complete your draft, here are some questions to ask yourself:

- Is your argument (thesis) clear?
- Do your main arguments give the reasons for "why your thesis is so"?
- Have you supported these with credible and relevant evidence and your own analysis?
- Have you adequately addressed alternative perspectives?
- Is there additional reading or research you need in order to strengthen your thesis and arguments?

EXAMPLE

Here is a sample DRAFT of a paper in response to Chapter
in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*:

By Rachel Bell

Essay #4

“Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past.” This applies well to the past when blacks were enslaved. In “Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave,” Douglass reveals how this long and brutal control of human beings was partly accomplished through control over literacy. The control and limitations over reading and writing during slavery sought to make slaves like Douglass ignorant, powerless, and therefore more easily controlled.

Douglass lived in Baltimore for 7 years as a house slave and initially was taught by Mrs. Hugh but later was forbidden by his masters Mr. and Mrs. Hugh to read or write. Mrs. Hugh became furious if she caught Douglass reading because she wanted to control him. Many slave states passed laws making it illegal to teach slaves to read and write as seen in this typical law in North Carolina:

AN ACT TO PREVENT ALL PERSONS FROM TEACHING SLAVES TO READ OR WRITE, THE USE OF FIGURES EXCEPTED. Whereas the teaching of slaves to read and write, has a tendency to excite dis-satisfaction in their minds, and to produce insurrection and rebellion, to the manifest injury of the citizens of this State: Therefore, be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina, and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same, that any free person, who shall hereafter teach, or attempt to teach, any slave within the State to read or write, the use of figures excepted, or shall give or sell to such slave or slaves any books or pamphlets, shall be liable to indictment in any court of record in this State having jurisdiction thereof. ("Slaves Are Prohibited to Read and Write by Law")

The law then goes on to list the punishments and for a white person it was a fine and possible imprisonment and for a free person of color they could be fined, imprisoned or whipped ("Slaves Are Prohibited to Read and Write by Law"). They couldn't just control people through force but had to control their minds too.

Douglass discovered that freeing his mind led to anguished torment. "As I read and contemplated the subject, behold! that very discontentment which Master Hugh had predicted would follow my learning to read had already come, to torment and sting my soul to unutterable anguish. I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing. It had given me a view of my wretched condition, without the remedy. It opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out. In moments of agony, I envied my fellow-slaves for their stupidity" (84). So is ignorance bliss? No, never. To be ignorant allows others to control us. Douglass realized this and after becoming educated, he joined the abolitionist movement and spent the remainder of his life fighting for the equality and rights of blacks as well as women.

Mukhtar Mai in her memoir *In the Name of Honor* published in 2006, tells her story of growing up in a small village in Pakistan where girls were not allowed to be educated. Mai was sentenced to be publically gang raped by six men in a stable with 100 of her fellow villagers outside. Mai was then expected to follow custom and commit suicide, but instead she went to the police and testified against her attackers. Because she could not read or write, the officers wrote down her account but altered what she said to absolve her attackers of guilt, so when her case went to court, she lost. In spite of this, Mai still fights. She remains an outspoken advocate for women's rights, she is still pressing a retrial of her attackers, she continues to run the organization she started Mukhtar Mai Women's Welfare Organization (MMWWO), and even with many attempts to close it, she still runs a school she established in her village to educate girls.

We shouldn't let others control us. We should fight for our rights and everyone should be allowed an equal education. No one should be denied learning to read and write. If people can't read and write then they cannot compete equally in society and they will be taken advantage of by others.

Works Cited (Draft)

Douglass, Frederick. Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave.

Mai, Muktar. In the Name of Honor.

<http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/slaveprohibit.html>

Note:
3 sources are listed—some sources in the paper are missing from the Works Cited and none of the citations is properly formatted yet.

WHAT IS REVISING?

Revising means what it says: it is a re-vision of your paper. To revise is to see again, to re-conceive your original essay. When you **revise** a paper, the larger elements of writing generally receive attention first—the **focus, organization, paragraphing, content, and overall strategy**.

Improvements in sentence structure, word choice, grammar, punctuation, and mechanics come later when you **edit** the paper.

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

WHY REVISE?

Past Supreme Court Justice, Louis Brandeis said: “There is no such thing as good writing, only good rewriting.” American writer E.B. White echoed these sentiments when he said simply, “The best writing is rewriting.” When you revise or rewrite your draft, you are able to bring a higher level of clarity and development.

HOW DO I DO IT?

Here are some guiding questions you can use to revise your draft:

TITLE

- Does your title give readers a good idea of what's to come? ("Assignment #3" is not a title)

INTRODUCTION

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

BODY PARAGRAPHS

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

CONCLUSION

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

EXAMPLE

Here is a sample REVISION of the same paper in response to Chapter VII in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*:

Rachel Bell
Professor Lucia Lachmayr
English 100
21 May 2013

← Proper MLA formatting has been added for the student and class information at the left and a title has been added.

Controlling Human Beings

INTRODUCTION FROM THE DRAFT:

“Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past.” This applies well to the past when blacks were enslaved. In “Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave,” Douglass reveals how this long and brutal control of human beings was partly accomplished through control over literacy. The control and limitations over reading and writing during slavery sought to make slaves like Douglass ignorant, powerless, and therefore more easily controlled.

REVISIONS: The dropped quote has now been connected to a lead in phrase telling who said it and when. A contemporary reference to a band using the quote was added to give the quote modern-day relevancy. A transition was then added showing how this quote applies to Douglass’s story. A “so what?” was added to the thesis applying the control over people in the past through literacy to today.

In the 1940s, George Orwell warned “Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past.” In the 1990s there was a band called Rage Against the Machine, the name itself referring to a people’s movement to fight against control (corporation, government or otherwise) used this mantra in their song “Testify,” a warning to not silently endure. This is a warning that is not only relevant to the 20th century, but has been applicable since human beings started forming structures of power to control and oppress one another. This can be seen during the times of slavery in the United States when blacks were enslaved. In Frederick Douglass’s novel *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, Douglass reveals how this control of human beings was partly accomplished through control over literacy. The control and limitations over reading and writing during slavery sought to make slaves like Douglass ignorant, powerless, and therefore more easily controlled, and this control over literacy and education is still happening in the world today.

BODY PARAGRAPH ONE FROM THE DRAFT:

Douglass lived in Baltimore for 7 years as a house slave and was forbidden by his masters Mr. and Mrs. Hugh to read or write. Mrs. Hugh became furious if she caught Douglass reading because she wanted to control him. Many slave states passed laws making it illegal to teach slaves to read and write as seen in this typical law in North Carolina:

AN ACT TO PREVENT ALL PERSONS FROM TEACHING SLAVES TO READ OR WRITE, THE USE OF FIGURES EXCEPTED. Whereas the teaching of slaves to read and write, has a tendency to excite dis-satisfaction in their minds, and to produce insurrection and rebellion, to the manifest injury of the citizens of this State: Therefore, be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina, and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same, that any free person, who shall hereafter teach, or attempt to teach, any slave within the State to read or write, the use of figures excepted, or shall give or sell to such slave or slaves any books or pamphlets, shall be liable to indictment in any court of record in this State having jurisdiction thereof. ("Slaves Are Prohibited to Read and Write by Law")

The law then lists the punishments and for a white person it was a hefty fine and possible imprisonment and for a free person of color they could be fined, imprisoned or whipped "not exceeding thirty nine lashes, nor less than twenty lashes" ("Slaves Are Prohibited to Read and Write by Law"). They couldn't just control people through force but had to control their minds too.

REVISIONS: Before the paragraph began with plot summary and facts. Now the paragraph begins with an arguable topic sentence that links directly to the thesis about control. More explanation was added connecting Mrs. Hugh's fury with her desire to control Douglass. A quote was added from the text supporting the claim that education and slavery could not co-exist. The largest addition to the paragraph was developing the "so what?" explanation and analysis at the end of the paragraph telling what this connection between denial of literacy and control reveals.

In his narrative, Douglass exposes how being denied education was one of the main tactics used to keep so many blacks trapped within generations of enslavement. Douglass lived in Baltimore for 7 years as a house slave and initially his once kind mistress began to teach him to read and write until her husband forbid it. Afterwards, Mrs. Hugh became furious if she caught Douglass reading as she understood that keeping him illiterate and ignorant was her only way to maintain control over him, "She was an apt woman; and a little experience soon demonstrated, to her satisfaction, that education and slavery were incompatible with each other" (82). Mr. and Mrs. Hugh were not the only slave-owners to realize that educated people are harder to control, and that they could not indefinitely sustain control over other human beings solely through physical control. Many slave states passed laws making it illegal to teach slaves to read and write as seen in this typical law in North Carolina:

AN ACT TO PREVENT ALL PERSONS FROM TEACHING SLAVES TO READ OR WRITE, THE USE OF FIGURES EXCEPTED. Whereas the teaching of slaves to read and write, has a tendency to excite dis-satisfaction in their minds, and to produce insurrection and rebellion, to the manifest injury of the citizens of this State: Therefore, be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina, and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same, that any free person, who shall hereafter teach, or attempt to teach, any slave within the State to read or write, the use of figures excepted, or shall give or sell to such slave or slaves any books or pamphlets, shall be liable to indictment in any court of record in this State having jurisdiction thereof. ("Slaves Are Prohibited to Read and Write by Law")

The law then lists the punishments and for a white person it was a fine and possible imprisonment and for a free person of color they could be fined, imprisoned or whipped ("Slaves Are Prohibited to Read and Write by Law"). The fear behind passing laws such as these reveals the certain knowledge that reading and writing can indeed lead to “insurrection and rebellion.” Revolution comes when one can read and understand laws that apply to and protect one group and yet arbitrarily exclude another. Rebellion comes when people, through reading, can gain a larger historical perspective and know what is fair and what is not. Insurrection comes when people can use the written word to communicate with and assemble the masses. This shows how physical force alone cannot control human beings for long but that something else must accompany it. The frightening truth that slave-owners and others throughout history have understood is that to fully control another person, you must limit their perceptions, their understanding of the world, and the influence of others—in essence you must also control their mind.

BODY PARAGRAPH TWO FROM THE DRAFT:

Douglass discovered that freeing his mind led to anguished torment. “As I read and contemplated the subject, behold! that very discontentment which Master Hugh had predicted would follow my learning to read had already come, to torment and sting my soul to unutterable anguish. I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing. It had given me a view of my wretched condition, without the remedy. It opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out. In moments of agony, I envied my fellow-slaves for their stupidity” (84). So is ignorance bliss? No, never. To be ignorant allows others to control us. Douglass realized this and after becoming educated he joined the abolitionist movement and spent the remainder of his life fighting for the equality and rights of blacks as well as women.

REVISIONS: The paragraph was revised so it didn't begin with a fact. In the topic sentence, first a transition of time was added and then a “so what?” was added that “change was set in motion.” The dropped quote was integrated in more smoothly with a phrase that introduces it and links it to the topic sentence about Douglass's despair. The quote which was very long was separated with some commentary in between. Again the largest revision came with the added analysis at the end of the paragraph delving further into why ignorance is not bliss and the harms of this type of thinking.

After secretly learning to read and write on his own, Douglass discovered that freeing his mind led to anguished torment as he was unable to free himself from the entrenched institutions of slavery, but change at least was set in motion. Initially, being awakened to the stark realities of his condition served to plunge Douglass into despair: “As I read and contemplated the subject, behold! that very discontentment which Master Hugh had predicted would follow my learning to read had already come, to torment and sting my soul to unutterable anguish” (84). Once Douglass's eyes were opened, he suffered: “... I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing. It had given me a view of my wretched condition, without the remedy. It opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out. In moments of agony, I envied my fellow-slaves for their stupidity” (84). So is ignorance bliss? The answer for us to live in a decent world has to be no, never. To be ignorant allows others not only to make choices for you but to limit your choices. Not knowing the factors and people who shape your life, enables those in power to act in their own self-interest. It also makes people unable to recognize when they are victimized by unjust situations, and if you cannot see the problem, then you can never demand or bring about change. After Douglass understood the evils of slavery, he suffered initially and even entertained thoughts of suicide, but later he escaped to the north and became an influential leader in the abolitionist movement and spent the remainder of his life fighting for the equality and rights of blacks as well as women.

BODY PARAGRAPH THREE FROM THE DRAFT:

Muktar Mai in her memoir *In the Name of Honor* published in 2006, tells her story of growing up in a small village in Pakistan where girls were not educated. Mai, was sentenced to be publically gang raped by six men in a stable with 100 of her fellow villagers outside. Mai was then expected to follow custom and commit suicide, but instead she went to the police and testified against her attackers. Because she could not read or write, the officers wrote down her account but altered what she said to absolve her attackers of guilt, so when her case went to court, she lost. In spite of this, Mai still fights. She remains an outspoken advocate for women's rights, she is still pressing a retrial of her attackers, she continues to run the organization she started Mukhtar Mai Women's Welfare Organization (MMWWO), and even with many attempts to close it, she still runs a school she established in her village to educate girls.

REVISIONS: The paragraph began with plot summary of a book that had not yet been introduced. A topic sentence was added that transitioned more smoothly from the discussion of Douglass to Mai and connected back to thesis about literacy and control of people. Before Mai's horrific punishment was stated very abruptly. Now more context has been added leading up to what happened to her. Then more description of Mai's years of struggle as well as a quote from a fellow activist was added to emphasize what Mai bravely fights against. Analysis of what Mai gained was added at the end.

Unfortunately, when slavery was abolished, that did not end the practice of denying certain groups of people an education in order to control them, but it also did not end people's ability to go against societal norms, educate themselves, and fight for change. Muktar Mai in her memoir *In the Name of Honor* published in 2006, tells her story of growing up in a small village in Pakistan where girls were not allowed to be educated. In 2002, a more powerful clan wanted to assert its power so without evidence, they accused her brother of having sexual relations with an older woman in another clan. Mai was sentenced to be publically gang raped by six men in a stable with 100 of her fellow villagers outside. Mai was then expected to follow custom and commit suicide, but instead she went to the police and testified against her attackers. Because she could not read or write, the officers wrote down her account but altered what she said to absolve her attackers of guilt, so when her case went to court, she lost. After that, she dedicated herself to learn to read and write so she could document her own story and navigate the complexities of the legal system. As Mai suffered death threats and battled a daunting and biased legal system, a fellow activist told her:

It doesn't matter what women think, because they are not allowed to think at all!

They're not allowed to learn to read and write, to find out how the world around them works. That's why illiterate women cannot defend themselves: they know nothing about their rights, and words are put into their mouths to sabotage their revolt. But we support you! Just have courage. (46)

After nearly 10 years of her case being tried in various courts and reaching all the way to the Supreme Court, all but one of the men were acquitted. The president of Pakistan has since admitted to restricting Mai's movements as the publicity her case receives puts a bad light on Pakistan, and with her attackers free, her life remains in danger to this day. In spite of all this, Mai still fights. She remains an outspoken advocate for women's rights, she is still pressing a retrial of her attackers, she continues to run the organization she started Mukhtar Mai Women's Welfare Organization (MMWWO), and she still runs a school she established in her village to educate girls. With literacy came a more confident and determined Mai and through literacy she has been able to rescue many abused women, educate scores of young girls, and reach out beyond her community and gain international recognition and support.

CONCLUSION FROM THE DRAFT:

We shouldn't let others control us. We should fight for our rights and everyone should be allowed an equal education. No one should be denied learning to read and write. If people can't read and write then they cannot compete equally in society and they will be taken advantage of by others.

REVISIONS: The previous conclusion ran out of steam and was the weakest, least developed paragraph in the essay. It stayed very general with very sweeping "should" statements but no specific explanation of why this issue is important today and what we can do with this knowledge. The conclusion was the area of largest revision in the paper because the essay needed to end on a stronger more convincing note. A modern-day application was added using Jonathan Kozol's research about the poor quality of inner-city schools in the U.S to show how large groups of people are denied an education today. Then how we can all fight this through using our own skills of literacy was added at the end so there is a clearer call to action.

Slavery might feel very distant time wise and Pakistan might feel very far off geographically, but the issue of people being denied literacy and education is not so far removed. People are being denied education right here and right now in the United States as well, so we must all continue to be vigilant about Orwell's warning: "Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past." Those who write our history, who write our textbooks, who write our news, who write our laws, write us. In the United States, unfortunately the quality of education one receives is based on income so those living in wealthy neighborhoods get a good education but those who do not, are destined to be controlled by a wealthy elite: "Children in one set of schools are educated to be governors; children in the other set of schools are trained for being governed" (Kozol 176). Jonathan

Kozol in his book *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's School* documented the inequalities in education across the U.S. in inner-city schools. He repeatedly documented the high dropout rates as so many never get high school diplomas in schools that are underfunded, underequipped, and understaffed. We cannot call ourselves a democracy if the many are ruled by the few. We need to take a lesson from Frederick Douglass and Muktar Mai and use our own literacy skills to call out injustice and mobilize people to address it, be it large scale or small: blogging, writing letters to our political representatives, emailing our friends, reposting articles on Facebook. Ignorance leads to passivity and loss of choice. Even small efforts are empowering and can effect big change.

AN OVERVIEW OF THE MAIN REVISIONS TO THE DRAFT:

*** The PIE paragraph approach was used in each paragraph:**

- First, the “P” (point) was missing in nearly every paragraph as most paragraphs began with facts or plot summary. Therefore topic sentences were added at the beginning of each paragraph that transitioned from the paragraph that came before, linked back to the thesis about literacy and control and forward to the main point in the paragraph.
- Second, the “I” (information) in each paragraph was decent but dropped quotes needed to be connected to phrases that introduced and explained them and additional quotes were added to fully prove and illustrate certain points.
- Third, the “E” (explanation) was underdeveloped in each paragraph so this was further developed throughout the essay to show why the issues raised were important and why the reader should care.

*** Additional context, transitions and explanation were added:**

- When information seemed “out of the blue” or the connections to the overall discussion were unclear, more description was added or logical transitions explaining the connection directly were added.

*** The conclusion was scrapped and completely revised:**

- The conclusion in the draft was underdeveloped, too general, and didn't explain to the reader why control over literacy is a concern today. Outside research was added showing how the urban poor in the U.S. are denied an equal education and then what we can do individually about injustice such as this was added. The essay was about how control is taken away from us so the essay now ends on how we can regain some of that control.

WORKS CITED FROM THE DRAFT:

Works Cited

Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*.
Mai, Muktar. *In the Name of Honor*.
<http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/slaveprohibit.html>

REVISIONS: The original Works Cited did not list all the references that were used in the essay. All the outside research was added and listed in alphabetical order with the second lines of each citation indented. All the book titles were also italicized. Next, the formatting for all the sources was incorrect as you cannot just list the author's name and title of the book or just list a web link. The website <http://citationmachine.net> was used where you can chose to format by MLA (or other types like APA) and then plug in the information asked for based on the type of source you want to cite. Then it formats the citation for the Works Cited and for the in-text citation for you. Skyline College's library webpage also has citation information: <http://www.skylinecollege.edu/library/citingsources.php>

Works Cited

Douglass, Frederick. *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*. New York, NY: Penguin Books, 1982. 81-85. Print.

Kozol, Jonathan. *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's School*. New York, NY: Harper Perennial, 1991. 176. Print.

Mai, Muktar. *In the Name of Honor*. New York, NY: Washington Square Press, 2006. 46-165. Print

Orwell, George. *1984*. New York, NY: Plume-Harcourt Brace, 1983. 30. Print.

Rage Against the Machine, "Testify Lyrics." *Metrolyrics*. CBS Interactive Music Group, 2 Nov 1999. Web. 19 Jul 2013. <<http://www.metrolyrics.com/testify-lyrics-rage-against-the-machine.html>>.

"Slaves Are Prohibited to Read and Write by Law." *History is a Weapon*. N.p., n.d. Web. 18 Jul 2013 <<http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/slaveprohibit.html>>.

WHAT SHOULD ESSAY TITLES LOOK LIKE?

After you revise your essay and are moving onto the editing and proofreading stage in the writing process, it's time to pay closer attention to the title of your essay. Essay titles should let your reader know what your essay will be about and immediately draw in your reader's interest. Titles should also be specific enough to prepare the reader for your particular argument, so avoid vague titles like "Racism" or "Hope." Also, never turn in a formal essay with a generic title like "Paper #2" and don't use the title of the work you are writing on as your own title like *The Great Gatsby*. It is often easier to write or revise your title *after* you have written your essay and have settled on the central themes and thesis.

WHY ARE TITLES IMPORTANT?

Creating a strong, clear, appealing title is an important part of any writing task. The title is the reader's *first* introduction to your piece of writing, and first impressions matter. Therefore, you want to create a title which pulls in your reader's interest and makes him or her want to keep reading. In a college class, you want your title to make your essay stand out from the stack and make your peers and your professor drawn to read your essay.

HOW CAN I CREATE A GOOD TITLE?

You normally want to include the following features in your title:

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

PRACTICE

CREATING INNOVATIVE TITLES

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

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

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

Harmful Stereotypes	Genders in Society
Male and Female Roles and Stereotypes	Stereotypes Between Genders
Advertising and Stereotypes	Seeing Stereotypes
Harmful Stereotypical Views of Women	Stereotypes
Stereotypes and Roles	Gender Images
Stereotypes: Silly and Harmless	Are you a Man or a Woman?
The Roles of Males and Females	Societies' Stereotypes
Today's Stereotypes on Opposite Genders	Stereotyping
Differences in Gender	Stereotypes
The Power of Society	Gender Stereotypes
How Society Categorizes Men and Women	Surrounded By Stereotypes

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

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

Possible Title(s):

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

Possible Title(s):

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

Possible Title(s):

WHAT IS EDITING/PROOFREADING?

When you get to this stage, the hardest part is over. At the editing/proofreading stage, you are looking at sentence clarity, grammar, punctuation, spelling and any other sentence level issues or careless mistakes that distract your readers from your main ideas. Wait to edit and proofread until you are at the finishing stage, so you don't waste time carefully fixing each sentence in a paragraph you might end up removing entirely in the revision stage.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

You don't spend a long time picking out a nice gift for someone and then wrap it in newspaper. You spent a long time on your essay, so you want the final presentation of it to be inviting and impressive. An essay that contains careless or excessive errors will tell your reader that you did not invest much time or effort and will make your reader uninterested in reading your paper.

HOW DO I DO IT?

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

EXAMPLE

Here is a sample of EDITING/PROOFREADING the same paper in response to Chapter VII in *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*:

Rachel Bell

Professor Lucia Lachmayr

English 100

21 May 2013

Crossed out words show where wordiness has been removed.

Underlined sections mean descriptive words, phrases, or transitions have been added or dull, repetitive words have been replaced.

Proper MLA page numbering in the top right was added to each page with the author's last name and page number. Also the generic title "Controlling Human Beings" was replaced with something more original.

The proper in-text citations were added after the opening quotes

Education Denied: a Recipe to Control Human Beings

In the 1940s, George Orwell warned "Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past" (Orwell 30). In the 1990s ~~there was~~ a band called Rage Against the Machine, the name itself referring to a people's movement to fight against control (corporation, government or otherwise) used this mantra in their song "Testify," a warning to not silently endure injustice (Rage Against the Machine). This ~~is a~~ warning ~~that~~ is not only relevant to the 20th century, but has been applicable since human beings started forming structures of power to control and oppress one another. This can vividly be seen during the times of slavery in the United States when blacks were enslaved for two and a half centuries. In Frederick Douglass's novel *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, Douglass reveals how this long and brutal control of human beings was partly accomplished through control over literacy. The control and limitations over reading and writing during slavery sought to make slaves like Douglass ignorant, powerless, and therefore more easily controlled, and this control over literacy and education is still happening in the world today.

In his narrative, Douglass exposes how being denied education was one of the main tactics used to keep so many blacks trapped within generations of enslavement. Douglass lived in Baltimore for 7 years as a house slave ~~and initially his once kindly mistress, Mrs. Hugh, began to teach him to read and write until her husband forbid it.~~—and was forbidden by his masters Mr. and Mrs. Hugh to

Originally the three underlined words immediately below were “control” but a thesaurus was helpful to find words to get rid of that repetition.

Bell 2

read or write Mrs. Hugh became furious if she caught Douglass reading as she understood that keeping him illiterate and ignorant was her only way to maintain power over him, “She was an apt woman; and a little experience soon demonstrated, to her satisfaction, that education and slavery were incompatible with each other” (82). Mr. and Mrs. Hugh were not the only slave-owners to realize that educated people are harder to subjugate, and that they could not indefinitely sustain control over other human beings solely through physical coercion. Many slave states passed laws making it illegal to teach slaves to read and write as seen in this typical law in North Carolina:

AN ACT TO PREVENT ALL PERSONS FROM TEACHING SLAVES TO READ OR WRITE, THE USE OF FIGURES EXCEPTED. Whereas the teaching of slaves to read and write, has a tendency to excite dis-satisfaction in their minds, and to produce insurrection and rebellion, to the manifest injury of the citizens of this State: Therefore, be it enacted by the General Assembly of the State of North Carolina, and it is hereby enacted by the authority of the same, that any free person, who shall hereafter teach, or attempt to teach, any slave within the State to read or write, the use of figures excepted, or shall give or sell to such slave or slaves any books or pamphlets, shall be liable to indictment in any court of record in this State having jurisdiction thereof. ("Slaves Are Prohibited to Read and Write by Law")

The law then ~~goes on to list~~ lists the punishments and for a white person it was a hefty fine and possible imprisonment and for a free person of color they could be fined, imprisoned or whipped “not exceeding thirty nine lashes, nor less than twenty lashes” ("Slaves Are Prohibited to Read and Write by Law").

The fear behind passing laws such as these reveals the certain knowledge that reading and writing can indeed lead to “insurrection and rebellion.” Revolution comes when one can read and understand laws that apply to and protect one group and yet arbitrarily exclude another. Rebellion comes when people, through reading, can gain a larger historical perspective and know what is fair, just and reasonable and what is not. Insurrection comes when people can use the written word to communicate with and

thereby assemble the masses. This shows how physical force alone cannot control human beings for long ~~but that something else must accompany it~~. The frightening truth that slave-owners and others throughout history have understood is that to fully control another person, you must limit their perceptions, their understanding of the world, and the influence of others—in essence you must also control their mind.

After secretly learning to read and write on his own, Douglass discovered that freeing his mind led to anguished torment as he was unable to free himself from the entrenched institutions of slavery, but change at least was set in motion. ~~Douglass starting reading various books that made convincing arguments against slavery which finally helped him form his own thoughts on the subject that had previously “died away for want of utterance” (84)~~. Initially, being awakened to the stark realities of his condition served to plunge Douglass into despair: “As I read and contemplated the subject, behold! that very discontentment which Master Hugh had predicted would follow my learning to read had already come, to torment and sting my soul to unutterable anguish” (84). Once Douglass’s eyes were opened, he invariably suffered: “... I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing. It had given me a view of my wretched condition, without the remedy. It opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out. In moments of agony, I envied my fellow-slaves for their stupidity” (84). So is ignorance bliss? The answer for us to live in a fair and decent world has to be no, never. To be ignorant allows others not only to make choices for you but to limit your choices without you even realizing it. Not knowing the factors and people who shape your life, enables those in power to act in their own self-interest and have no accountability when doing so. It also makes people unable to recognize when they are victimized by unjust situations, and if you cannot see the problem, then you can never demand ~~or bring about~~ change.

After Douglass understood the evils of slavery, he suffered initially and even entertained thoughts of suicide, but later he escaped to the north and became an influential leader in the abolitionist movement and spent the remainder of his life fighting for the equality and rights of blacks as well as

women.

Unfortunately, when slavery was abolished in 1865, that did not end the practice of denying certain groups of people an education in order to control them, but it also did not end people's ability to go against societal norms, educate themselves, and fight for change. Muktar Mai in her memoir *In the Name of Honor* published in 2006, tells her story of growing up in a small village in Pakistan where girls were not **allowed to be** educated. In 2002, a more powerful clan wanted to assert its power so without evidence, they accused her brother of having sexual relations with an older woman in another clan.

As a result, Mai, as his oldest sister, was sentenced to be publically gang raped by six men in a stable with 100 of her fellow villagers outside. Mai was then expected to follow custom and commit suicide, but instead she went to the police and testified against her attackers. Because she could not read or write, the officers wrote down her account but altered what she said to absolve her attackers of guilt, so when her case went to court, she lost. **~~Mai states: "The law requires that the police draw up a preliminary investigative report. And it's always the same thing: they tell the woman, 'Sign with your thumb, we'll write it down for you,' and when the report reaches the judge, the culprits are always innocent, and the woman has lied!" (Mai 164-165).~~** After that, she dedicated herself to learn to read and write so she could document her own story and navigate the complexities of the legal system. As Mai suffered death threats and battled a daunting and biased legal system, a fellow activist told her:

It doesn't matter what women think, because they are not allowed to think at all!

They're not allowed to learn to read and write, to find out how the world around them works. That's why illiterate women cannot defend themselves: they know nothing about their rights, and words are put into their mouths to sabotage their revolt. But we support you! Just have courage. (46)

After nearly 10 years of her case being tried in various courts and reaching all the way to the Supreme Court, **sadly** all but one of the men were acquitted. The president of Pakistan has since admitted to restricting Mai's movements as the publicity her case receives puts a bad light on Pakistan, and with

her attackers free **and part of a very powerful clan**, her life remains in danger to this day. In spite of all this, Mai still fights. She remains an outspoken advocate for women's rights, she is still pressing a retrial of her attackers, she continues to run the organization she started Mukhtar Mai Women's Welfare Organization (MMWFO), **and even with many attempts to close it**, she still runs a school she established in her village to educate girls. With literacy came a more confident and determined Mai and through literacy she has been able to rescue many abused women, educate scores of young girls, and reach out beyond her community and gain international recognition and support.

Slavery might feel very distant time wise and Pakistan might feel very far off geographically, but the issue of people being denied literacy and education is not so far removed. People are being denied education right here and right now in the United States as well, so we must all continue to be vigilant about Orwell's warning: "Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past" (**Orwell 30**). Those who write our history, who write our textbooks, who write our news, who write our laws, write us. In the United States, unfortunately the quality of education one receives is based on income **and property taxes** so those living in **affluent** neighborhoods get a good education but those who do not, are destined to be controlled by a wealthy elite: "Children in one set of schools are educated to be governors; children in the other set of schools are trained for being governed" (Kozol 176). Jonathan Kozol in his book *Savage Inequalities: Children in America's School* documented the inequalities in education across the U.S. in inner-city schools. He repeatedly documented the high dropout rates in these schools ~~as so many never get high school diplomas in~~ **schools** that are **grossly** underfunded, underequipped, and understaffed. We cannot call ourselves a **true** democracy if the many are ruled by the few. We need to take a lesson from Frederick Douglass and Mukhtar Mai and use our own literacy skills to call out injustice and mobilize people to address it, be it large scale or small: blogging, writing letters to our political representatives, **reading investigative books and articles**, emailing our friends, reposting articles on Facebook. Ignorance leads to **blind** passivity and loss of choice. Even small efforts are empowering and can effect **big great** change.

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EXAMPLE

Here is a sample FINAL VERSION of an essay. In these lessons, you have seen all the writing stages that went into building this paper: annotating Douglass's text, freewriting, brainstorming, journalist questions, listing, clustering, creating a thesis, outlining, drafting, revising, editing and proofreading.

Bell 1

Rachel Bell

Professor Lucia Lachmayr

English 100

21 May 2013

Education Denied: a Recipe to Control Human Beings

In the 1940s, George Orwell warned “Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past” (Orwell 30). In the 1990s a band called Rage Against the Machine, the name itself referring to a people’s movement to fight against control (corporation, government or otherwise) used this mantra in their song “Testify,” a warning to not silently endure injustice (Rage Against the Machine). This warning is not only relevant to the 20th century, but has been applicable since human beings started forming structures of power to control and oppress one another. This can vividly be seen during the times of slavery in the United States when blacks were enslaved for two and a half centuries. In Frederick Douglass’s novel *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, Douglass reveals how this long and brutal control of human beings was partly accomplished through control over literacy. The control and limitations over reading and writing during slavery sought to make slaves like Douglass ignorant, powerless, and therefore more easily controlled, and this control over literacy and education is still happening in the world today.

In his narrative, Douglass exposes how being denied education was one of the main tactics used to keep so many blacks trapped within generations of enslavement. Douglass lived in Baltimore for 7 years as a house slave and was forbidden by his masters Mr. and Mrs. Hugh to read or write. Mrs. Hugh became furious if she caught Douglass reading as she understood that keeping him illiterate and ignorant was her only way to maintain power over him, “She was an apt woman; and a little

experience soon demonstrated, to her satisfaction, that education and slavery were incompatible with each other” (82). Mr. and Mrs. Hugh were not the only slave-owners to realize that educated people are harder to subjugate, and that they could not indefinitely sustain control over other human beings solely through physical coercion. Many slave states passed laws making it illegal to teach slaves to read and write as seen in this typical law in North Carolina:

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The law then lists the punishments and for a white person it was a hefty fine and possible imprisonment and for a free person of color they could be fined, imprisoned or whipped “not exceeding thirty nine lashes, nor less than twenty lashes” ("Slaves Are Prohibited to Read and Write by Law"). The fear behind passing laws such as these reveals the certain knowledge that reading and writing can indeed lead to “insurrection and rebellion.” Revolution comes when one can read and understand laws that apply to and protect one group and yet arbitrarily exclude another. Rebellion comes when people, through reading, can gain a larger historical perspective and know what is fair, just and reasonable and what is not. Insurrection comes when people can use the written word to communicate with and thereby assemble the masses. This shows how physical force alone cannot control human beings for long. The frightening truth that slave-owners and others throughout history have understood is that to

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<<http://www.historyisaweapon.com/defcon1/slaveprohibit.html>>.

Essay Checklist: To ensure you have a complete essay, **you will want to check off all of the following:**

Student Name:

PAPER TOPIC:

- ___ The essay responds to all parts of the assignment and effectively fulfills all the requirements.
- ___ The essay is an analysis of/argument about the text(s).

PAPER FORMATTING:

- ___ The essay is double spaced with 1-inch margins at the top, sides and bottom of each page.
- ___ There is no extra spacing between paragraphs, just half inch indents at the start of each paragraph.
- ___ The essay meets the minimum page requirements.
- ___ The paper title is appropriate, creative and draws in reader interest.
- ___ The title page and numbering are properly formatted according to standard conventions (i.e. MLA).
- ___ The names of the texts are properly formatted (names of longer works likes books and plays are italicized or underlined, and titles of shorter works like chapter titles and short stories are in quotes)
- ___ I included a Work Cited page citing the primary text I wrote about as well as any outside research.

INTRODUCTION:

- ___ My introduction names the text(s) I am analyzing (title & author).
- ___ My introduction contains a thesis that is clear and arguable and has a clear “so what?”
- ___ My introduction is quick to capture reader interest and strongly orients the reader.

BODY PARAGRAPHS:

- ___ Each paragraph has a clear topic sentence stating a claim that directly supports the thesis.
- ___ Each paragraph contains supporting information (evidence) and analysis (so what?).
- ___ The paragraphs are focused, fair, reasonable, logical and contain clear transitions.

CONCLUSION:

- ___ The conclusion leads to a larger significance and does not simply summarize the points made.

PLAGIARISM:

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

INTEGRATING SOURCES:

- ___ I have included quotes and paraphrases from the reading.
- ___ All quotes are connected to phrases that introduce them—there are no “dropped” quotes.
- ___ I have followed all quotes with page numbers in parenthesis (and/or author depending on citation).
- ___ All quotes fit in logically and are accompanied with analysis that expresses the quote’s significance.
- ___ If I used outside research, it was credible, it met the required number of sources, and it was used to directly support my argument.

STYLE:

- ___ I have crafted sentences with attention to word choice, sentence combining, sentence variety, parallelism and have eliminated wordiness to create concise, purposeful and coherent sentences.

GRAMMAR-PUNCTUATION-SPELLING:

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



CREATING INNOVATIVE TITLES

POSSIBLE TITLES:

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

Possible Title(s): Men in Film: Macho on the Outside, Crying on the Inside

How Movies are Making Men Tough but Emotionally Dead

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

Possible Title(s): Be Anything You Want to Be! Not if the Media Has Any Say

Mechanics, Surgeons and Pilots versus Nannies, Nurses and Secretaries: How the Media Keeps Our Jobs Divided by Gender

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

Possible Title(s): Women’s Heightened Sexy Factor and Lowered Self-Esteem

Woman or Thing? How TV is Changing Women into Objects

What, Why, and How?

5

MLA CONVENTIONS

General Formatting
Titles & Authors
In-Text Citations
Works Cited Guidelines & Example
Creating a Works Cited List

WHAT IS MLA?

MLA stands for Modern Language Association, which is a professional association in the United States for scholars of language and literature.

MLA style is the style recommended by the Modern Language Association for preparing and writing scholarly manuscripts and student research papers. It concerns itself with the mechanics of writing, such as punctuation, quotation, and documentation of sources. **MLA style** has been widely used by schools, academic departments, and instructors for nearly half a century. MLA style provides writers with a system for cross-referencing their sources from their parenthetical references to their "works cited" page.

All fields of research agree on the need to document scholarly borrowings, but documentation conventions vary because of the different needs of scholarly disciplines. MLA style for documentation is widely used in the humanities, especially in writing on language and literature. Generally simpler and more concise than other styles, MLA style features brief parenthetical citations in the text keyed to an alphabetical list of works cited that appears at the end of the work.

WHY USE MLA?

Using MLA Style properly makes it easier for readers to navigate and comprehend a text by providing familiar cues when referring to sources and borrowed information. Editors and instructors also encourage everyone to use the same format so there is consistency of style within a given field. Following MLA's standards as a writer will allow you to:

- Provide your readers with cues they can use to follow your ideas more efficiently and to locate information of interest to them.
- Allow readers to focus more on your ideas by not distracting them with unfamiliar or complicated formatting.
- Establish your credibility or ethos in the field by demonstrating an awareness of your audience and their needs as fellow researchers (particularly concerning the citing of references).

WHEN DO I USE MLA?

There are several steps in your essay writing process where you will need to use MLA, including:

1. General Formatting
2. Titles & Authors
3. In-Text Citations
4. Works Cited

In this chapter, we'll show you how to use MLA for each of these 4 areas...

HOW DO I USE MLA?

The following explanations and examples will help familiarize you with the basic formatting requirements of MLA Style and the different standards for notation that MLA writers are expected to use. Pay attention to even the small details from basic paper layout to abbreviations to punctuation and spacing.

A well formatted essay sends a positive message to the reader that the writer has invested care, time, and attention into crafting the essay.

General Formatting

- Essay is double-spaced**
- A standard font is used (e.g. Times New Roman), font size 12**
- There are 1 inch margins at the top, sides and bottom of the paper**
- There are no extra spaces between the paragraphs, just a half inch indent at the beginning of each paragraph**
- There is a MLA formatted title page with the following information in the top left corner of the paper:**
 - Student name
 - Instructor name
 - Course title
 - Date
- There is MLA style numbering on each page in the top right with student's last name and page number (e.g. Smith 1)**
- Essay meets the minimum page requirement**

Rachel Bell

Professor Karen Wong

English 100

21 June 2014

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

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

The diligence and persistent effort Malcolm X showed in learning to read has become disappointingly rare. Malcolm X in his autobiography tells us that when he went to prison, he could hardly read or write. He decided the way to improve would be to copy the entire dictionary word for word by hand. He said to copy just the first page alone took an entire day. The next day he reviewed all

Titles & Authors

- The student’s essay title is centered above the introductory paragraph and is appropriate, creative and draws in reader interest.**
- The names of the texts are properly formatted (names of longer works are italicized or underlined, and titles of shorter works are in quotes)**

<p>Italicize or underline longer works (italicizing is more commonly used to avoid confusion with hyperlinks)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ Books○ Plays○ Periodicals (newspapers, journals, and magazines)○ Films○ Television or web series○ Albums (CDs)○ Long or epic poems○ Court cases○ Computer and video games○ Orchestral works○ Paintings, sculptures and other works of visual art	<p>Use quotation marks for shorter texts and for works that are part of a larger work:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">● Chapters in books● One Act Plays● Articles in periodicals (newspapers, journals, and magazines)● Short Stories● Episodes of television or a web series● Song titles● Short Poems● Essays● Titles of sections from longer works● Other literary works shorter than a three act play or complete book
---	--

- For titles, only put them in quotes, underline OR italicize them— NEVER a combination of styles. WRONG: Gene’s favorite book is “Geek Love.”**
- All words in titles are capitalized except the following (when they aren’t the first word in the title): articles (a, an), prepositions (in, of), conjunctions (and, but, so), and the “to” in infinitives (*How to Sing*)**
- In reading-based writing, introduce the text(s) and author(s) being written about in the introductory paragraph.**
- When first introducing a text, provide the full name of the author and afterwards, refer to the author by last name (never by first name)**
- Don’t confuse characters in stories/poems and authors as being the same person as often they are not.**

PRACTICE

Find the **TEN FORMATTING ERRORS** in the first page of the following essay:

Lachmayr 1

Rachel Bell

Professor Lucia Lachmayr

21 May 2013

Revision of Essay #1

In the novel "Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave," it is revealed how this long and brutal control of human beings was partly accomplished through control over literacy. The control and limitations over reading and writing during slavery sought to make slaves like Fred ignorant, powerless, and therefore more easily controlled, and this control over literacy and education is still happening in the world today.

In his narrative, Fred exposes how being denied education was one of the main tactics used to keep so many blacks trapped within generations of enslavement. Freddie lived in Baltimore for 7 years as a house slave and was forbidden by his masters Mr. and Mrs. Hugh to read or write.

In-Text Citations

In-text citation means that the author's last name and the page number(s) from which the quotation or paraphrase is taken must appear in the text (the body of the essay), and a complete reference should appear on your Works Cited page at the end.

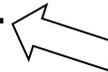
You have two options when you cite your sources within the text of your paper:

- (1) **Provide the author's name and the page number on which you found the material you are citing:**

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

- (2) **Provide author's name in text of your sentence and include only page number after the sentence.**

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



Look closely...at the parenthetical citation after the quote and notice that the period in the sentence goes *after* the citation parenthesis. Also note what is never included: the words or abbreviations pg. or pp. or page.

Corporate author?

Sometimes the author can be a corporation, organization or website like Chevron, the ASPCA, or the DMV.com so follow the same rules above citing them as the authors i.e. (ASPCA 21).

Multiple authors?

For a source with two authors, list the authors' last names in the text or in the parenthetical citation i.e. (Best and Marcus 32). For a source with three or more authors, list only the first author's last name, and replace the additional names with et al i.e. ((Franck et al. 327).

No author?

If the author is unknown, either use the complete title in the phrase introducing the quote or use a short form of the title in parentheses i.e. ("The Effects of Global Warming" 13).

No page number?

Do not include the page number if a work lacks page numbers, as is the case with many Web sources. Even if a printout from a Web site shows page numbers, treat the source as unpaginated in the in-text citation because not all printouts give the same page numbers (when the pages of a Web source are stable, as in PDF files, supply a page number in your in-text citation).

Works Cited Guidelines

A Works Cited is an alphabetized list of texts you have analyzed, quoted, summarized, or paraphrased in your essay. The Works Cited appears at the end of your paper and gives publication information for each of the sources you have cited in the paper.

- In text-based writing, you will always include a Works Cited listing the text you are analyzing. If you did not do additional outside research, your Works Cited will still list your primary text or texts.**
- Begin the list of works cited on a new page at the end of the paper.**
- Center the title Works Cited about one inch from the top of the page and double-space throughout.**
- All citations on the Works Cited are listed alphabetically according to the last name of the author.**
- If a work has no author, alphabetize by the first word of the title (ignoring “A,” “An,” or “The” at the beginning of the title).**
- Indenting—do not indent the first line of each works cited entry, but indent any additional lines one-half inch. This technique highlights the names of the authors, making it easy for readers to scan the alphabetized list along the left margin.**
- If your list includes two or more works by the same author, use the author’s name for the first entry only. For subsequent entries, use three hyphens followed by a period. List the titles in alphabetical order.**
- The format of the source information will vary depending on if the source is a book, a website, an article, etc. For the proper format by type, visit: <http://www.skylinecollege.edu/library/citingsources.php>**
- You can use sites like this one to properly format citations for you: <http://citationmachine.net/>**

EXAMPLE

Works Cited

- Addonizio, Kim. "Affair." *Hunger and Thirst: Food Literature*. Ed. Nancy Cary. San Diego: City Works Press, 2008. 235-236. Print.
- Ahmedi, Fauzia Erfan. "Welcoming Courtyards: Hospitality, Spirituality, and Gender." *Feminism and Hospitality: Gender in the Host/Guest Relationship*. 3rd ed. Lanham: Lexington Books, 2010. 109-24. Print.
- "Business: The Economy and Global Warming." *The Economist* 29 May 2012: 82. Print.
- Gillespie, Paula, and Neal Lerner. *The Allyn and Bacon Guide to Peer Tutoring*. Boston: Allyn, 2000. Print.
- Murphy, Beth. "How to Dance the Macarena." Youtube. Youtube, 7 Sept. 2010. Web. 19 Apr. 2014.
- Nasar, Sylvia. "Manifold Destiny." *The New Yorker* Conde Nast Digital, 28 Aug. 2006. Web. 30 Mar. 2010.
- Poiger, Uta G. "Rock 'n' Roll, Female Sexuality, and the Cold War Battle over German Identities." *The Journal of Modern History* 68.3 (1996): 577. JSTOR. Web. 2 Jan. 2013.
- Pollan, Michael. *The Omnivore's Dilemma: A Natural History of Four Meals*. New York: Penguin, 2007. Print.
- Titanic*. Dir. James Cameron. Perf. Leonardo Di Caprio, Kate Winslett, Billy Zane. 20th Century Fox. 1998. DVD.

Creating a Works Cited List

From Purdue OWL: MLA has turned to a style of documentation that is based on a general method that may be applied to every possible source, to many different types of writing. But since texts have become increasingly mobile, and the same document may be found in several different sources, following a set of fixed rules is no longer sufficient.

The current system is based on a few principles, rather than an extensive list of specific rules. While the handbook still gives examples of how to cite sources, it is organized according to the process of documentation, rather than by the sources themselves. This process teaches writers a flexible method that is universally applicable. Once you are familiar with the method, you can use it to document any type of source, for any type of paper, in any field.

Here is an overview of the process:

When deciding how to cite your source, start by consulting the list of core elements. These are the general pieces of information that MLA suggests including in each Works Cited entry. In your citation, the elements should be listed in the following order:

- 1. Author.**
- 2. Title of source.**
- 3. Title of container,**
- 4. Other contributors,**
- 5. Version,**
- 6. Number,**
- 7. Publisher,**
- 8. Publication date,**
- 9. Location.**

Each element should be followed by the punctuation mark shown here.

1. Author

Begin the entry with the author's last name, followed by a comma and the rest of the name, as presented in the work. End this element with a period.

Said, Edward W. *Culture and Imperialism*. Knopf, 1994.

2. Title of source

The title of the source should follow the author's name. Depending upon the type of source, it should be listed in italics or quotation marks (titles of longer texts like books and websites are italicized and titles of shorter texts like articles, songs or poems titles go inside quotation marks).

Henley, Patricia. *The Hummingbird House*. MacMurray, 1999.

Bagchi, Alaknanda. "Conflicting Nationalisms: The Voice of the Subaltern in Mahasweta Devi's Bashai Tudu." *Tulsa Studies in Women's Literature*, vol. 15, no. 1, 1996, pp. 41-50.

3. Title of container

Containers are larger wholes in which the source is located. For example, if you want to cite a poem that is listed in a collection of poems, the individual poem is the source, while the larger collection is the container. The title of the container is usually italicized and followed by a comma, since the information that follows next describes the container.

Kincaid, Jamaica. "Girl." *The Vintage Book of Contemporary American Short Stories*, edited by Tobias Wolff, Vintage, 1994, pp. 306-07.

The container may also be a television series, which is made up of episodes.

"94 Meetings." *Parks and Recreation*, created by Greg Daniels and Michael Schur, performance by Amy Poehler, season 2, episode 21, Deedle-Dee Productions and Universal Media Studios, 2010.

The container may also be a website, which contains articles, postings, and other works.

Zinkievich, Craig. Interview by Gareth Von Kallenbach. *Skewed & Reviewed*, 27 Apr. 2009, www.arcgames.com/en/games/star-trek-online/news/detail/1056940-skewed-%2526-reviewed-interviews-craig. Accessed 15 Mar. 2009.

In some cases, a container might be within a larger container. You might have read a book of short stories on *Google Books*, or watched a television series on *Netflix*. You might have found the electronic version of a journal on JSTOR. It is important to cite these containers within containers so that your readers can find the exact source that you used.

"94 Meetings." *Parks and Recreation*, season 2, episode 21, NBC, 29 Apr. 2010. *Netflix*, www.netflix.com/watch/70152031?trackId=200256157&tctx=0%2C20%2C0974d361-27cd-44de-9c2a-2d9d868b9f64-12120962.

Langhamer, Claire. "Love and Courtship in Mid-Twentieth-Century England." *Historical Journal*, vol. 50, no. 1, 2007, pp. 173-96. *ProQuest*, doi:10.1017/S0018246X06005966. Accessed 27 May 2009.

4. Other contributors

In addition to the author, there may be other contributors to the source who should be credited, such as editors, illustrators, translators, etc. If their contributions are relevant to your research, or necessary to identify the source, include their names in your documentation.

Note: Terms like editor, illustrator, translator, etc., are no longer abbreviated.

Foucault, Michel. *Madness and Civilization: A History of Insanity in the Age of Reason*. Translated by Richard Howard, Vintage-Random House, 1988.

Wolf, Virginia. *Jacob's Room*. Annotated and with an introduction by Vara Neverow, Harcourt, Inc., 2008.

5. Version

If a source is listed as an edition or version of a work, include it in your citation.

The Bible. Authorized King James Version, Oxford UP, 1998.

Crowley, Sharon, and Debra Hawhee. *Ancient Rhetorics for Contemporary Students*. 3rd ed., Pearson, 2004.

6. Number

If a source is part of a numbered sequence, such as a multi-volume book, or journal with both volume and issue numbers, those numbers must be listed in your citation.

Dolby, Nadine. "Research in Youth Culture and Policy: Current Conditions and Future Directions." *Social Work and Society: The International Online-Only Journal*, vol. 6, no. 2, 2008, www.socwork.net/sws/article/view/60/362. Accessed 20 May 2009.

"94 Meetings." *Parks and Recreation*, created by Greg Daniels and Michael Schur, performance by Amy Poehler, season 2, episode 21, Deedle-Dee Productions and Universal Media Studios, 2010.

Quintilian. *Institutio Oratoria*. Translated by H. E. Butler, vol. 2, Loeb-Harvard UP, 1980.

7. Publisher

The publisher produces or distributes the source to the public. If there is more than one publisher, and they are all relevant to your research, list them in your citation, separated by a forward slash (/).

Klee, Paul. *Twittering Machine*. 1922. Museum of Modern Art, New York. *The Artchive*, www.artchive.com/artchive/K/klee/twittering_machine.jpg.html. Accessed May 2006.

Women's Health: Problems of the Digestive System. American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists, 2006.

Daniels, Greg and Michael Schur, creators. *Parks and Recreation*. Deedle-Dee Productions and Universal Media Studios, 2015.

8. Publication date

The same source may have been published on more than one date, such as an online version of an original source. For example, a television series might have aired on a broadcast network on one date, but released on *Netflix* on a different date. When the source has more than one date, it is sufficient to use the date that is most relevant to your use of it. If you're unsure about which date to use, go with the date of the source's original publication.

"Hush." *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*, created by Joss Whedon, performance by Sarah Michelle Gellar, season 4, Mutant Enemy, 1999.

9. Location

You should be as specific as possible in identifying a work's location.

An essay in a book, or an article in journal should include page numbers.

Adiche, Chimamanda Ngozi. "On Monday of Last Week." *The Thing around Your Neck*, Alfred A. Knopf, 2009, pp. 74-94.

The location of an online work should include a URL.

Wheelis, Mark. "Investigating Disease Outbreaks Under a Protocol to the Biological and Toxin Weapons Convention." *Emerging Infectious Diseases*, vol. 6, no. 6, 2000, pp. 595-600, wwwnc.cdc.gov/eid/article/6/6/00-0607_article. Accessed 8 Feb. 2009.

A physical object that you experienced firsthand should identify the place of location.

Matisse, Henri. *The Swimming Pool*. 1952, [Museum of Modern Art, New York](#).

ANSWERS

TEN FORMATTING ERRORS:

- (1) The font is too large at size 16
- (2) The font is unconventional
- (3) In essay information in the top left, the class title is left out
- (4) The page numbering in the top right has the professor's last name, not the student's
- (5) The title "Revision of Essay #1" is generic, not creative and does not draw in reader interest
- (6) When the novel is introduced, it needs to also list the author
- (7) The title of the novel is in quotes when it should be italicized
- (8) The main character is referred to by different informal nicknames not used in the text and one is misspelled.
Always be accurate and consistent with character and author names and be sure they are spelled correctly.
- (9) There is an extra space after the first paragraph and the second paragraph needs to be indented.
- (10) The margins on the left side are not one inch

FORMATTING ERRORS CORRECTED IN VERSION BELOW:

Bell 1

Rachel Bell

Professor Lucia Lachmayr

English 100

21 May 2013

Education Denied: a Recipe to Control Human Beings

In Frederick Douglass's novel *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, Douglass reveals how this long and brutal control of human beings was partly accomplished through control over literacy. The control and limitations over reading and writing during slavery sought to make slaves like Douglass ignorant, powerless, and therefore more easily controlled, and this control over literacy and education is still happening in the world today.

In his narrative, Douglass exposes how being denied education was one of the main tactics used to keep so many blacks trapped within generations of enslavement. Douglass lived in Baltimore for 7 years as a house slave and was forbidden by his masters Mr. and Mrs. Hugh to read or write.

What, Why, and How?

6

EVALUATING WRITING:

Workshopping explanation and guidelines
Rubrics: for students and instructors
Students Responding to Instructor Feedback
Grading standards

WHAT IS WORKSHOPPING?

A workshop is a meeting at which a group of people engage in intensive discussion and activity on a particular subject or project. When workshopping writing, students share their writing with each other with the goal of providing specific and constructive feedback to guide the writers in creating more unified, complex, and polished revisions of their essays.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Workshopping helps you to...

- learn to formulate constructive feedback for a peer.
- learn to gather and respond to feedback on your own work.
- gain outside perspectives you may not have thought of or considered.
- improve your skills of reading carefully with attention to detail.
- utilize the benefits of hands on learning.
- transition from writing for yourself and the instructor to a broader audience and academic community.

HOW DO I DO IT?

Before you begin, consider how best to effectively work with your peers.

Good Practices in Workshopping...

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

WHAT IS A RUBRIC?

A rubric communicates expectations and creates consistent criteria and standards by which to evaluate a performance or project. In writing, a rubric allows teachers and students to evaluate an activity which can be complex and subjective. A rubric is aimed at accurate and fair assessment, fostering understanding, and indicating a way to proceed with subsequent learning and teaching. A rubric can also provide a basis for self-evaluation, reflection, and peer review.

WHY ARE RUBRICS IMPORTANT?

Rubrics help to...

- bring objectivity to subjective scoring.
- take away the “guessing game” by providing students with consistent standards the teacher will be using to evaluate their writing.
- teach students to set learning goals and take the responsibility for their learning into their own hands by knowing what skills make up a desired performance so they can strive to achieve it.
- assist students in developing their personal ability to judge excellence, or the lack thereof, in their work and the work of others.
- assure students that there is equality in grading and standardized expectations.
- praise students’ strengths and identify their weaknesses because rubrics provide visual representations of areas of excellence and under-performance allowing easy identification of what areas to work on at a glance.
- provide a clear means for students to monitor their progress on specific criteria over a given period of instruction or time.
- ensure for teachers that they are evaluating student work fairly, clearly and thoroughly.

HOW DO I DO IT?

The English professors at Skyline College have worked together to create a shared rubric so that regardless of English class or instructor, students will be evaluated according to a consistent set of criteria based on a shared understanding of writing fundamentals. All of the materials designed to instruct, evaluate and comment on student writing in this Rhetoric are based on that departmental rubric. Contained here are three different approaches using Skyline College’s English Departmental rubric to evaluate and comment on writing. These rubrics can be used by students to evaluate one another, and they can be used by instructors to evaluate students. This provides further consistency and shared expectations as the students and the instructor use the same evaluating tool.

Composition Essay Rubric with Explanations

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

How to: Check the appropriate rubric boxes and provide explanations afterwards of the ratings.

Using the information: For areas where a writer receives “needs work” or “adequate,” review that area in the Rhetoric associated with that topic and use the advice when revising.

	needs work	adequate	good	excellent
Assignment Fulfillment <i>For more info, see: Chap 3: Paper Topics</i>	Essay does not respond to the assignment and/or fails to fulfill the requirements. Essay does not analyze the text(s). <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/>	Essay responds to the assignment but fails to fulfill some of the requirements. Essay partially analyzes the text(s). <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/>	Essay responds to the assignment and fulfills all of the requirements. Essay analyzes the text(s). <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/>	Essay responds to the assignment and effectively fulfills all requirements. Essay thoroughly analyzes the text(s) in a meaningful and complex way. <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/>
Thesis <i>For more info, see: Chap 7: Thesis</i>	Thesis is missing, unfocused or vague or the thesis does not respond to the text(s). <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/>	Operating as a controlling idea for the essay, the thesis makes an argument about the text(s) but is simplistic and/or formulaic. <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/>	Operating as a controlling idea for the essay, the thesis makes a focused, direct, and thought-provoking argument about the text(s). <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/>	Operating as a controlling idea for the essay, the thesis makes complex, enlightening argument about the text(s). <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/>
Organization/ Coherence/ Focus <i>For more info, see: Chap 8: Introductions & Conclusions and Chap 9: Paragraphs</i>	Essay has no clearly defined or apparent organization. Introduction fails to engage or orient the reader; body paragraphs lack focus or cohesion; there are no topic sentences; conclusion is abrupt or not evident. The essay is not unified around one clear argument. <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/>	The sequence of ideas is functional but may have abrupt or illogical shifts. Introduction attempts to engage and orient the reader; body paragraphs are focused but lack cohesion; topics sentences are functional; conclusion reiterates the purpose and major points of the essay but is formulaic. The essay is loosely unified around one clear argument but there are gaps. <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/>	The sequence of ideas and transitions are effective. Introduction engages and orients the reader; body paragraphs are focused and cohesive; topic sentences are strong; conclusion illuminates the central idea and explores the larger implications and/or significance. The essay is unified around one clear argument. <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/>	The sequence of ideas and transitions are seamless and fluid. Introduction is quick to capture reader interest and strongly orients the reader; body paragraphs are clearly focused and cohesive; conclusion provides sophisticated, thought-provoking, and convincing analysis into the larger implications and/or significance. The essay is tightly unified around one clear argument. <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/>
Development & Support <i>For more info, see: Chap 9: Paragraphs</i>	Body paragraphs contain illogical reasoning. Body paragraphs contain summaries or generalizations that lack relevant supporting evidence and analysis. <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/>	Body paragraphs contain some well-reasoned points but are sometimes illogical.. Body paragraphs offer some level of evidence and analysis which at times may be too general. <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/>	Body paragraphs are mostly fair, reasonable and logical. Body paragraphs offer focused, convincing and somewhat original analysis of relevant evidence. <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/>	Body paragraphs are consistently fair, reasonable and logical. Body paragraphs offer focused, richly developed, sophisticated, original, and convincing analysis of relevant evidence. <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/>

	needs work	adequate	good	excellent
Use of Text <i>For more info, see:</i> Chap 10: Integrating Sources	Relevant quotes, paraphrases and concepts from the reading and relevant sources to support and illustrate ideas are missing or inadequate. Neglects to or weakly integrates quotes and paraphrases to support and illustrate ideas. <input type="checkbox"/>	Relevant quotes, paraphrases and concepts from the reading and relevant sources to support and illustrate ideas are adequate. <input type="checkbox"/>	Relevant quotes, paraphrases and concepts from the reading and relevant sources to support and illustrate ideas are skillfully integrated. <input type="checkbox"/>	Relevant quotes, paraphrases and concepts from the reading and relevant sources to support and illustrate ideas are not only selected and skillfully integrated but demonstrate deep use of the texts. <input type="checkbox"/>
MLA Formatting and Documentation Skills <i>For more info, see:</i> Chap 5: MLA	MLA format has not been used properly. Sources are not properly cited according to MLA format. <input type="checkbox"/>	Some MLA formatting has been used but is missing elements. Sources are properly cited using MLA format with occasional lapses in usage. <input type="checkbox"/>	Has properly used MLA format in title page, body of paper and page numbering. Sources are cited using MLA format with very few lapses in usage. <input type="checkbox"/>	Has properly used MLA format in title page, body of paper and page numbering. Sources are properly cited using MLA format correctly. <input type="checkbox"/>
Sentence Style <i>For more info, see:</i> Chap 13: Style	Sentences are either overly simplistic or confusingly worded. Sentences are not joined logically to show relationships between ideas. There is a lack of sentence variety. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sentences are solid but sometimes choppy. Sentences could be joined more logically to show relationships between ideas. There is minimal sentence variety. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sentences are clear and direct. Sentences are joined logically to show relationships between ideas. Sentences demonstrate syntactical maturity through varied sentence structure. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sentences are fluid and graceful and are joined logically to show relationships between ideas. Sentences effectively demonstrate syntactical maturity through varied sentence structure. <input type="checkbox"/>
Grammar <i>For more info, see:</i> Chap 14: Grammar	Essay has frequent errors in grammar, usage and spelling. 4 or more errors per page. <input type="checkbox"/>	Essay has some errors in grammar, usage and spelling. 3 or fewer errors per page. <input type="checkbox"/>	Essay has occasional errors in grammar, usage and spelling. 2 or fewer errors per page. <input type="checkbox"/>	Essay has few, if any, grammatical or proofreading errors. 1 or fewer errors per page. <input type="checkbox"/>

Comments: further explanations behind the scoring choices along with revision advice
(for more commenting space, insert electronically or attach additional page)

For instructor Use—Holistic Essay Grade:

Literature Essay Rubric with Explanations

For (author of paper):	From (evaluator):
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How to: Check the appropriate rubric boxes and provide explanations afterwards of the ratings.

Using the information: For areas where a writer receives “needs work” or “adequate,” review that area in the Rhetoric associated with that topic and use the advice when revising.

	needs work	adequate	good	excellent
<p>Assignment Fulfillment</p> <p><i>For more info, see: Chap 3: Paper Topics</i></p>	<p>Essay does not respond to the assignment and/or fails to fulfill the requirements. Essay does not analyze the text(s). <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Essay responds to the assignment but fails to fulfill some of the requirements. Essay partially analyzes the text(s). <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Essay responds to the assignment and fulfills all of the requirements. Essay analyzes the text(s). <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Essay responds to the assignment and effectively fulfills all requirements. Essay thoroughly analyzes the text(s) in a meaningful and complex way. <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Literary Analysis</p> <p><i>For more info, see: Chap 12: Literature</i></p>	<p>Essay does not include literary analysis or criticism. Essay neglects to evaluate or analyze literary theme(s) or techniques. <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Essay uses simple but inconsistent literary analysis and criticism. Essay provides basic level evaluation and analysis of literary theme(s) and techniques. <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Essay provides probing literary analysis and criticism. Essay provides a thorough evaluation and analysis of literary theme(s) and techniques. <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Essay applies thought-provoking and complex literary analysis and criticism. Essay engages in a sophisticated and original evaluation and analysis of literary theme(s) and techniques. <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Thesis</p> <p><i>For more info, see: Chap 7: Thesis</i></p>	<p>Thesis is missing, unfocused or vague or the thesis does not respond to the text(s). <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Operating as a controlling idea for the essay, the thesis makes an argument about the text(s) but is simplistic and/or formulaic. <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Operating as a controlling idea for the essay, the thesis makes a focused, direct, and thought-provoking argument about the text(s). <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>Operating as a controlling idea for the essay, the thesis makes complex, enlightening argument about the text(s). <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Organization/ Coherence/ Focus</p> <p><i>For more info, see: Chap 8: Introductions & Conclusions and Chap 9: Paragraphs</i></p>	<p>Essay has no clearly defined or apparent organization. Introduction fails to engage or orient the reader; body paragraphs lack focus or cohesion; there are no topic sentences; conclusion is abrupt or not evident. The essay is not unified around one clear argument. <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>The sequence of ideas is functional but may have abrupt or illogical shifts. Introduction attempts to engage and orient the reader; body paragraphs are focused but lack cohesion; topics sentences are functional; conclusion reiterates the purpose and major points of the essay but is formulaic. The essay is loosely unified around one clear argument but there are gaps. <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>The sequence of ideas and transitions are effective. Introduction engages and orients the reader; body paragraphs are focused and cohesive; topic sentences are strong; conclusion illuminates the central idea and explores the larger implications and/or significance. The essay is unified around one clear argument. <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p>The sequence of ideas and transitions are seamless and fluid. Introduction is quick to capture reader interest and strongly orients the reader; body paragraphs are clearly focused and cohesive; conclusion provides sophisticated, thought-provoking, and convincing analysis into the larger implications and/or significance. The essay is tightly unified around one clear argument. <input style="float: right;" type="checkbox"/></p>

	needs work	adequate	good	excellent
Development & Support <i>For more info, see: Chap 9: Paragraphs</i>	Body paragraphs contain illogical reasoning. Body paragraphs contain summaries or generalizations that lack relevant supporting evidence and analysis. <input type="checkbox"/>	Body paragraphs contain some well-reasoned points but are sometimes illogical.. Body paragraphs offer some level of evidence and analysis which at times may be too general. <input type="checkbox"/>	Body paragraphs are mostly fair, reasonable and logical. Body paragraphs offer focused, convincing and somewhat original analysis of relevant evidence. <input type="checkbox"/>	Body paragraphs are consistently fair, reasonable and logical. Body paragraphs offer focused, richly developed, sophisticated, original, and convincing analysis of relevant evidence. <input type="checkbox"/>
Use of Text <i>For more info, see: Chap 10: Integrating Sources</i>	Relevant quotes, paraphrases and concepts from the reading and relevant sources to support and illustrate ideas are missing or inadequate. Neglects to or weakly integrates quotes and paraphrases to support and illustrate ideas. <input type="checkbox"/>	Relevant quotes, paraphrases and concepts from the reading and relevant sources to support and illustrate ideas are adequate. <input type="checkbox"/>	Relevant quotes, paraphrases and concepts from the reading and relevant sources to support and illustrate ideas are skillfully integrated. <input type="checkbox"/>	Relevant quotes, paraphrases and concepts from the reading and relevant sources to support and illustrate ideas are not only selected and skillfully integrated but demonstrate deep use of the texts. <input type="checkbox"/>
MLA Formatting and Documentation Skills <i>For more info, see: Chap 5: MLA</i>	MLA format has not been used properly. Sources are not properly cited according to MLA format. <input type="checkbox"/>	Some MLA formatting has been used but is missing elements. Sources are properly cited using MLA format with occasional lapses in usage. <input type="checkbox"/>	Has properly used MLA format in title page, body of paper and page numbering. Sources are cited using MLA format with very few lapses in usage. <input type="checkbox"/>	Has properly used MLA format in title page, body of paper and page numbering. Sources are properly cited using MLA format correctly. <input type="checkbox"/>
Sentence Style <i>For more info, see: Chap 13: Style</i>	Sentences are either overly simplistic or confusingly worded. Sentences are not joined logically to show relationships between ideas. There is a lack of sentence variety. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sentences are solid but sometimes choppy. Sentences could be joined more logically to show relationships between ideas. There is minimal sentence variety. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sentences are clear and direct. Sentences are joined logically to show relationships between ideas. Sentences demonstrate syntactical maturity through varied sentence structure. <input type="checkbox"/>	Sentences are fluid and graceful and are joined logically to show relationships between ideas. Sentences effectively demonstrate syntactical maturity through varied sentence structure. <input type="checkbox"/>
Grammar <i>For more info, see: Chap 14: Grammar</i>	Essay has frequent errors in grammar, usage and spelling. 4 or more errors per page. <input type="checkbox"/>	Essay has some errors in grammar, usage and spelling. 3 or fewer errors per page. <input type="checkbox"/>	Essay has occasional errors in grammar, usage and spelling. 2 or fewer errors per page. <input type="checkbox"/>	Essay has few, if any, grammatical or proofreading errors. 1 or fewer errors per page. <input type="checkbox"/>

Comments: further explanations behind the scoring choices along with revision advice
(for more commenting space, insert electronically or attach additional page)

For instructor Use—Holistic Essay Grade:

Composition Essay Rubric

For (author of paper):	From (evaluator):
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How to: Check the appropriate rubric boxes and provide explanations afterwards of the ratings.

Using the information: For areas where a writer receives “needs work” or “adequate,” review that area in the Rhetoric associated with that topic (link below) and use the advice when revising.

Criteria	needs work	adequate	good	excellent
Assignment Fulfillment Does the essay respond to all parts of the assignment and effectively fulfill all the requirements? Is the essay an analysis of/argument about the text(s)? <i>For more info, see Chapter 3: Paper Topics</i>				
Thesis/Controlling Idea Is the thesis a controlling idea for the essay? Is it clear and arguable? Does it have a clear “so what?” stating a larger significance? Is the thesis a response to and an analysis of the text(s)? <i>For more info, see Chapter 7: Thesis Statements</i>				
Organization/Coherence/Focus Is the introduction quick to capture reader interest and strongly orient the reader? Is there a logical order of ideas with clear transitions? Are there strong topic sentences? Does the writer stay on topic within each paragraph? Does the conclusion lead to larger implications and/or significance? Is the overall essay unified around one clear argument? <i>For more info, see Chapter 8: Introductions & Conclusions and Chapter 9: Paragraphs</i>				
Development/Support Are the arguments fair, reasonable, and logical? Is the evidence in the body paragraphs consistently focused on a clear supporting point? Are body paragraphs fully developed, insightful, and convincing? Is there a balance of textual support and the student’s own analysis? <i>For more info, see Chapter 9: Paragraphs</i>				
Use of Text Are relevant quotes, paraphrases and concepts from the text skillfully integrated to support and illustrate ideas? Do they demonstrate sophisticated use of the text(s)? <i>For more info, see Chapter 10: Integrating Sources</i>				
MLA Formatting and Documentation Skills Has MLA format been used including title page and page numbers? Are the sources cited within the essay and in the Works Cited done correctly according to MLA format? <i>For more info, see Chapter 5: MLA Conventions</i>				
Sentence Style Do the sentences flow well? Does the writer join sentences to show relationships between ideas? Is there sentence variety? <i>For more info, see Chapter 13: Style</i>				
Grammar Is the essay proofread paying attention to grammar, punctuation, and spelling? <i>For more info, see Chapter 14: Grammar</i>	4 or more errors/page	3 or fewer errors/page	2 or fewer errors/page	1 or fewer errors/page

Comments: further explanations behind the scoring choices along with revision advice
(for more commenting space, insert electronically or attach additional page)

<u>For instructor Use</u>—Holistic Essay Grade:
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Literature Essay Rubric

For (author of paper):	From (evaluator):
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How to: Check the appropriate rubric boxes and provide explanations afterwards of the ratings.

Using the information: For areas where a writer receives “needs work” or “adequate,” review that area in the Rhetoric associated with that topic (link below) and use the advice when revising.

Criteria	needs work	adequate	good	excellent
Assignment Fulfillment Does the essay respond to all parts of the assignment and effectively fulfill all the requirements? Is the essay an analysis of/argument about the text(s)? <i>For more info, see Chapter 3: Paper Topics</i>				
Literary Analysis Has the essay included literary analysis and criticism? Has the essay effectively evaluated and analyzed literary theme(s) and techniques? <i>For more info, see Chapter 12: Literature</i>				
Thesis/Controlling Idea Is the thesis a controlling idea for the essay? Is it clear and arguable? Does it have a clear “so what?” stating a larger significance? Is the thesis a response to and an analysis of the text(s)? <i>For more info, see Chapter 7: Thesis Statements</i>				
Organization/Coherence/Focus Is the introduction quick to capture reader interest and strongly orient the reader? Is there a logical order of ideas with clear transitions? Are there strong topic sentences? Does the writer stay on topic within each paragraph? Does the conclusion lead to larger implications and/or significance? Is the overall essay unified around one clear argument? <i>For more info, see Chapter 8: Introductions & Conclusions and Chapter 9: Paragraphs</i>				
Development/Support Are the arguments fair, reasonable, and logical? Is the evidence in the body paragraphs consistently focused on a clear supporting point? Are body paragraphs fully developed, insightful, and convincing? Is there a balance of textual support and the student’s own analysis? <i>For more info, see Chapter 9: Paragraphs</i>				
Use of Text Are relevant quotes, paraphrases and concepts from the text skillfully integrated to support and illustrate ideas? Do they demonstrate sophisticated use of the text(s)? <i>For more info, see Chapter 10: Integrating Sources</i>				
MLA Formatting and Documentation Skills Has MLA format been used including title page and page numbers? Are the sources cited within the essay and in the Works Cited done correctly according to MLA format? <i>For more info, see Chapter 5: MLA Conventions</i>				
Sentence Style Do the sentences flow well? Does the writer join sentences to show relationships between ideas? Is there sentence variety? <i>For more info, see Chapter 13: Style</i>				
Grammar Is the essay proofread paying attention to grammar, punctuation, and spelling? <i>For more info, see Chapter 14: Grammar</i>	4 or more errors/page	3 or fewer errors/page	2 or fewer errors/page	1 or fewer errors/page

Comments: further explanations behind the scoring choices along with revision advice
(for more commenting space, insert electronically or attach additional page)

<u>For instructor Use</u>—Holistic Essay Grade:
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Composition Essay Rubric with Integrated Comments

For (author of paper):	From (evaluator):
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How to: Check the appropriate rubric box and provide an explanation of the ratings by answering the questions below. Fill out each section thoroughly to provide thoughtful and comprehensive feedback.

Using the information: For areas where a writer receives “needs work” or “adequate,” review that area in the Rhetoric associated with that topic (link below) and use the advice when revising.

<p>I. Assignment Fulfillment Does the essay respond to all parts of the assignment and effectively fulfill all the requirements? Is the essay an analysis of/argument about the text(s)? Comments:</p>				
Assignment Fulfillment	needs work	adequate	good	excellent
More information: See Chapter 3: Paper Topics				
<p>II. Thesis/Controlling Idea Is the thesis a controlling idea for the essay? Is it clear and arguable? Does it have a clear “so what?” stating a larger significance? Is the thesis a response to and an analysis of the text(s)? Comments:</p>				
Thesis/Controlling Idea	needs work	adequate	good	excellent
More information: See Chapter 7: Thesis Statements				
<p>III. Organization/Coherence/Focus Is the introduction quick to capture reader interest and strongly orient the reader? Is there a logical order of ideas with clear transitions? Are there strong topic sentences? Does the writer stay on topic within each paragraph? Does the conclusion lead to larger implications and/or significance? Is the overall essay unified around one clear argument? Comments:</p>				
Organization/Coherence/Focus	needs work	adequate	good	excellent
More information: See Chapter 8: Introductions & Conclusions and Chapter 9: Paragraphs				
<p>IV. Development/Support Are the arguments fair, reasonable, and logical? Is the evidence in the body paragraphs consistently focused on a clear supporting point? Are body paragraphs fully developed, insightful, and convincing? Is there a balance of textual support and the student’s own analysis? Comments:</p>				
Development/Support	needs work	adequate	good	excellent
More information: See Chapter 9: Paragraphs				

V. Use of Text

Are relevant quotes, paraphrases and concepts from the text skillfully integrated to support and illustrate ideas? Do they demonstrate sophisticated use of the text(s)?

Comments:

Use of Text	needs work	adequate	good	excellent
More information: See Chapter 10: Integrating Sources				

VI. MLA Formatting & Documentation Skills

Has MLA format been used including title page and page numbers? Are the sources cited within the essay and in the Works Cited done correctly according to MLA format?

Comments:

MLA Formatting & Documentation Skills	needs work	adequate	good	excellent
More information: See Chapter 5: MLA Conventions				

VII. Sentence Style

Do the sentences flow well? Does the writer join sentences to show relationships between ideas? Is there sentence variety?

Comments:

Sentence Style	needs work	adequate	good	excellent
More information: See Chapter 13: Style				

VIII. Grammar

Is the essay proofread paying attention to grammar, punctuation, and spelling?

Comments:

Grammar	4 or more errors/page	3 or more errors/page	2 or more errors/page	1 or more errors/page
More information: See Chapter 14: Grammar				

For instructor Use—Holistic Essay Grade:

Literature Essay Rubric with Integrated Comments

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

How to: Check the appropriate rubric box and provide an explanation of the ratings by answering the questions below. Fill out each section thoroughly to provide thoughtful and comprehensive feedback.

Using the information: For areas where a writer receives “needs work” or “adequate,” review that area in the Rhetoric associated with that topic (link below) and use the advice when revising.

<p>I. Assignment Fulfillment</p> <p>Does the essay respond to all parts of the assignment and effectively fulfill all the requirements? Is the essay an analysis of/argument about the text(s)?</p> <p>Comments:</p>				
Assignment Fulfillment	needs work	adequate	good	excellent
More information: See Chapter 3: Paper Topics				
<p>II. Literary Analysis</p> <p>Has the essay included literary analysis and criticism? Has the essay effectively evaluated and analyzed literary theme(s) and techniques?</p> <p>Comments:</p>				
Literary Analysis	needs work	adequate	good	excellent
More information: See Chapter 12: Literature				
<p>III. Thesis/Controlling Idea</p> <p>Is the thesis a controlling idea for the essay? Is it clear and arguable? Does it have a clear “so what?” stating a larger significance? Is the thesis a response to and an analysis of the text(s)?</p> <p>Comments:</p>				
Thesis/Controlling Idea	needs work	adequate	good	excellent
More information: See Chapter 7: Thesis Statements				
<p>IV. Organization/Coherence/Focus</p> <p>Is the introduction quick to capture reader interest and strongly orient the reader? Is there a logical order of ideas with clear transitions? Are there strong topic sentences? Does the writer stay on topic within each paragraph? Does the conclusion lead to larger implications and/or significance? Is the overall essay unified around one clear argument?</p> <p>Comments:</p>				
Organization/Coherence/Focus	needs work	adequate	good	excellent
More information: See Chapter 8: Introductions & Conclusions and Chapter 9: Paragraphs				

V. Development/Support

Are the arguments fair, reasonable, and logical? Is the evidence in the body paragraphs consistently focused on a clear supporting point? Are body paragraphs fully developed, insightful, and convincing? Is there a balance of textual support and the student's own analysis?

Comments:

Development/Support	needs work	adequate	good	excellent
More information: See Chapter 9: Paragraphs				

VI. Use of Text

Are relevant quotes, paraphrases and concepts from the text skillfully integrated to support and illustrate ideas? Do they demonstrate sophisticated use of the text(s)?

Comments:

Use of Text	needs work	adequate	good	excellent
More information: See Chapter 10: Integrating Sources				

VII. MLA Formatting & Documentation Skills

Has MLA format been used including title page and page numbers? Are the sources cited within the essay and in the Works Cited done correctly according to MLA format?

Comments:

MLA Formatting & Documentation Skills	needs work	adequate	good	excellent
More information: See Chapter 5: MLA Conventions				

VIII. Sentence Style

Do the sentences flow well? Does the writer join sentences to show relationships between ideas? Is there sentence variety?

Comments:

Sentence Style	needs work	adequate	good	excellent
More information: See Chapter 13: Style				

IX. Grammar

Is the essay proofread paying attention to grammar, punctuation, and spelling?

Comments:

Grammar	4 or more errors/page	3 or more errors/page	2 or more errors/page	1 or more errors/page
More information: See Chapter 14: Grammar				

For instructor Use—Holistic Essay Grade:

STUDENTS RESPONDING TO INSTRUCTOR FEEDBACK

Responding to instructor feedback helps to...

- better understand the advice you were given on your writing.
- identify areas of strength and also areas that need improvement.
- form writing plans and strategies, so you can apply the advice to future assignments.
- give the instructor an idea if his/her approaches were effective in conveying revision advice.
- let the instructor know what writing elements need to be covered more thoroughly or be revisited.

Using the advice you received from your instructor, answer the following questions:

(1) What were some of your writing strengths that were identified?

(2) What main areas of improvement were identified?

(3) How do you plan to apply the advice you were given in your next writing assignment? What do you plan to prioritize?

(4) Were there any parts of the advice that were unclear?

(5) Are there writing elements you would like to see focused on more or revisited in the class?

WHAT ARE GRADING STANDARDS?

As Skyline College's English instructors created a rubric to set clear criteria and standards for essays, they have also created a shared set of standards which explain the grades used to score essays.

WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

Grading standards help to...

- give grades meaning by creating a clear set of standards others can reference to know what set of skills and abilities are connected with that grade.
- create fairness and consistency between English courses as all students are being graded by the same criteria.
- teach people to measure the quality of their own writing.
- promote self-sufficiency because how to achieve high quality work is clearly defined.
- give students clear goals as they write and give teachers clear ways to assess that writing.

Here are the **Essay Grading Standards** for the Skyline English Department:

"A" essay: 98-100=A+, 93-97=A, 90-92=A-

Excellent: Essay is an enlightening, unified, convincing, and original response with larger implications/significance.

- **Assignment Fulfillment:** Thoroughly and effectively meets all requirements.
- **Thesis:** Makes a clear, complex and enlightening argument about the text(s).
- **Organization:** Presents a seamlessly fluid and unified structure that supports a central idea/thesis.
- **Development and Support:** Provides logical, original, well-developed, and relevant evidence and analysis.
- **Use of Text and MLA Guidelines:** Skillfully integrates relevant textual evidence demonstrating a deep use of the text(s) using proper format and documentation.
- **Sentence Style and Grammar:** Demonstrates sentence skill, clarity, and variety with few, if any, grammatical or proofreading errors.

"B" essay: 87-89=B+, 83-86=B, 80-82=B-

Good: Essay is a thought provoking, focused, persuasive response with larger implications/significance.

- **Assignment Fulfillment:** Meets all requirements.
- **Thesis:** Makes a focused, direct, and thought-provoking argument about the text(s).
- **Organization:** Presents an effectively unified structure that supports a central idea/thesis.
- **Development and Support:** Provides logical, well-developed, and reasonable evidence and analysis.
- **Use of Text and MLA Guidelines:** Skillfully integrates relevant textual evidence using proper format and documentation.
- **Sentence Style and Grammar:** Demonstrates sentence skill, clarity, and variety with few grammatical or proofreading errors.

"C" essay: 77-79=C+, 70-76=C

Adequate: Essay contains one or more of the following: is clear but somewhat simplistic, loosely unified, has adequate but at times inconsistent development, and/or analysis of the larger implications/significance is present but could be more developed.

- **Assignment Fulfillment:** Meets nearly all requirements.
- **Thesis:** Makes a clear argument about the text(s) but may be simplistic or formulaic.
- **Organization:** Presents a loosely unified structure that supports a central idea/thesis but may have gaps in logic.
- **Development and Support:** Provides some evidence and analysis that is well-reasoned but other points may be illogical and/or too general.
- **Use of Text and MLA Guidelines:** Adequately integrates textual evidence using proper format and documentation but may have some lapses in correct usage.
- **Sentence Style and Grammar:** Demonstrates solid sentence skill but may have some choppiness, minimal variety, and lapses in logical connections with some grammatical or proofreading errors.

"D" essay: 67-69=D+, 63-66=D, 60-62=D-

Needs Work/Unsatisfactory: Essay contains one or more of the following: is unfocused, poorly organized, underdeveloped, and/or lacks analysis of the larger implications/significance.

- **Assignment Fulfillment:** Does not meet all requirements.
- **Thesis:** Is unfocused or vague or the thesis may not respond to the text(s).
- **Organization:** Contains poor organization and may not be clearly unified around one clear argument.
- **Development and Support:** Provides illogical reasoning and summaries or generalizations may lack relevant supporting evidence and analysis.
- **Use of Text and MLA Guidelines:** Lacks adequate textual evidence and may neglect to properly integrate, format and/or document textual evidence.
- **Sentence Style and Grammar:** Sentences may either be overly simplistic or confusingly worded. Sentences may not be joined logically to show relationships between ideas and/or lack variety with frequent errors in grammar, usage and spelling.

"F" essay: 59-0=F

Not acceptable/Failing: Essay contains one or more of the following: is off topic, is missing many of the essential essay elements such as thesis, organization, development, and/or the sentences are confusing with excessive errors.

- **Assignment Fulfillment:** Essay does not respond to the assignment and/or fails to fulfill the requirements.
- **Thesis:** Thesis may be missing or the thesis may not respond to the text(s).
- **Organization:** Essay has no clearly defined or apparent organization.
- **Development and Support:** Does not provide clear, reasonable or related evidence and analysis.
- **Use of Text and MLA Guidelines:** Fails to include textual evidence and/or lacks proper formatting.
- **Sentence Style and Grammar:** Sentences may be hard to understand with excessive errors in grammar, usage and spelling.

What, Why, and How?



THESIS STATEMENTS

Definition and rationale
Simple and complex thesis statements
Narrowing down a topic
Writing text-based thesis statements
Creating a thesis
Revising a thesis
Where to put a thesis

WHAT IS A THESIS?

TOPIC VERSUS THESIS?

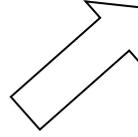
The subject you are writing about is the topic.
Add your opinion to a topic to create a thesis.

Topic + opinion = thesis

Add the significance to make a more complex thesis:

Topic + opinion + so what? = thesis

Another way to look at it!



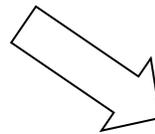
Topic
H
E
Stance
I
So what?

WHAT IS A THESIS?

The thesis is the main point of an essay, a focused, arguable statement which allows the reader to make predictions about the reading.

WHAT ARE THE CHARACTERISTICS OF AN EFFECTIVE THESIS?

- The language is clear, straight-forward and can't be misunderstood.
- It is contestable and arguable. Ask yourself: Could someone disagree? The answer should be yes.
- It is concentrated on a focused point: not too broad and not too narrow, but the right size for the assignment.
- It is complex and delves into the larger significance or impact.
- It is compelling and draws in your readers' interest and makes them want to read more to see how you prove your claim.
- It is directly connected to the prompt/question/assignment for the essay.



Just remember the 6 Cs!

Clear
Contestable
Concentrated
Complex
Compelling
Conected

A THESIS IS NOT:

- A fact
- A quote
- A question

WHY USE A THESIS?

- It allows the reader to make predictions about the reading.
- It guides the writer to stay focused on the main idea of the essay.
- It generates thought, evidence and analysis.
- It provides a purpose for the essay and answers questions like these:
 - What am I trying to accomplish in this essay?
 - What do I want to convince my reader of?

HOW DO I KNOW IT'S A THESIS?

TOPIC + OPINION = THESIS

A thesis is TOPIC + OPINION so you need to make sure that opinion is present or else it is not a thesis statement. The opinion is what makes a thesis arguable and it provides the purpose and focus for the paper: to convince your reader of that opinion.

Locating the Opinion in a Thesis: When you look for the opinion in a thesis, ask yourself: What is the writer's attitude towards the topic? For example, in the sentence "Backpacking in the mountains last year was an exciting experience," the topic is "backpacking" and the opinion is that this trip was "exciting." Another person on the same trip might have had a different attitude and may have found the trip boring or exhausting. "Exciting" reveals the writer's attitude and also indicates what the essay with this thesis statement will be focused on: demonstrating why it was "exciting." This thesis statement limits the writer's focus and clearly tells the reader what the essay will be about.

PRACTICE

Put a box around the TOPIC and underline the OPINION words below.

If there are no opinion words, it is not a thesis:

- 1) The subject of unwarranted fears, most bats are harmless and highly beneficial.
- 2) Vigorous exercise is a good way to reduce the effects of stress on the body.
- 3) Buffalo and Toronto differ in four major ways.
- 4) Developing color film is more complicated than developing black and white.
- 5) In this essay I will discuss abortion.
- 6) Television is destroying the unity of the modern family.
- 7) In her essay, Erlich shows that there is a balance of community and isolation in her hometown.

HOW DO I KNOW IT'S A COMPLEX THESIS?

TOPIC + OPINION + SO WHAT? = COMPLEX THESIS

A complex thesis is TOPIC + OPINION + SO WHAT? To form an arguable thesis, add opinion to a topic, and to make a more complex thesis, add “so what?” So *what* is the larger significance, the implications, and/or the outcomes of what you are arguing?

PRACTICE

**Below are student-created thesis statements about non-fiction texts.
For each thesis, list the TOPIC, the OPINION and the “SO WHAT?”**

THESIS STATEMENTS ON NON-FICTION TEXTS:

(1) In *Field Notes from a Catastrophe*, Elizabeth Kolbert seeks to use the evidence she has collected across her years of worldwide travel to show how we should best address climate change. Kolbert uses the island of Samsø to support her case for the mass implementation of alternative energy sources, but she does not point out the many cons that come with the use of alternative energy sources that are wind, biofuels, and solar which is reason enough to refrain from attempts at a greater implementation of them until problems of space, waste, and cost are addressed.

TOPIC: _____

OPINION: _____

SO WHAT? _____

(2) In her book *Field Notes from a Catastrophe*, Elizabeth Kolbert argues that everybody needs to work on ending humans' carbon emissions to prevent catastrophic climate change on our planet. However, at this point, catastrophic climate change is inevitable, so instead we need to focus our efforts on researching ways to make the new climates survivable.

TOPIC: _____

OPINION: _____

SO WHAT? _____

THESIS STATEMENTS ON NON-FICTION TEXTS--*Continued*:

(3) T.V Reed in his book *The Art of Protest*, argues that environmentalism has been coded as a “white issue.” If those raising the awareness are perceived as largely white and well-off preaching to and within the same demographic, the probability of those most impacted, namely the poor communities of color who disproportionately suffer environmental hazards and toxic dumps, having a voice is dismal, so meaningful change will not occur.

TOPIC: _____

OPINION: _____

SO WHAT? _____

(4) In *The Art of Protest*, T.V. Reed in his chapter “Singing Civil Rights,” says that music during the time of the Civil Rights Movement soulfully spoke about the oppressions of racism against blacks in America. Nowadays, Hip-Hop is one of the main driving forces keeping the conversation going about the continued inequalities that blacks suffer, and this is particularly important in an age of rising police brutality targeted at black men.

TOPIC: _____

OPINION: _____

SO WHAT? _____

(5) In *I Am Malala*, Malala Yousafzai shows how education can be used to combat terrorism in Pakistan because when people become more educated, they can more confidently self-advocate and are less susceptible to being falsely seduced by empty propaganda, so if the country follows Malala’s lead, it can rid itself of the Taliban influence.

TOPIC: _____

OPINION: _____

SO WHAT? _____

THESIS STATEMENTS ON NON-FICTION TEXTS--Continued:

(6) Malala Yousafzai's story, as told in her book *I am Malala*, is powerful and her cause is admirable but her idea that education combats terrorism is simplistic and glosses over the importance of the geopolitical situation Pakistan finds itself in. Education in this environment is no guarantee of deradicalization and may even work to galvanize their cause. In a political context of postcolonial exploitation where foreign governments actively try to destabilize the country and fund extremist groups, education will just make more effective terrorists.

TOPIC: _____

OPINION: _____

SO WHAT? _____

(7) In Anthony Swofford's *Jarhead*, we see a military culture of toxic masculinity—where relationships with women are transactional, showing emotional sensitivity is weakness, and violence is the preferred method of conflict resolution. This phenomenon is systemic in all branches of the military and is the catalyst for the extensive number of sexual harassment cases, rape, and high rates of suicide for service members.

TOPIC: _____

OPINION: _____

SO WHAT? _____

(8) In *Jarhead*, Anthony Swofford described how the soldier's first amendment rights are suspended once they sign the military contract. This silencing ensures that the Marines continue to follow orders from the "top" without any objections, and this control ensures that the interests of the rich and powerful are protected while the rights of the soldiers as U.S. citizens are violated, and this enables war for profit to continue.

TOPIC: _____

OPINION: _____

SO WHAT? _____

TOPIC + OPINION + SO WHAT? = COMPLEX THESIS

A complex thesis is TOPIC + OPINION + SO WHAT? To form an arguable thesis, add opinion to a topic, and to make a more complex thesis, add “so what?” So *what* is the larger significance, the implications, and/or the outcomes of what you are arguing?

PRACTICE

**Below are student-created thesis statements about fiction texts.
For each thesis, list the TOPIC, the OPINION and the “SO WHAT?”**

THESIS STATEMENTS ON FICTION TEXTS: Poetry

(1) Before the abolition of slavery in 1865, Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, fashioned her poem “Bury Me in a Free Land” to sharpen the glaring contradiction between the most cherished American value of freedom, and its antithesis expressed in the enslavement and brutalization of African Americans. Harper thereby forces her readers to come to terms with their own hypocrisy as Americans to hasten the demise of slavery.

TOPIC: _____

OPINION: _____

SO WHAT? _____

(2) In the different stanzas in her poem “Bury Me in a Free Land,” Frances Ellen Watkins Harper, gives graphic snapshots depicting the horrors of slavery: blacks sold like animals on the auction block, escaped blacks being hunted down, blacks being whipped and beaten bloody, black babies being taken from mothers. Unfortunately, African-Americans living in the “land of the free” today still suffer many of these same forms of injustice as their labor continues to be exploited, as they suffer higher rates of profiling and murder, and as their families continue to be torn apart due to mass incarceration.

TOPIC: _____

OPINION: _____

SO WHAT? _____

THESIS STATEMENTS ON FICTION TEXTS: Short Stories

(3) In Zora Neale Hurston's short story "Sweat," Sykes, a black man living in the Jim Crow South, constantly feels the need to assert his masculinity over Delia through acts of abuse and adultery in order to make up for insecurities resulting from his failure to fulfill the traditional male roles of provider and protector.

TOPIC: _____

OPINION: _____

SO WHAT? _____

(4) In her short story "Sweat," Zora Neale Hurston makes her reader feel empathy for the main character Delia, a hardworking woman who endures years of mental and physical abuse from her husband. Through helping her reader care about Delia, Hurston enables her reader to feel the triple burden of oppression of being black, female and poor in America.

TOPIC: _____

OPINION: _____

SO WHAT? _____

THESIS STATEMENTS ON FICTION TEXTS: Plays (Drama)

(5) Yusef's wife, Anbara, writes revolutionary articles in the play *Tennis in Nablus* by Ismail Khalidi highlighting women's empowerment and support as absolutely essential for the success of any movement or revolution that aspires toward real change. Khalidi uses symbolism and imagery to demonstrate that a primary reason for the failure of the Palestinian nation to escape the abuse of their British oppressors was because of their refusal to empower the most deeply oppressed members of their own society, their women.

TOPIC: _____

OPINION: _____

SO WHAT? _____

(6) In his play *Tennis in Nablus*, Ismail Khalidi creates an emotional connection for his audience to the struggle of the Palestinians in their revolt against the British in the 1930s by describing a division within a family and using it as a metaphor for the divisive impact of colonization in Palestine then and afterwards.

TOPIC: _____

OPINION: _____

SO WHAT? _____

THESIS STATEMENTS ON FICTION TEXTS: Novels

(7) In *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, Azar Nafisi demonstrates how literature is not only powerful enough to become a threat against oppressive regimes, but that it also emotionally liberates those who are covertly standing against the oppressive government. By studying Vladimir Nabokov's novel *Lolita* in their secret book club, Nafisi and her students were able to relate to Lolita's struggle but also reject being passive victims, which inspires the students to silently resist their oppressive government.

TOPIC: _____

OPINION: _____

SO WHAT? _____

(8) In Azar Nafisi's novel, *Reading Lolita in Tehran*, she incorporates the classic American novel *The Great Gatsby* by F. Scott Fitzgerald in conjunction with telling the history of and her experiences in the Islamic Republic of Tehran to demonstrate how reconstructing and living in the past only dooms the future.

TOPIC: _____

OPINION: _____

SO WHAT? _____

HOW DO I NARROW A TOPIC?

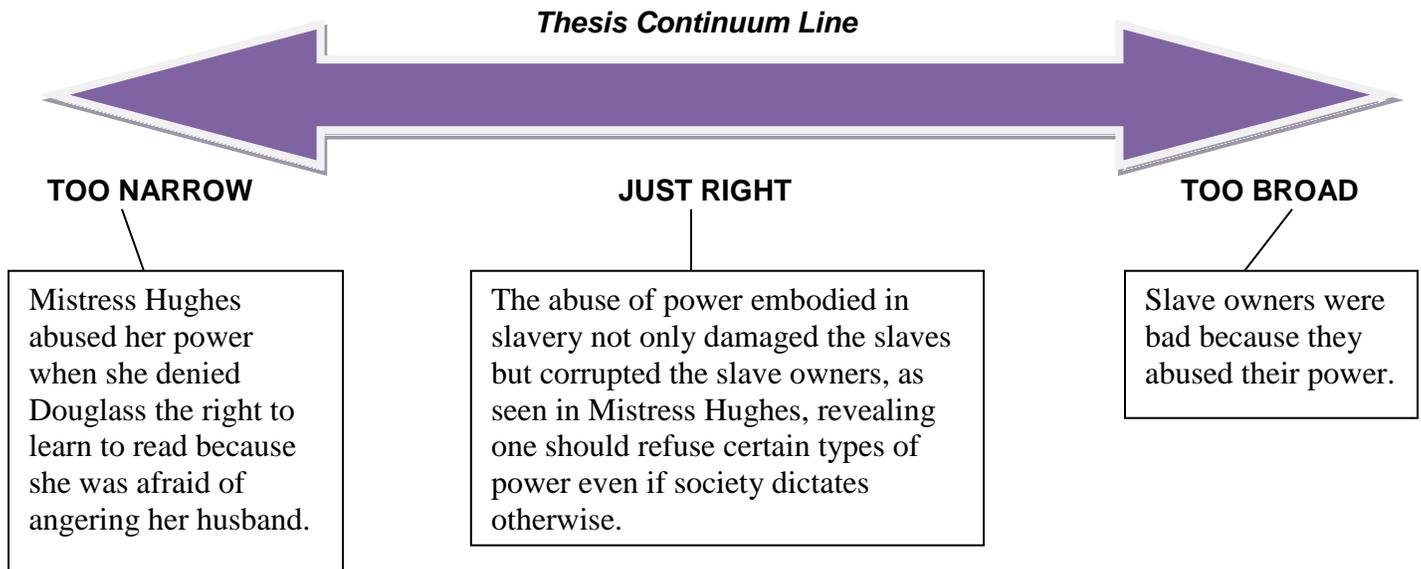
Before creating a thesis, you want to focus on narrowing down your topic. Typical undergraduate academic papers range from 2 to 20 pages. You generally won't be writing book length papers (150 pages plus), so you don't want to begin with topics that would require the length of a book to investigate and prove like "the worldwide drug trade" or "racism in America." You want to use focus strategies to help you narrow down to a manageable topic you can effectively and concretely prove in a shorter paper. You can use these strategies individually or combined.

Focus Strategy	Narrowing the topic	<div style="text-align: center; border: 1px solid black; border-radius: 15px; padding: 5px; background-color: #e0e0e0;">PRACTICE</div> <p>Narrow down the "too broad" topic using each focus strategy:</p>
Time 	<p>Too broad: "In the past..."; "Since the dawn of time..."; "In the beginning of society..."</p> <p>In the early 14th century? In the late 1960s? Summer of 1985? Since 1990? This year? 10 years from now?</p>	<p>Topic that is too broad: The enslavement of people since Roman times</p> <p>Narrow the topic (by time):</p>
Place 	<p>Too broad: "In the world today..."; "In the United States, all citizens..."; "People who live in Africa..."; "In the Middle-East, everyone..."</p> <p>Can the place be narrowed to a country? A state? A town? A neighborhood?</p>	<p>Topic that is too broad: Abuse of slaves in the United States</p> <p>Narrow the topic (by place):</p>
Population 	<p>Too broad: "All Latinos..."; "Men and women in Asia..."; "Every English-speaker..."; "All doctors..."; "Older people always..."</p> <p>Which population should be the focus and why? Can you make an accurate statement about the entire group?</p>	<p>Topic that is too broad: Slaves who were discontent</p> <p>Narrow the topic (by population):</p>
Viewpoint 	<p>Too broad: "The Holocaust was bad."; "Men are violent."; "We need to get rid of poverty"; "Racism hurts people."; "People shouldn't do things that are bad for them."</p> <p>Can you break your topic down into smaller parts? What aspect of your topic is most interesting to you? What particular aspect of your topic is the most important or has the largest impact? Who exactly is affected?</p>	<p>Topic that is too broad: Slavery was harmful.</p> <p>Narrow the topic (by viewpoint):</p>

PRACTICE

EVALUATING A THESIS USING A CONTINUUM LINE

Applying the advice on narrowing a topic in regard to time, place, population and viewpoint, you can evaluate thesis statements using a continuum line. Some will be too narrow, some too broad, but your goal as a writer is to create a thesis that is just right.



Evaluate the following thesis statements and decide where they fall on the continuum line. Explain your reasoning.

- (1) Even though most people believe school has influenced them or taught them the most, it was my father, not school, that taught me the value of reading and writing.
- (2) Literacy is the key to success, and you must be literate to be successful in today's world.
- (3) The only way to achieve literacy is by learning the five paragraph essay.
- (4) The North and South fought the Civil War for many reasons, some were the same and some different.
- (5) While both sides fought the Civil War over the issue of slavery, the North fought for moral reasons while the South fought to preserve its own institutions.
- (6) The main argument of the Civil War was whether individual states had a right to self-govern independent of federal law.
- (7) Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* is a great American novel.
- (8) Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* suggests that to find the true expression of American democratic ideals, one must leave "civilized" society in order to find one's basic humanity.
- (9) Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* shows that Huck grew when he realized people missed him when he was presumed dead.

HOW CAN I WRITE A TEXT-BASED THESIS?

When writing about a text, it can be challenging to separate your opinion from the author's when forming a thesis. Oftentimes, students will create an arguable thesis statement, but it will be the author's thesis. Or sometimes, the thesis will summarize what happened more than argue a clear point. Your reader knows what the author thinks because s/he will have read what the author wrote, but your reader doesn't know what YOU think which should be the focus of the paper. Lead papers with your own, original argument—arguing your point on the text is the purpose of the essay.

When writing about a text, DON'T:

- (1) Give the author's thesis as your own.
- (2) Summarize what happened instead of giving an argument.
- (3) Give general advice that doesn't directly address the text and is too large to prove in an essay.

When writing about a text, DO:

- (1) Give your own original take and opinion on the text.
- (2) Only summarize parts of the text that directly prove your thesis.
- (3) Provide a specific, text-based argument that can be fully proven in the assigned page length of the essay.

How do I write an original, arguable thesis about a text?

- (1) Figure out the central argument or moral of the story and give your opinion on it. Ask yourself "so what?" So what is the significance or importance of this? So what are the outcomes or repercussions? So what has been overlooked? So what are some different opinions? So why should someone care?
- (2) Narrow the topic down. Oftentimes, when responding to an author's text, it is a long piece—much longer than the paper you are assigned to write on it. Therefore, don't take on the entire text. Break down its elements and respond to a motif, a character, a symbol, a chapter, a smaller issue that was raised.

PRACTICE

For the following text-based thesis statements, tell which of the following descriptions best fit each one?

Revise it: It gives the AUTHOR'S THESIS instead of the writer's own argument

Revise it: It SUMMARIZES what happened instead of giving an argument

Revise it: It gives GENERAL ADVICE that doesn't directly address the text and is too large to prove in an essay.

FINE AS IS: Thesis is arguable, text-based and should lead to a good analysis of the reading

- (1) In *Generation Me*, Jean Twenge shows how those born in the 70s, 80s and 90s were raised with too much self-esteem and she argues that this leads to apathy, depression, loneliness and higher suicide rates.
- (2) Life is short so follow you our own path and make the best of what you have.
- (3) In Sarah Katin's "Naked," the narrator's experience in a Korean bathhouse reveals that American notions of nudity are unhealthy because how American women are taught to view their own bodies produces feelings of shame, discomfort in their own skins, and it distances women from each other.
- (4) Margot Schilpp provides us with a declaration of her thoughts, feelings and views of the world and what she thinks about love.
- (5) On the surface, in Layne Mosler's "Cab Fare," an American food reviewer seeks the recommendations of local cab drivers to find the best, non-touristy restaurants in Buenos Aires, but here food becomes symbolic for the fundamental nourishment people seek and their desire to reestablish control in the face of instability and uncertainty.
- (6) Eric Schlosser in his book *Fast Food Nation* describes how the fast food industry has been subsidized by the government, and how this has enabled the general public to be overly exposed to unhealthy food.
- (7) Jim Rogers reports in his book that the music industry has tried to hold three parties responsible for copyright infringement, but when looked at closely, the websites that facilitate file-sharing should be the ones most heavily prosecuted because if we concentrate our efforts to fine them, we can kill the problem at the root.
- (8) Maria Mazziotti Gillan shows that when she became an adult, she started to appreciate the things she previously felt shame for.
- (9) Obstacles may seem impossible to overcome but are surmountable because anything is possible when you work hard.
- (10) The characters in Kelly Hayes-Raitt's "Tongue-Tied," the older reporter and the young impoverished Iraqi girl, symbolize the parent-child mentality the United States has towards developing countries and this attitude that shapes our foreign policies is damaging to us and other nations, as seen in our failures in Iraq.
- (11) Emmanuel experiences trials and tribulations and in the end, he did not get recognized for his accomplishments and he remained troubled due to dealing with Post Traumatic Stress Syndrome.

HOW CAN I CREATE A THESIS?

TOPIC + OPINION + SO WHAT? = THESIS

Step 1: Brainstorm Topics

Here are some questions that could help you:

- What in the text inspired, confused, angered, excited, annoyed, and/or surprised you?
- What in the text was important for you to understand or you feel others should be aware of?
- What does the prompt/assignment ask you to focus on and explore?

Brainstorm the issues, ideas, and themes raised in the reading (create at least 15 for a range of options):

Step 2: Select a topic

Choose one of the topics that most interest you and you want to explore further:

Step 3: Create complex questions about your topic

Create complex questions to be answered with opinion, not facts or yes/no answers.

Here are some question formats that could help you: How is (topic) connected to (outside issue)? How do the flaws in the author's arguments on (topic) result in (outcome)? What angles on (topic) have been overlooked? How can we apply the information about (topic)? How did/will (effect) occur because/if (cause) happened or will happen? How can (problem) be addressed or changed for (topic)?

Step 4: Answer your best question with your opinion.

This creates a rough thesis statement.

Step 5: Ask yourself “so what?” So what is the impact, importance, outcomes, or larger implications?

This strengthens and deepens your thesis statement.

Step 6: Using your answer with its significance, write a 1-2 sentence thesis statement.

This refines and focuses your thesis statement.

Step 7: Test the thesis by seeing if you can gather good evidence to support it.

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

List potential outside evidence, such as research, outside sources, real-life examples, personal knowledge, personal examples that could possibly further prove and/or illustrate your argument:

If you cannot find strong or sufficient evidence, then rethink your thesis statement.

EXAMPLE

HOW CAN I CREATE A THESIS?

TOPIC + OPINION + SO WHAT? = THESIS

Step 1: Brainstorm Topics

Here are some questions that could help you:

- What in the text inspired, confused, angered, excited, annoyed, and/or surprised you?
- What in the text was important for you to understand or you feel others should be aware of?
- What does the prompt/assignment ask you to focus on and explore?

Brainstorm the issues, ideas, and themes raised in the reading (create at least 15 for a range of options):

forbidden to read and write
humans treated as beasts
depravity of slave owners
abuse of power
slavery turning good people bad
reading and writing as dangerous
education and slavery incompatible
fear of rebellion
dehumanization
used white boys as teachers

impressive determination
bread for knowledge--both feeding
Christian country?
rights to freedom
emancipation—liberation
slavery as indefensible
reading a curse or blessing?
wretched condition--no remedy
ignorance is bliss?
building consciousness

Step 2: Select a topic

Choose one of the topics that most interest you and you want to explore further:

Reading and writing as dangerous

Step 3: Create complex questions about your topic

Create complex questions to be answered with opinion, not facts or yes/no answers.

Here are some question formats that could help you: How is (topic) connected to (outside issue)? How do the flaws in the author's arguments on (topic) result in (outcome)? What angles on (topic) have been overlooked? How can we apply the information about (topic)? How did/will (effect) occur because/if (cause) happened or will happen? How can (problem) be addressed or changed for (topic)?

How is control of human beings connected to writing and reading?

Why were the slaveholders so fearful of slaves learning to read and write?

When has reading lead to violence and uprising?

What about becoming educated leads to Douglass's despair?

Step 4: Answer your best question with your opinion.

This creates a rough thesis statement.

How is control of human beings connected to writing and reading?

Slaves were controlled by not being able to read and write because they could not learn by reading the arguments and experiences of others and from history what is fair, just and reasonable and what is not.

Step 5: Ask yourself “so what?” So what is the impact, importance, outcomes, or larger implications?

This strengthens and deepens your thesis statement.

So what? We should be concerned because in certain parts of the world today, what the public can read and write is controlled and as a result the rights of the people are violated and they are powerless or ignorant of this.

Step 6: Using your answer with its significance, write a 1-2 sentence thesis statement.

This refines and focuses your thesis statement.

The control and limitations over reading and writing during slavery sought to make slaves like Douglass ignorant, powerless, and more easily controlled, and this control over literacy and education is still happening in the world today.

Example continued on next page...

Step 7: Test the thesis by seeing if you can gather good evidence to support it.

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

- Douglass discovers that “...education and slavery were incompatible with each other.” (1)
- On page 2 it describes how Douglass read in “The Columbian Orator” how a slave used logic and persuasive argument so well that his master freed him (shows education can lead to change).
- Reading and education makes one intolerant of injustice: “The more I read, the more I was led to abhor and detest my enslavers” (2).
- Douglass says: “...that very discontentment which Master Hugh had predicted would follow my learning to read had already come, to torment and sting my soul to unutterable anguish. As I writhed under it, I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing. It had given me a view of my wretched condition, without the remedy. It opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out. In moments of agony, I envied my fellow-slaves for their stupidity” (2) (But Douglass did not give up and later was instrumental in abolishing slavery)

List potential outside evidence, such as research, outside sources, real-life examples, personal knowledge, personal examples that could possibly further prove and/or illustrate your argument:

- Mukhtar Mai in her memoir *In the Name of Honor*, tells how as a woman in Pakistan, she was not allowed to learn to read and write. As a result, when she was publically gang raped in 2002 by members of a more powerful clan, she went to the police and they wrote down an incorrect statement of the account so after years of going through the court system, the men were acquitted. Since then she has learned to read and write, she has started schools to educate girls, and remains today an outspoken advocate for women’s rights.
- In Alex S. Jones’s *Losing the News: The Future of the News that Feeds Democracy* he argues that in the United States we are losing funding and support for investigative journalism so Americans are getting sound bites of news and no real understanding of what is going on politically or financially so we don’t protest and don’t understand the sources for the larger societal problems like the recent financial collapse.
- Jonathan Kozol in *Savage Inequalities*, looks at different cities and sees how many of the urban poor, most of whom are black and Latino, are not given an equal education because school funding is based on income and property tax. As a result, there is an enormous dropout rate and many of these kids can barely read and write.

HOW CAN I REVISE AND STRENGTHEN A THESIS?

PRACTICE

CHANGING INEFFECTIVE THESIS STATEMENTS TO EFFECTIVE ONES:

1. A strong thesis statement takes a stand: your thesis needs to show your conclusions about a subject.

WEAK THESIS: Douglass makes the interesting point that there are some negative and positive aspects to reading.

This is a weak thesis statement. It fails to take a stand and the words *interesting* and *negative and positive aspects* are vague.

STRONGER THESIS:

2. A strong thesis statement justifies discussion: your thesis should indicate the point of the discussion.

WEAK THESIS: Christians practiced slavery in the United States.

This is a weak thesis statement because it merely states a fact, so your reader won't be able to tell the point of the statement.

STRONGER THESIS:

3. A strong thesis statement expresses one main idea: Readers need to be able to see that your paper has one main point. If your thesis statement expresses more than one idea, then you might confuse your readers about the subject of your paper.

WEAK THESIS: People should not follow unjust laws and showing strong determination is what helped Douglass to be successful.

This is a weak thesis statement because the reader can't decide whether the paper is about unjust laws or strong determination. To revise the thesis, the relationship between the two ideas needs to become clearer.

STRONGER THESIS:

4. A strong thesis statement is specific: A thesis statement should show exactly what your paper will be about and the argument should be narrow enough to be concretely proven.

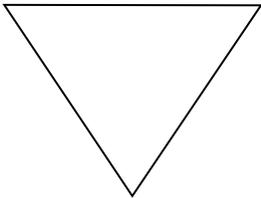
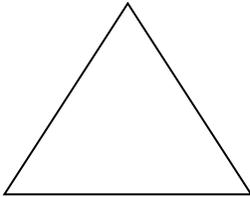
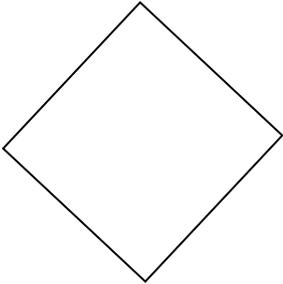
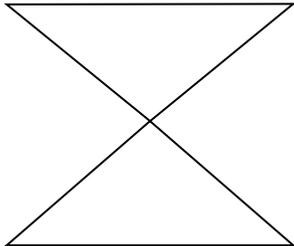
WEAK THESIS: Slavery in the United States damaged many lives.

This is a weak thesis statement for two reasons. First, *slavery* can't be discussed thoroughly in a short essay. Second, *damaged* is vague and *many lives* is very general. You should be able to identify specific causes and effects.

STRONGER THESIS:

HOW DO I KNOW WHERE TO PUT A THESIS?

Research shows that you comprehend better when the thesis is directly stated, particularly when it is stated at the beginning of an essay. Such an initial thesis statement offers a signpost briefing you on what to expect and overviews the author's message. Unfortunately, writers do not always follow this pattern. In a research study using psychology texts, the main idea was clearly stated in only 58 percent of the sampled paragraphs. Thus, you should be skilled in identifying stated and implied thesis statements.

<p>An introductory statement of the thesis is given at the beginning of the paragraph:</p> <p>Thesis Context Context Context Context</p> 	<p>A concluding statement of the thesis appears at the end of the paragraph:</p> <p>Context Context Context Context Thesis</p> 
<p>Details are placed at the beginning and end to arouse interest, with a statement of the thesis in the middle of the paragraph:</p> <p>Context Context Thesis Context Context</p> 	<p>Both the introductory and concluding sentences state the thesis:</p> <p>Thesis Context Context Context Context Thesis</p> 

For Implied Thesis Statements:

Details combine to make a point but the thesis is not directly stated:

1. Context
2. Context
3. Context
4. Context



PRACTICE

LOCATING THESIS STATEMENTS:

Don't meddle with old unloaded firearms, they are the most deadly and unerring things ever created. You don't have to take any pains with them at all; you don't have to have a rest, you don't have to have any sights on the gun, you don't have to take aim even. No, you just pick out a relative and bang away, and you are sure to get him. A youth who can't hit a cathedral at thirty yards with a Gatling gun in three-quarters of an hour, can take up an old empty musket and bag his grandmother every time at a hundred.

---Mark Twain, "Advice to Youth"

In *The Oracles: My Filipino Grandparents in America*, Pati Poblete gives her account as a young girl growing up in America being raised by her culturally foreign grandparents, and the results reverberate with her well into her adult years. Her parents, on the other hand, play a deafeningly silent role throughout the upbringing of Pati. The failure of Pati's parents to provide her with guidance, attention and to control her exposure to popular media at a young age prevented her from having a healthy relationship with her grandparents and a healthy identity. Ron Taffel, a child-rearing expert, advised: "Even as kids reach adolescence, they need more than ever for us to watch over them. Adolescence is not about letting go. It's about hanging on during a very bumpy ride." Pati unfortunately didn't have this support so seemed to hit every bump.

---Student paper on Pati Poblete's *The Oracles: My Filipino Grandparents in America*

In the 1940s, George Orwell warned "Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past" (Orwell 30). In the 1990s a band called Rage Against the Machine, the name itself referring to a people's movement to fight against control (corporation, government or otherwise) used this mantra in their song "Testify," a warning to not silently endure oppression. This warning is not only relevant to the 20th century, but has been applicable since human beings started forming structures of power to control and oppress one another. This can vividly be seen during the times of slavery in the United States when blacks were enslaved for two and a half centuries. In Frederick Douglass's novel *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*, Douglass reveals how this long and brutal control of human beings was partly accomplished through control over literacy. The control and limitations over reading and writing during slavery sought to make slaves like Douglass ignorant, powerless, and therefore more easily controlled, and this control over literacy and education is still happening in the world today.

--Sample essay on Frederick Douglass's [*Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*](#)

A TV set stood close to a wall in the small living room crowded with an assortment of chairs and tables. An aquarium crowded the mantelpiece of a fake fireplace. A lighted bulb inside the tank showed many colored fish swimming about in a haze of fish food. Some of it lay scattered on the edge of the shelf. The carpet underneath was a sodden black. Old magazines and tabloids lay just about everywhere.

---Bienvenidos Santos, "Immigration Blues"

ANSWERS

TOPIC + OPINION = THESIS

Put a box around the **TOPIC** and underline the **OPINION** words below:

- 1) The subject of unwarranted fears, most **bats** are harmless and highly beneficial.
- 2) **Vigorous exercise** is a good way to reduce the effects of stress on the body.
- 3) **Buffalo and Toronto** differ in four major ways.
- 4) **Developing color film** is more complicated than developing black and white.
- 5) In this essay I will discuss **abortion** (no opinion words—not a thesis)
- 6) **Television** is destroying the unity of the modern family.
- 7) In her essay, Erlich shows that there is a balance of community and isolation in **her hometown**

TOPIC + OPINION + SO WHAT? = COMPLEX THESIS

THESIS STATEMENTS ON NON-FICTION TEXTS:

- (1) **Topic:** greater implementation of alternative energy sources
Opinion: problems with alternative energy are not satisfactorily solved
So What? wider implementation of alternative energy could worsen current problems of space, waste and cost
- (2) **Topic:** catastrophic climate change
Opinion: catastrophic climate change is inevitable
So What? need to refocus efforts from reducing carbon emissions to adaptation and survival
- (3) **Topic:** only whites leading environment movement
Opinion: non-whites most impacted but no voice
So What? no change
- (4) **Topic:** music conveying black oppression
Opinion: today hip-hop conveys on-going black oppression
So What? importantly exposes rise in police brutality targeting black men
- (5) **Topic:** education to combat terrorism in Pakistan
Opinion: more education leads to people self-advocating and not being tricked by propaganda
So What? Pakistan can rid itself of Taliban

- (6) **Topic:** education to combat terrorism in Pakistan
Opinion: foreign countries are actively trying to destabilize Pakistan and are funding extremists
So What? education will make more effective terrorists
- (7) **Topic:** military culture of toxic masculinity
Opinion: toxic masculinity is systemic in all branches of military
So What? leads to sexual harassment, rape and suicide
- (8) **Topic:** freedom of speech of soldiers suspended
Opinion: silence allows the rich and powerful to use soldiers as they like
So What? allows war for profit to continue

THESIS STATEMENTS ON FICTION TEXTS:

- (1) **Topic:** American values of freedom versus slavery
Opinion: American values of freedom contradict slavery
So What? coming to terms with this hypocrisy hastens the end of slavery
- (2) **Topic:** treatment of African-Americans during slavery versus now
Opinion: the ways blacks suffered during slavery can still be seen today
So What? African-Americans are still not truly free
- (3) **Topic:** Sykes' abuse of Delia
Opinion: abuse results from need to assert masculinity
So What? need to assert masculinity results from failure to be provider and protector.
 Implied: racism has emasculated, disempowered and embittered Sykes
- (4) **Topic:** empathy for Delia
Opinion: Hurston makes her reader feel empathy for Delia
So What? empathy will lead to understanding the oppression resulting from race, gender, and class
- (5) **Topic:** Palestinian revolt against the British
Opinion: women are essential to revolution and real change
So What? Palestinian revolt failed due to not empowering their own women
- (6) **Topic:** Palestinian revolt against the British
Opinion: emotional connection is made through divided family
So What? divided family a metaphor for Palestine then and after
- (7) **Topic:** Nafisi's use of *Lolita*
Opinion: *Lolita* helped the women to reject being passive victims
So What? inspires silent resistance to government
- (8) **Topic:** Nafisi's use of *The Great Gatsby*
Opinion: Nafisi uses *The Great Gatsby* to comment on the Islamic Republic
So What? shows reconstructing and living in past dooms the future

NARROWING DOWN A TOPIC:

ANSWERS

Narrow down the “too broad” topic using each focus strategy:

TIME:

Topic that is too broad: The enslavement of people since Roman times.

Narrow the topic (by time): Slavery during the era of Frederick Douglass during the early 1800s

PLACE:

Topic that is too broad: Abuse of slaves in the United States.

Narrow the topic (by place): The abuse of house slaves in Maryland, where Douglass lived.

POPULATION:

Topic that is too broad: Slaves who were discontent

Narrow the topic (by population): Slaves, like Douglass, who rebelled against unjust laws.

VIEWPOINT:

Topic that is too broad: Slavery was harmful.

Narrow the topic (by viewpoint): Slavery demoralized human beings and destroyed families.

EVALUATING A THESIS USING A CONTINUUM LINE:

- (1) Even though most people believe school has influenced them or taught them the most, it was my father, not school, that taught me the value of reading and writing. **JUST RIGHT**
- (2) Literacy is the key to success, and you must be literate to be successful in today's world. **TOO BROAD**
- (3) The only way to achieve literacy is by learning the five-paragraph essay. **TOO NARROW**
- (4) The North and South fought the Civil War for many reasons, some were the same and some different. **TOO BROAD**
- (5) While both sides fought the Civil War over the issue of slavery, the North fought for moral reasons while the South fought to preserve its own institutions. **JUST RIGHT**
- (6) The main argument of the Civil War was whether individual states had a right to self-govern independent of federal law. **TOO NARROW**
- (7) Mark Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* is a great American novel. **TOO BROAD**
- (8) Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* suggests that to find the true expression of American democratic ideals, one must leave "civilized" society in order to find one's basic humanity. **JUST RIGHT**
- (9) Twain's *Huckleberry Finn* shows that Huck grew when he realized people missed him when he was presumed dead. **TOO NARROW**

EVALUATING TEXT-BASED THESIS STATEMENTS:

- (1) In *Generation Me*, Jean Twenge shows how those born in the 70s, 80s and 90s were raised with too much self-esteem and she argues that this leads to apathy, depression, loneliness and higher suicide rates. **AUTHOR'S THESIS**
- (2) Life is short so follow your own path and make the best of what you have. **GENERAL ADVICE**
- (3) In Sarah Katin's "Naked," the narrator's experience in a Korean bathhouse reveals that American notions of nudity are unhealthy because how American women are taught to view their own bodies produces feelings of shame, discomfort in their own skins, and it distances women from each other. **FINE AS IS**
- (4) Margot Schilpp provides us with a declaration of her thoughts, feelings and views of the world and what she thinks about love. **SUMMARIZES**
- (5) On the surface, in Layne Mosler's "Cab Fare," an American food reviewer seeks the recommendations of local cab drivers to find the best, non-touristy restaurants in Buenos Aires, but here food becomes symbolic for the fundamental nourishment people seek and their desire to reestablish control in the face of instability and uncertainty. **FINE AS IS**
- (6) Eric Schlosser in his book *Fast Food Nation* describes how the fast food industry has been subsidized by the government, and how this has enabled the general public to be overly exposed to unhealthy food. **AUTHOR'S THESIS**
- (7) Jim Rogers reports in his book that the music industry has tried to hold three parties responsible for copyright infringement, but when looked at more closely, the websites that facilitate file-sharing should be the ones most heavily prosecuted because if we concentrate our efforts to fine them, we can kill the problem at the root. **FINE AS IS**
- (8) Maria Mazziotti Gillan shows that when she became an adult, she started to appreciate the things she previously felt shame for. **SUMMARIZES**
- (9) Obstacles may seem impossible to overcome but are surmountable because anything is possible when you work hard. **GENERAL ADVICE**
- (10) The characters in Kelly Hayes-Raitt's "Tongue-Tied," the older reporter and the young impoverished Iraqi girl, symbolize the parent-child mentality the United States has towards developing countries and this attitude that shapes our foreign policies is damaging to us and other nations, as seen in our failures in Iraq. **FINE AS IS**
- (11) Emmanuel experiences trials and tribulations and in the end, he did not get recognized for his accomplishments and he remained troubled due to dealing with PTSD. **SUMMARIZES**



CHANGING INEFFECTIVE THESIS STATEMENTS TO EFFECTIVE ONES:

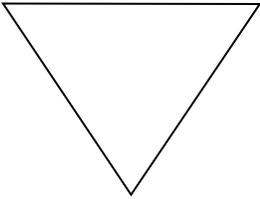
Possible answers to strengthen the thesis statements for exercises 1-4:

<p>1. WEAK THESIS: Douglass makes the interesting point that there are some negative and positive aspects to reading.</p> <p>STRONGER THESIS: Douglass shows how becoming educated makes it intolerable to live in slavery revealing how lack of education can lead to submissiveness.</p> <p>This is a strong thesis because it takes a stand, and because it's specific.</p>	<p>3. WEAK THESIS: People should not follow unjust laws and showing strong determination is what helped Douglass to be successful.</p> <p>STRONGER THESIS: Through Douglass's own story of strong determination and perseverance, he leaves no room for doubt that one should break the law if it is unjust.</p> <p>This is a strong thesis because it shows that the two ideas are related. Hint: a great many clear and engaging thesis statements contain words like <i>because, since, so, although, through, unless, however.</i></p>
<p>2. WEAK THESIS: Christians practiced slavery in the United States.</p> <p>STRONGER THESIS: Christians who practiced slavery or who continue to support any law that denies others equal rights, violate the basic tenets of the Bible and its teachings of humanity and kindness.</p> <p>This is a strong thesis because it is controversial. This is a good strategy for creating a strong thesis. Readers will be interested in reading the rest of the essay to see how you support your point.</p>	<p>4. WEAK THESIS: Slavery in the United States damaged many lives.</p> <p>STRONGER THESIS: Douglass's narrative reveals how slavery in the U.S. not only damaged the psyche of the slaves but destroyed the humanity of the slave owners.</p> <p>This is a strong thesis statement because it narrows the subject to make it more specific and manageable, and it also names who was affected rather than the vague "damaged <i>many</i> lives."</p>

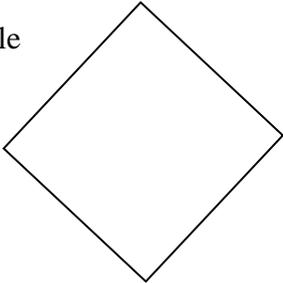
LOCATING THESIS STATEMENTS:

ANSWERS

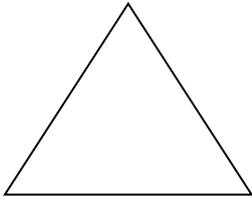
Mark Twain, “Advice to Youth”

<p>Begins with thesis</p> 	<p>Thesis: Don’t meddle with old unloaded firearms, they are the most deadly and unerring things ever created.</p>
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Student paper on Pati Poblete’s *The Oracles: My Filipino Grandparents in America*

<p>Thesis in the middle</p> 	<p>Thesis: The failure of Pati’s parents to provide her with guidance, attention and to control her exposure to popular media at a young age prevented her from having a healthy relationship with her grandparents and a healthy identity.</p>
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Sample essay on Frederick Douglass’s *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass, an American Slave*

<p>Ends with thesis</p> 	<p>Thesis: The control and limitations over reading and writing during slavery sought to make slaves like Douglass ignorant, powerless, and therefore more easily controlled, and this control over literacy and education is still happening in the world today.</p>
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Bienvenidos Santos, “Immigration Blues”

<p>Thesis implied</p> 	<p>The thesis is implied and not stated. The reader must put together the clues from the title, author’s name and description of the immigrants’ accommodations to figure out the author’s opinion as he appears to have sympathy for the immigrants who suffer poverty, long hours of work, and limited education.</p>
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What, Why, and How?

8

INTRODUCTIONS & CONCLUSIONS:

Introductions:

- What, Why and How
- Examples & Practice

Conclusions:

- What, Why and How
- Examples & Practice

WHAT IS AN INTRODUCTION?

An introduction is the opening paragraph(s) of an expository essay, which introduces the reader to the main topic or thesis, sets the tone, and provides background and/or context about the subject matter. Introductions are usually short (1 paragraph for shorter papers), but can be multiple paragraphs long if they are kept in proportion with the rest of the essay.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Authors use different introductions for different kinds of essays. However, there are some common reasons as to why introductions are important in an essay.

In general, introductions:

- Allow the reader to preview the content of the essay.
- Give necessary or helpful background and context on the subject matter.
- Introduce the primary text(s) being analyzed.
- Provide space to introduce major concepts that will be covered in the body of the essay.
- Establish the tone or mood of the essay (e.g. serious, informative, humorous, formal/informal, etc).
- Attract the reader's attention and make the reader want to keep reading.

HOW DO I CREATE ONE?

1. Before you begin:

Gather your notes and create an outline and a thesis. This will give you a sense of your paper and its audience. Decide on what material is needed in the introduction in order to make the rest of your essay clear.

2. Know what to avoid in an introduction:

- Avoid broad, general, or sweeping statements (“Since the beginning of time,” “In today’s world,” “There are many positive and negative sides to the argument”).
- Avoid the mechanical or making an announcement (“In this essay I’m going to discuss,” “My essay will be about”).
- Avoid overused lead-ins like dictionary definitions (“According to *American Heritage*,” “*Webster’s* dictionary defines ‘oppression’ as...”).
- Avoid being too specific. Save the specific details and examples for your body paragraphs.

3. Decide on an effective opening approach.

There are many ways to lead into an essay. Choose an approach that will fit your writing task, draw in your reader’s interest, and create a clear context for your argument. Here are some examples of different approaches you can use in writing an introduction but don’t feel limited to this list as there are many creative approaches you can use:

- Provide a brief anecdote (a short amusing or interesting real life story) or interesting example that is relevant to the topic.
- Incorporate a thought-provoking quote from the primary text or another outside source.
- Use a striking fact or statistic.
- Pose a relevant question that will get your reader thinking.
- State a problem that will be analyzed or solved.
- Connect your topic to a familiar experience the reader is likely to have had or a cultural reference they are likely to have shared.
- State a misconception and then correct it.
- Provide background information and/or history on the topic.

EXAMPLE

Using variations on the topic of literacy, here are some example introductions using some of the approaches listed:

- Start your paper with an interesting example. Here is an example:

In the past, those who could not read and write signed documents with an “X” in place of their name. However, because they could not read, they sometimes were cheated of their property and sometimes, signed away their lives. In our history, slaves were sold as property, not knowing how to read the deeds of their own sale. Former slave Fredrick Douglass wrote in his essay “Learning to Read” of how he became literate even though it was against the law to do so. **Douglass shows how literacy is vital in the fight against oppression and ensures that all people can have a voice in creating a just society.**

- Start your paper with a misconception and correct it. Here is an example:

Some students in high school often feel that learning to read and write well is a waste of time. They often feel that they have enough reading and writing skills to obtain and hold a job without further study. After all, some students reason, many jobs do not involve extensive reading and writing, especially jobs which focus on manual labor. However, many who get into the workforce end up finding out that basic literacy is not enough. At a certain point, the job may require looking at complex documents such as contracts which can be crucial to the outcome of the company. Those who cannot fulfill the needs of today’s jobs often find themselves under-employed or in low-wage jobs which keeps them below the poverty line. **Literacy is important in getting the tools we need to improve our prospects and to be able to contribute to the larger world.**

- Start your paper with an important quote from an expert. Here is an example:

Literary critic Lawrence Clark Powell once said, “Write to be understood, speak to be heard, read to grow.” What Clark shows is the multi-purposes of literacy. We tend to think of reading and writing as a skill, not a lifestyle. This attitude needs to change. Reading and writing needs to be as much a part of our lives as breathing. **Literacy plays an important part in knowing what is going on in the world around us. If we can read and write well, then we grow and learn who we are.**

- **Start your paper with a surprising fact or statistic. Here is an example:**

According to statistics put out by the Department of Corrections, nearly two thirds of California's inmates read below a ninth grade level. More than half read at a seventh grade level and a whopping 21 percent can't read a third grade textbook (Sterngold). In other words, most of our prisoners are illiterate. Those who are illiterate often feel trapped in their lives with few options. Many of these people get taken advantage of. Many cannot speak on their own behalf, especially when authority figures have command of the written word. The way to change this imbalance of power is to become literate. **In other words, literacy helps people to become autonomous and redirect their lives toward a more secure future.**

From: James Sterngold, "Illiteracy Reinforces Prisoners' Captivity," San Francisco Chronicle. 27 Dec. 2006. Web. 1 Sept. 2013.

- **Start your paper with a rhetorical question. The answer to your question leads to your thesis. Here is an example:**

With all the advanced ways to communicate through high tech, is the written word dead? This is what many media experts are asking. After all, emails are usually casual, content is readily available online, and most people have turned into visual thinkers anyway. But good reading and writing skills today are needed more than ever. On the World Wide Web, people are gaining access to more and more sophisticated documents. In fact, more communication is done through reading and writing, than through face-to-face interaction. **Literacy is important to be able communicate with the outside world. With good reading and writing skills, everyone has the capacity to understand the issues that influence their lives.**

- **Start your paper with an anecdote which is like a very short story. Here is an example:**

My brother did not go to college. He barely got out of high school. Currently, he owns and runs an automotive parts store. However, he has come to realize that many patrons come into the store not to buy parts, but to compare his prices to deals they find on the internet. As a result, my brother resolved to create a website, but he had trouble reading and applying the written instructions on building websites and creating content. His friends vowed to help them, but they too had such low writing skills that they couldn't help him either. My brother's business has survived through word-of-mouth, but other competitors who are more literate and more web savvy are able to reach a wider range of potential customers and achieve greater success. **Literacy determines career success in a wide range of fields and to not be literate is today's fast-paced technological world often means that you will be left behind.**

PRACTICE

These introductions are taken from student essays analyzing the same book *Enrique's Journey* by Sonia Nazario. Analyze and describe the different approaches each one used:

CREATIVE APPROACHES FOR INTRODUCTIONS:

- Provide a brief anecdote or interesting example
- Incorporate a thought provoking quote
- Use a striking fact or statistic
- Pose a relevant question that will get your reader thinking
- State a problem that will be analyzed or solved
- Connect topic to a familiar experience/cultural reference
- State a misconception and then correct it
- Provide background information and/or history on the topic

(1) The Destructive Impact on Children “Left-Behind”

Imagine children growing-up with their mother and father for the first few years of their life, seeing them daily and forming habits with both parents, when suddenly, one or both parents leave. Although this occurs all over the world, this is starting to become much more of a problem for children in Central America where their parents are leaving their homeland and families to come to the United States. They are leaving for the opportunity to provide a better quality of life for their children by sending money that will allow them to have food, clothing, and will pay for school related expenses. Often, the children that are left behind are not able to fully cope with this loss because of their feelings of abandonment, as was represented in *Enrique's Journey*, by Sonia Nazario. The child's relationship with the parent who has left is damaged and becomes more difficult to repair the longer they are separated from each other. Parents who migrate to the United States have the intent of providing a higher quality of life for the children who are left-behind. However, the benefits aren't worth the potentially devastating outcomes that children endure due to their feelings of abandonment.

(2) There's Always Another Choice

Throughout my childhood, my father had to leave my mother, my two sisters and me for weeks and often months at a time as a large part of his job involved travel. When he came home, we were often shy with him, like he was a stranger visiting and before we could bond with him, he was gone again. As a result, I don't think we ever formed a strong emotional attachment to him and to this day, he still feels somewhat like a stranger. I know he worked to support us but I can't let go of the resentment over the lost years. When I read Sonia Nazario's *Enrique's Journey*, I understood Enrique's deep resentment for his mother who left him to go to the U.S. when he was five years old to earn money for the family. Logically, I understood what drove her as they lived in extreme poverty and the future for her children was financially bleak, but emotionally, I didn't. I feel Lourdes, as a mother, could have made a better choice because when it comes to children, a parent's supportive presence should prevail over financial concerns.

CREATIVE APPROACHES FOR INTRODUCTIONS:

- Provide a brief anecdote or interesting example
- Incorporate a thought provoking quote
- Use a striking fact or statistic
- Pose a relevant question that will get your reader thinking
- State a problem that will be analyzed or solved
- Connect topic to a familiar experience/cultural reference
- State a misconception and then correct it
- Provide background information and/or history on the topic

(3) A Resolution Long Overdue

The Federation for American Immigration Reform estimates that “Illegal immigration costs U.S. taxpayers about \$113 billion a year at the federal, state and local level” (FAIR). The U.S. government spends billions of dollars deporting undocumented immigrants and billions more funding government programs to assist immigrants who are already in the U.S. Illegal immigration is hurting our borders and the economy. Sonia Nazario in her book *Enrique’s Journey* makes vivid the devastating harms of illegal immigration by telling the story of Enrique and his mother. Pushed by the poverty and the lack of opportunities in their country, year after year, millions of people like Enrique and his mother risk their lives trying to escape the impoverished life in Latin America and enter the U.S. illegally. After years of debates and reforms, clearly the U.S. policies to solve the illegal immigration issue have proved to be both costly and inefficient. However, so far the main solutions the U.S. employs are immediate deportation of undocumented immigrants and border security. The U.S. government should do more than just deporting undocumented immigrants and enforcing border security. Instead the U.S. government needs to encourage and pressure the Latin governments to provide more jobs, government assistance and help improve the quality of life in Latin America so that immigrants like Enrique and his mom are not so pressed to cross the U.S. border illegally.

(4) A Mother’s Choice, A Child’s Longing

Would you rather leave your child to improve his living condition by illegally immigrating to another country for better work or stay by your child’s side and watching him suffer from poverty and hunger? That hardly seems like a fair choice as it is a no-win situation. However, every year too many women throughout Central America are compelled to make this difficult decision, and that is where the story begins in the book *Enrique’s Journey* by Sonia Nazario. A heartbreaking and moving story of a fifteen-year-old boy, Enrique, who follows his mother, Lourdes, to America eleven tumultuous years after she leaves him behind to find opportunity there. Through Nazario’s work we experience the life of an immigrant child and mother and see up-close the strain endured by these families and the rejection that is felt by the children who are left behind. Unstable governments and economic policies in Central America must improve so that mothers won’t be forced to make the horrible choice to leave. A rich country like the U.S. must intervene, so parents can take care of their children in their own countries or else there will continue to be generations of children turning to drugs, crime, and gangs which have a devastating impact on all of us.

CREATIVE APPROACHES FOR INTRODUCTIONS:

- Provide a brief anecdote or interesting example
- Incorporate a thought provoking quote
- Use a striking fact or statistic
- Pose a relevant question that will get your reader thinking
- State a problem that will be analyzed or solved
- Connect topic to a familiar experience/cultural reference
- State a misconception and then correct it
- Provide background information and/or history on the topic

(5) Putting a Price on a Mother's Love

"The most terrible poverty is loneliness and the feeling of being unloved." -- Mother Theresa.

When the family unit is sacrificed for the sole benefit of financial stability, it can only lead to the destruction of its main motivation – the family. Driven by extreme impoverished conditions, the once tightly knit families of Central America are being divided as immigrants leave for the United States in search of better opportunities. The rising numbers of abandoned children set out on their own to find their mothers in the United States. The journey is dangerous without any promises of survival or success. But for the children they leave behind, dealing with the emotional trauma of abandonment is more difficult than the physical pain of hunger. The permanent scar it leaves on a child will never heal. Maternal abandonment leaves the children to deal with significant emotional, mental and psychological after effects (Gerlach). For every mother deciding to leave her children behind, there comes the risk of losing the love of your children. In Lourdes' case in *Enrique's Journey* by Sonia Nazario, her choice and her many years of absence cause her to lose a part of her son, Enrique, permanently.

(6) The Children of the Undocumented: A Struggle to Thrive

When you plant a seed, you must nurture it. You must provide it with the right amount of water, sunlight and a soil rich in nutrients. If any one of these elements is lacking, the plant will never grow properly. It may sprout initially, but it will become weaker until it withers and goes back into the earth. The same can be said for raising a child. To grow a well-rounded and secure human being one needs to provide food, shelter, and dedicated emotional guidance. *Enrique's Journey* by Sonia Nazario shows how the love and guidance a child needs from a parent is vital for healthy growth survival. Children are being left to grow wild, like weeds, so turn to hurtful nutrients like drugs and exist in harmful environments, like gangs. The sad truth is that Enrique's story is one of millions. As immigrants leave their families and children behind to migrate to the United States searching for economic stability, they are tearing apart the family structure for which they are making such huge sacrifices to preserve. By leaving their children behind, migrants are causing the deterioration of the Latin American culture and destroying its historically close family structure.

WHAT IS A CONCLUSION?

The conclusion is the last paragraph in the essay that brings the writer's argument to a close and makes the reader reflect on the discussion in the body of the essay. Conclusions provide effective closure for the discussion in the body paragraphs but don't simply summarize but rather look at the larger implications of the topic.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

So much is at stake in writing a conclusion. This is, after all, your last chance to persuade your readers to your point of view and to impress yourself upon them as a writer and thinker. The impression you create in your conclusion will shape the impression that stays with your readers after they've finished the essay. Your conclusion should be the best part of your paper.

The end of an essay should therefore convey a sense of completeness and closure as well as a sense of the lingering possibilities of the topic, its larger meaning, and its implications. The final paragraph should close the discussion without closing it off.

HOW DO I CREATE ONE?

1. Before you begin:

Read your entire essay and think of your larger purpose. What exactly does your reader need to think about as you close your essay? Review your thesis so that you know where the paper started. This helps you review and sometimes re-envision your thesis leaving you with a stronger more articulated argument.

2. What to avoid in a conclusion:

- Avoid beginning with "in conclusion" or "finally." Your reader should know the paragraph concludes the essay based on the content.
- Avoid directly copying your thesis to your conclusion.
- Avoid summarizing the whole paper.
- Avoid introducing new ideas. If you find yourself introducing a new idea, then evaluate the significance of the idea to see if it instead deserves a body paragraph.
- Avoid throwing the paper off balance by being excessively long or conversely ending with a conclusion that is under-developed and too brief.

3. Decide on an effective closing approach:

Authors use different types of conclusions for different kinds of essays. Below is a list of the more popular styles for conclusions but like with approaches for introductions, don't feel limited to this list as there are many creative approaches you can use:

- Reinforce the larger significance of the discussion showing your readers why the paper was important, meaningful and/or useful—answer the question “so what?”
- Propose a course of action.
- Make a prediction.
- Challenge the reader to look to the future.
- Establish a sense of closure in your essay by linking the last paragraph to the first, perhaps by reiterating a word, phrase, reference or idea you used at the beginning.
- End with a quotation from or reference to a primary or secondary source, one that amplifies your main point or puts it in a different perspective.
- Offer opinions that your reader might not have accepted earlier.
- Consider the implications or outcomes of your argument.
- Try to solve a problem you have raised.

EXAMPLE

Here are some example conclusions using some of the approaches listed:

- **Reinforce the larger significance of the discussion. Here is an example:**

Language is constantly changing. New words, influenced by our changing society, are continually enriching our vocabulary and our worldview. As a result, it is our task to keep up with the new and evolving terminology or we will be left out on a local and global level. As language unites us through newspapers, blogs, posts, emails, and texts, we must be open to new ways to connect through language and be ready to broaden the language we use. Having adaptable literacy skills is vital to remain in command of and an active participant in our ever-changing dialogue.

- **Make a prediction if the outcome is favorable or unfavorable. Here is an example:**

Great civilizations have left behind documents which are still used today in the court of law and which dictate our moral code. The oppressed have become free once they have harnessed the power of the written world. Frederick Douglass in his autobiography *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, expressed how literacy gave him the ability to see the injustice of his condition, “The more I read, the more I was led to abhor and detest my enslavers.” If we want to live in a society that seeks to uproot oppression and lives by a consistent moral code, the key is literacy. If not, if we fail to promote literacy, we will lose our voices and our abilities to oppose injustice and provide equal protection for our citizens.

- **Call to action. Here is an example:**

We must restructure our educational system and reexamine our educational values. Currently, the emphasis on standardized testing is not promoting the complex critical thinking and literacy skills needed to be successful in today’s society. Rather, our education system must be fully committed to teaching a rigorous curriculum of reading and writing skills so that our students are able to continue the push toward progress.

- **Challenging the reader to look into the future. Here is an example:**

Strong reading and writing skills are essential for human progress. A society which is literate will grow and thrive, creating a better world for our children. However, technology is causing our literacy skills to deteriorate as we passively watch and listen rather than read and write. Also, if money continues to dictate who receives quality education, a larger illiterate class will grow, and we will lose the vast potential of future generations. We need to ensure that active literacy is both encouraged and accessible to all or else we will not progress but rather devolve into a passive, ignorant, and apathetic society.

PRACTICE

Analyze these conclusions and describe the different approaches each one used:

CREATIVE APPROACHES FOR CONCLUSIONS:

- Reinforce the larger significance
- Propose a course of action
- Make a prediction
- Challenge the reader to look to the future
- Link the last paragraph to the first
- End with a quotation
- Offer opinions your reader might not have accepted earlier.
- Consider the implications or outcomes of your argument
- Try to solve a problem you have raised

(1) *The Simpsons* has a great impact on its viewers, making the show a part of America's collective consciousness. While the Simpsons themselves have both positive and negative qualities, these negative qualities—these flaws—make them more human to us, more believable as a family. The positive qualities they exhibit, although not always as prevalent, give us both hope and make us believe in the goodness of modern humankind. We watch the Simpsons because they are a reflection of ourselves with all of our quiriness and imperfections. The negativity in each show does not so much cause us to think of and feel evil or malice, but adds to the general enjoyment and provides material that leads to the discussion of a moral.

(2) So what are we to do in such a dangerous world? While our access to the Internet seems like any other natural right, it in fact carries a great deal of responsibility. And as much as we would like to extend that responsibility to everyone, we must realize that not everyone has the experience to act reasonably in such a dangerous domain. Currently we restrict the right to vote to persons over the age of 18 and the right to drink alcohol to persons over the age of 21 since we assume they are not ready to sensibly partake in these activities. We live in a time when freedom is more precious than ever. It is natural to want to extend freedoms and rights to as many people as possible, but we have to think of their safety. Just as no one has the right to put others' lives in danger—in a car on the freeway or a plane in the sky—children should not have unmonitored access to the internet if they are endangering themselves. We must help minors help themselves.

Analyze these conclusions and describe the different approaches each one used:

CREATIVE APPROACHES FOR CONCLUSIONS:

- Reinforce the larger significance
- Propose a course of action
- Make a prediction
- Challenge the reader to look to the future
- Link the last paragraph to the first
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- Offer opinions your reader might not have accepted earlier.
- Consider the implications or outcomes of your argument
- Try to solve a problem you have raised

- (3) If young children do not realize that their parents speak from firsthand experience of their own youth, how can parents convince their children of their wisdom? The answer lies in the trust that must be established in the family. Parents need to make conscious efforts to set time aside to connect with and bond with their children even when children reach the ages when they seek more independence. Parents need to share their life stories with their children, even the ones of poor decisions and regret, so children can learn from their elders and avoid similar pitfalls. Children learn from and respect honesty and will trust and relate to their parents more if they are allowed to see that they too make mistakes. If children have learned to trust their folks, they will heed them, whether or not they understand the source of their knowledge.
- (4) Challenges to homophobia and the rigidity of gender roles must go beyond the visible lesbian and gay movement. Lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals alone cannot defuse the power of stigmatization and the license it gives to frighten, wound, or kill. Literally millions of us are needed on this front, straight and gay alike. We invite any heterosexual unwilling to live with the damage that “real men” or “real women” messages wreak on them, on their children, and on lesbians, gay men, and bisexuals to join us. We ask that you not let queer jokes go unchallenged at work, at home, in the media, or anywhere. We ask that you foster in your children a genuine respect for themselves and their right to be who and what they wish to be, regardless of their gender...We ask that you invite your lesbian, gay, and bisexual friends and relatives into the routine of your lives without demanding silence or discretion from them...We ask that you stand with us in public demonstrations to demand our right to live as free people, without fear. We ask that you respect our dignity by acting to end the poison of homophobia” (Vasquez 165).

ANSWERS

Some of the approaches used in the introductions taken from the student on *Enrique's Journey* by Sonia Nazario.

(1) The Destructive Impact on Children “Left-Behind”

- * **Connect topic to familiar experience/cultural reference**
- * **Provide background information and/or history on the topic**

(2) There's Always Another Choice

- * **Provide a brief anecdote or interesting example**

(3) A Resolution Long Overdue

- * **Incorporate a thought provoking quote**
- * **Use a striking fact or statistic**
- * **State a problem that will be analyzed or solved**

(4) A Mother's Choice, A Child's Longing

- * **Pose a relevant question that will get your reader thinking**
- * **State a problem that will be analyzed or solved**

(5) Putting a Price on a Mother's Love

- * **Incorporate a thought provoking quote**
- * **Provide background information and/or history on the topic**

(6) The Children of the Undocumented: A Struggle to Thrive

This introduction didn't use any of the approaches that were listed in this chapter. Instead it used a metaphor approach comparing two unrelated things (sprouting seeds to raising children) to make a unique point. The approaches described in this chapter are potential ways to begin a paper but by no means should limit your creativity.

Conclusions:

Analyze these conclusions and describe the different approaches each one used:

- (1) Reinforce the larger significance
- (2) Propose a course of action and offer opinions your reader might not have accepted earlier
- (3) Try to solve a problem you have raised
- (4) Propose a course of action

What, Why, and How?

9

PARAGRAPHS

Definition and rationale

PIE paragraphs

Creating Paragraphs PIE Paragraphs

Peer Response for PIE Paragraphs

Topic sentences

Transitions

WHAT ARE PARAGRAPHS?

Paragraphs group related sentences around one main point, so the paragraphs can work together to prove the larger argument (the thesis) in an essay. Paragraphs provide visual breaks between ideas and signal a progression of ideas in the essay.

WHAT KINDS OF PARAGRAPHS ARE THERE?

In an essay, you'll have the following types of paragraphs:

- **Introductions** capture your reader's interest, establish a context for your topic, and smoothly lead your reader into your topic and thesis. You can read more about them in [Chapter 8: Introductions](#).
- **Body paragraphs** develop each of the main points and sub-points needed for your thesis to be credible. Body paragraphs contain topic sentences, evidence and analysis. You will read more about them in this chapter.
- **Conclusions** help you bring together the points you've made in an essay, they delve into the larger significance or impact of your argument, and they should leave your reader convinced of that central argument. You can read more about them in [Chapter 8: Conclusions](#).

PARAGRAPHS DO NOT:

- Consist of only quotes
- Consist of only facts
- Consist of only summary
- Contain a series of sentences not related to one another or to the thesis.

WHY USE PARAGRAPHS?

- **RELEVANCY:** Paragraphs help your reader to follow the logic of the essay and clearly see how each of your body paragraphs is related to your thesis.
- **FOCUS:** Paragraphs help your reader easily identify the one main idea in each paragraph and how each of the sentences within that paragraph contributes to this main idea.
- **ORGANIZATION:** Along with transitions and topic sentences, paragraph breaks help your reader understand you are moving on to a new point or aspect of your essay.
- **DEVELOPMENT:** Paragraphs require critical thinking to prove the main point of the essay by making connections with textual evidence, outside evidence, and your own analysis.
- **VOICE:** Paragraphs are a place where you get to say what you think and prove why you're right.

HOW CAN I WRITE A PARAGRAPH?

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

the PIE strategy:

P = Point	I = Information	E = Explanation
<p>The “P” part of your paragraph is your topic sentence: a clear statement of the main claim you are making in the paragraph.</p>	<p>The “I” fills out the body of your paragraph with concrete evidence that supports the main claim.</p>	<p>The “E” is the writer’s explanation of the significance of the provided information, especially as it relates to the thesis.</p>
<h3>Another way to look at it:</h3>		
<p>Tell me what your main point is.</p> 	<p>Show me, with evidence and examples, how or why your point is true.</p> 	<p>“So what?” Help me understand so what is the significance of the information.</p> 
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Choose one arguable point to prove per paragraph. • Write this point out as a sentence and this will be your topic sentence. • Your topic sentence should be more general than the rest of the paragraph but more specific than your thesis. • After you write the paragraph, look again at your topic sentence to be sure that it “fits” the paragraph. 	<p>Prove the claim in your topic sentence with evidence that can come in different forms:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Short direct quotes/paraphrases from class readings and discussions - Data from reputable sources (facts, statistics, polls) - Personal experience (real life stories, anecdotes, examples, observations) - Relevant examples from pop culture (song lyrics, movies, TV, celebrities) - Representations in mass media (newspapers, magazines, television) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interpret, analyze, explain the information, opinions or quotes you’ve included. • Examine some consequences, results, implications, ramifications of the information you just gave your audience. • Make it clear why your reader should care or be concerned. • Clarify any ambiguous ideas or information. • Comment on the credibility of the information, discussing its biases, assumptions, logic. • Relate the information explicitly to your thesis.

EXAMPLE

Sample PIE Paragraph

See the PIE paragraph structure in the first body paragraph from an essay on Malcolm X's "Learning to Read":

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

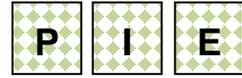
Of course, PIE paragraphs don't always need to look exactly like this; while you want to start a paragraph with your main *Point*, you might alternate between *Information* and *Explanation*, so that your paragraph could look like this:

P ⇒ I ⇒ E ⇒ I ⇒ E.

PRACTICE

Creating Paragraphs Using the PIE Paragraph Approach

Let's practice creating paragraphs using the **PIE** paragraph approach.



First, select a topic:

immigration
rap music
legalizing all drugs

the president
the health care system
the minimum wage

reality shows
police profiling
a topic raised in your
current class reading

Point

Second, using the topic you selected, **write a topic sentence** that states the main claim (your specific opinion) that you want to argue that fits the size of the paragraph:

Third, brainstorm concrete **evidence/information** you can use to prove your main claim:

Information

Fourth, analyze and explain **the significance, importance or impact** of your evidence and claims:

Explanation

Finally, using all the advice in this chapter, put it all together into a complete paragraph.

PRACTICE

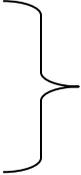
Peer Response for PIE Paragraphs

Use the following questions to provide constructive feedback on paragraphs:

Writer: _____

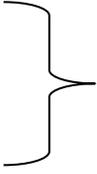
Peer Reviewer: _____

Point



Underline the writer's topic sentence. Based on this sentence alone, what do you predict this paragraph will have to say about the topic? What is the writer's point? Is it arguable? Is the main point narrow enough to be proven in one paragraph?

Information



Now, read through the entire paragraph once and jot down what you think the main point of the paragraph seems to be. Does it match with what you thought the main point would be based solely on the topic sentence? Is the evidence clear and convincing? Are there any details that seem irrelevant or not directly connected? Is any needed explanation missing?

Explanation



Has the writer included his/her own analysis of the larger significance for the main claim in the paragraph? Did he/she explain WHY the reader should care about this topic? Has he/she looked at the larger outcome or importance of the claim? Do you feel convinced by the writer's reasoning?

WHAT IS A TOPIC SENTENCE?

The PIE paragraph strategy begins with a topic sentence, and knowing how to build a strong topic sentence is the foundation of writing a convincing paragraph.

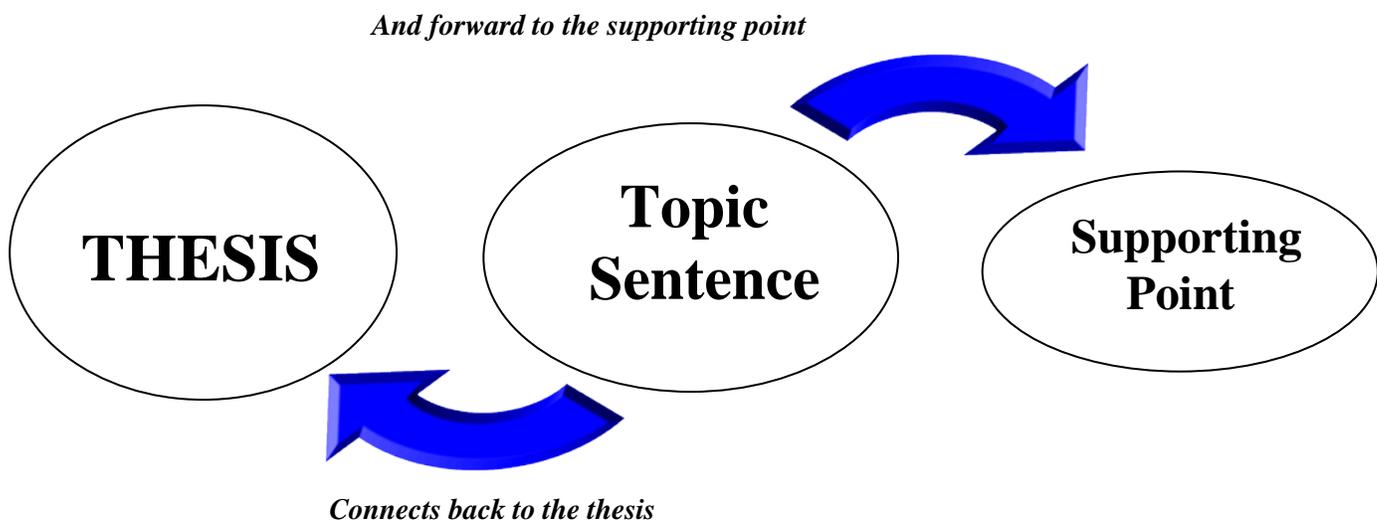
WHAT'S THE PURPOSE OF A TOPIC SENTENCE?

The main point (claim) of a paragraph is often indicated in a single sentence called the topic sentence. A topic sentence is like a thesis in that you can also ask yourself: Can I disagree? You want to be able to answer YES to show that there is an arguable claim that needs to be proven. While it is true that in published writing you'll sometimes find topic sentences in the middle or even at the end of a paragraph, placing your topic sentences at the beginning of each of your paragraphs is useful because:

- **A strong topic sentence can help you, the writer,** to focus each paragraph on one main point.
- **A strong topic sentence can help your reader** to see where you are headed with your ideas in a particular paragraph; topic sentences help your reader form a mental map of your essay.

WHY USE TOPIC SENTENCES?

A strong topic sentence connects back to your overall thesis and connects forward to the specific supporting point you are making in the paragraph to prove and illustrate your thesis and this makes the paragraph focused and unified. Here is a visual:



HOW CAN I WRITE STRONG TOPIC SENTENCES?

WHAT DIFFERENTIATES A STRONG TOPIC SENTENCE FROM A WEAK ONE?

The chart below points out some of the main differences between a topic sentence that is genuinely helpful to you and your readers, and one which is not:

A weak topic sentence:	A strong topic sentence:
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Doesn't "fit" your paragraph—that is, it misleads your reader into thinking you will be writing about one thing, but the paragraph itself is about something else	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Fits" your paragraph, accurately reflecting what you've actually written
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is so general that your reader can't form a clear image about what is to come	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is specific enough that your reader can predict what you will cover in that paragraph
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Simply states a fact, a piece of information that can be confirmed with observation or reference to reputable sources. Your reader is left wondering, "What is the point of this paragraph? What is the writer trying to prove with this piece of information?"	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Like a thesis statement, it sets up the controlling idea of the paragraph, clearly indicating the point or claim the writer will illustrate, describe, explain, analyze in the body of the paragraph
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Does not seem clearly related to your thesis	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Helps your reader see how this paragraph relates to and advances/supports your thesis

SOME GUIDELINES FOR WRITING STRONG TOPIC SENTENCES:

A topic sentence must predict or promise what follows, so it cannot be a question. To orient the reader, you may use a question as the first sentence, with the topic sentence as the answer to that question.

Weak: Should schools provide free computers for their students?

Strong: Schools must provide free computers for their students to assist them in their studies and prepare them for their future careers.

Phrases such as “I think” or “in my opinion” may muddle or weaken topic sentences. Your writing is always your opinion, so you don’t need these phrases unless they are central to the idea that you are trying to convey.

Weak: I think that it is important for every woman to carry pepper spray.

Strong: As violent criminals take over the city streets, women must carry pepper spray to protect themselves.

The topic sentence should provide clear relationships among all of its elements so that it can provide a framework for understanding the rest of the paragraph.

Weak: Historians record only dry statistics; we should read novels.

Strong: Accurate historical novels give us a deeper understanding of the past than do the dry collections of facts and statistics that pass for history texts.

A topic sentence needs to be clear and specific, so that it can predict and summarize the rest of the paragraph for the reader.

Weak: Public transit is terrible.

Strong: Incapable of providing reliable, comfortable service, the San Francisco Municipal Transit System is failing its ridership.

PRACTICE

CHOOSING THE TOPIC SENTENCE THAT FITS:

The topic sentence of the paragraphs below has been removed. Read them carefully and then choose the best topic sentence among the four choices below. Be prepared to explain your choice.

Paragraph 1:

This belief is especially common among weight lifters who often consume large quantities of high protein foods and dietary supplements, thinking it will improve their athletic performance. Like weightlifters, football players consume too much protein, expecting it to produce additional muscle energy. Although it is true that muscles contain more protein than other tissues, there is no evidence that a high protein diet actually constructs more muscle tissue than a normal diet. Nutritionists point out that muscle cells grow not from excess protein but from exercise: when a muscle is used, it pulls in protein for its consumption. This is how a muscle grows and strengthens. If athletes want to increase their muscle mass, then they must exercise in addition to following a well-balanced, normal diet.

1. Many athletes have false ideas regarding proper nutrition.
2. My brother, a weightlifter, is an example of someone who consumes a lot of protein because he thinks it will make him bulky.
3. Many athletes falsely believe that protein improves athletic performance by increasing muscle mass.
4. The public is often confused by the seemingly conflicting advice nutritionists give us about our health.

Paragraph 2:

Lately parents and critics across the country have been making a bigger fuss about the number and content of commercials aimed at children, and it seems as though the media has become a scapegoat for adults who have set questionable health guidelines for their children. It is both logical and factual to state that parents are the number one authority for most everything in their child's life, which of course includes food choices. Recent studies from the Institute of Medicine found that the easiest and most reliable measure of understanding a child's health and diet is to look at the health and diet of the parents. It is very likely that a child's obesity did not come from the media, but from behaviors within the family. Even if advertisements became restricted or more limited, if parents do not enforce healthy diets or teach nutrition, the children will have learned nothing. Timothy J. Muris of *The Wall Street Journal* realizes that without addressing the issues of parental control, the ban on child food advertisements are "appealing on the surface, but ultimately useless."

1. Despite increasing rates of childhood obesity, we should not ban junk food ads aimed at children.
2. According to Andrew Martin of the *Chicago Tribune*, "... the rates of obesity among 6 to 11-year-olds more than tripling during the last three decades, doubling for children ages 2 to 5 and increasing even more for adolescents 12 to 19 years old."
3. The staggering figures regarding childhood obesity alone are alarming enough to generate a stir.
4. Although junk food advertisements are being blamed for children's poor dietary habits, regulating these ads would not address the real source of the problem: lack of parental guidance.

PRACTICE

CREATING A TOPIC SENTENCE THAT FITS:

Now try creating your own topic sentences for the following paragraphs:

1) _____

Famous inventor Thomas Edison, for instance, did so poorly in his first years of school that his teachers warned his parents that he'd never be a success at anything. Similarly, Henry Ford, the father of the auto industry, had trouble in school with both reading and writing. But perhaps the best example is Albert Einstein, whose parents and teachers suspected that he was mentally disabled because he responded to questions so slowly and in a stuttering voice. Einstein's high school record was poor in everything but math, and he failed his college entrance exams the first time. Even out of school the man had trouble holding a job—until he announced the theory of relativity.

2) Eating disorders afflict as many as ten million women and one million men in the United States. But why?

Young girls not only play with Barbie dolls that display impossible, even comical, proportions, but they are also bombarded with images of supermodels. These images leave an indelible mental imprint of what society believes a female body should look like. Carri Kirby, a University of Nebraska mental health counselor, adds that there is a halo effect to body image as well: “We immediately identify physical attractiveness to mean success and happiness.”

3) From Deborah Blum’s “What’s the Difference between Boys and Girls?”

Boys tend to gather in large, competitive groups. They play games that have clear winners and losers and bluster through them, boasting about their skill. Girls, early on, gather in small groups, playing theatrical games that don’t feature hierarchy or winners. One study of children aged three to four found they were already resolving conflict in separate ways—boys resorting to threats, girls negotiating verbally and often reaching a compromise.

WHAT ARE TRANSITIONS?

Transitional words can signal levels of importance, connections, and the direction of thoughts. For example, after a friend begins a sentence with "I like you very much," would you prefer that the next word be "and" or "however"? The word "and" signals more of the same, hinting that you could anticipate another pleasant compliment. On the other hand, "however" signals a change of thought, so brace yourself for a negative remark. If the next words were "consequently" or "therefore," you could anticipate a positive result or reward for the positive feelings. Such words are transitions and lead readers to anticipate the direction of a writer's thoughts. Transitions also reveal organizational patterns.

In short, transitions...

- are phrases or words used to connect one idea to the next.
- are used by the author to help the reader move from one significant idea to the next.
- show the relationship within a paragraph (or within a sentence) between the main idea and the support the author gives for those ideas.

WHY USE TRANSITIONS?

Transitions serve as “guiderails” through someone else’s logic. We all think differently, so it is helpful to use transitions to signal the direction of your thoughts. Like you use a turn signal in a car to let the car behind you know you are going left, transitions signal which direction you are going as you present a series of ideas and arguments to someone not familiar with your reasoning.

HOW CAN I BEST USE TRANSITIONS?

Being familiar with different transitions and the logical direction each signals is the first step in using them effectively in your writing.

<i>PATTERNS OF ORGANIZATION AND THEIR TRANSITIONAL WORDS:</i>	
<p>Addition (providing additional examples): furthermore, again, also, further, moreover, besides, likewise, and, indeed, in addition, too, next, first, second</p>	<p>Cause and Effect (showing one element as producing or causing a result or effect): because, for this reason, consequently, hence, as a result, thus, due to, therefore, if, so, since</p>
<p>Concession (acknowledging the merits of the counter argument before reasserting an opinion): whereas, granted that, even though, though, yet, while, although</p>	<p>Illustration (explaining using examples): that is, for example, to illustrate, for instance, in fact, specifically, as seen in</p>
<p>Comparison (listing similarities among items): in a similar way, similarly, parallels, likewise, in alike manner, also, in the same manner</p>	<p>Contrast (listing differences among items): on the other hand, more than, but, however, conversely, on the contrary, although, nevertheless, still, in contrast, yet, even though</p>
<p>Definition (defining a concept and expanding with examples and restatements): can be defined, means, for example, like, in short, specifically</p>	<p>Description (listing characteristics or details using vivid language): is, as, like, could be described (using adjectives, adverbs and language that touches on the senses)</p>
<p>Location or Spatial Order (identifying the whereabouts of objects or people): next to, near, below, above, close by, within, without, beside, around, to the right or left, opposite</p>	<p>Narration or Time Order (listing events in order of occurrence): first, second, finally, after, before, next, later, now, at last, until, at the same time, while, during, as, meanwhile, then, immediately</p>
<p>Simple Listing (randomly listing items in a series): also, another, several, for example</p>	<p>Summary (condensing major points): in conclusion, to restate, briefly, to sum up, in short, in a nutshell, in other words, therefore, in summary</p>

PRACTICE

INSERTING APPROPRIATE TRANSITIONAL WORDS:

(1) Many people think that heavy fishing of a lake will eventually cause a serious depletion of the stock of fish; _____ in a lake with a limited food supply, heavy fishing often increases the fish supply.

(2) I didn't finish my homework, I'm behind in the reading, and I didn't study for the exam today; _____ I think I'm going to fail the class and have to take it again.

(3) The torrential rains in the Los Angeles area were highly destructive to the economy; _____ the rains brought much needed water to the farmers, the destruction to property and crops was enormous.

(4) Today, college women are finding many acceptable alternatives to the "graduate and get married" pattern of the past. Many women _____ are pursuing graduate degrees or joining the military.

(5) She had acquired some bad habits over the years of impatience and procrastination; _____ she started smoking and stopped working out.

MAKING PARAGRAPHS COHESIVE AND LOGICAL USING TRANSITIONS:

Add transitions and join sentences to make this disjointed paragraph unified and clear. You don't need to change the sequence of sentences:

Obstetricians perform too many cesareans. They can schedule deliveries for their own convenience. They can avoid sleepless nights and canceled parties. They resort to cesareans in any difficult delivery to protect themselves against malpractice suits. Cesareans involve larger fees and hospital bills than normal deliveries. Cesarean patients spend about twice as many days in the hospital as other mothers.

The National Institutes of Health confirmed that doctors were performing many unnecessary cesarean sections. They suggested ways to reduce their use. The recommendation was widely publicized. The obstetricians apparently failed to take note. In 1985, the operation was performed in 16.5 percent of United States' births. In 1992, 24.7 percent of the births were Cesareans.

TRANSITIONS COME IN PHRASES TOO:

Transitions can be in the form of words like *however, furthermore, meanwhile* but they can also come in the form of phrases like: *Not only x, but also y* and *If x, then y*. Sometimes you'll provide a full sentence to move your reader from one idea to the another: *As a result of Malcolm X forging his own education, he learns many things that are not taught in the typical classroom which inspires him to fight for change* (this moves the discussion from Malcolm X learning to read to what he learned to what he did).

Here are some examples of transitional phrases:

<p>To explain something further: Examples of this are, To say this in another way, In line with that, ...</p>	<p>To say it is true in only one direction: The converse is not true. This only goes in one direction. This is only true in this instance.</p>	<p>To say that something is true in "both directions" The converse is also true And vice versa</p>
<p>When you have given your conclusion first and want to then give your evidence, support, justification for it: The evidence for ... is The reason(s) for ... is (are) One can see this because This can be seen because This is supported by</p>	<p>To link together similar things (whether ideas or reasons): You can number them The following <i>n</i> things: [and then number them, or not number them, whichever seems more appropriate] In the same vein, Along with that, Not only x, but also y</p>	<p>To change topics: Moving on to a different point Considering something totally different now, Let me digress for a moment... Returning from the digression.... Returning to the above point about Related to...</p>
<p>When what you have presented leads up to, or supports, or makes a case for what you are about to say: We can see from the previous that, Because of the previous [sentence, paragraph, line of reasoning, three points,....] we can see that [or, it is rational to believe that, or it is reasonable to hold that]... In light of this we can see that</p>	<p>When you are going to "contradict" what has been said before [or contradict what you are about to say]: In spite of this [or, in spite of the fact that ...,] Despite the fact that ... Unfortunately that does not.... Contradicting that is While it may seem that.... The apparent implication is that ... , While it may be that..., The previous does not imply/demonstrate/show We cannot reasonably deduce/infer/assume from this... Although x, y While it is the case that..., it is not the case that (or it is not true that, or does not imply that....)</p>	<p>To show a cause and effect relationship: Since [x is true], [y is true] Since [x], y ... Because (of) x, y ... Given that x, y ... Factoring in that x, y... Taking into account x, we can see that y... As a consequence of x, y.... It follows from x, y We can see from x, y</p>

PRACTICE

IDENTIFYING TRANSITIONAL WORDS AND PHRASES:

Using one of the body paragraphs from the essay on Frederick Douglass’s *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, underline all the transitional words AND the transitional phrases:

After secretly learning to read and write on his own, Douglass discovered that freeing his mind led to anguished torment as he was unable to free himself from the entrenched institutions of slavery but change was set in motion. Being awakened to the stark realities of his condition only served to plunge Douglass into despair: “As I read and contemplated the subject, behold! that very discontentment which Master Hugh had predicted would follow my learning to read had already come, to torment and sting my soul to unutterable anguish (84). Once Douglass’s eyes were opened, he invariably suffered: “... I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing. It had given me a view of my wretched condition, without the remedy. It opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out. In moments of agony, I envied my fellow-slaves for their stupidity” (84). So is ignorance bliss? The answer for us to live in a fair and decent world has to be no, never. To be ignorant allows others not only to make choices for you but to limit your choices without you even realizing it. Not knowing the factors and people who shape your life, enables those in power to act in their own self-interest and have no accountability when doing so. It also makes people unable to recognize when they are victimized by unjust situations, and if you cannot see the problem, then you can never demand or bring about change. After Douglass understood the evils of slavery, he suffered initially and even entertained thoughts of suicide, but later he escaped to the north and became an influential leader in the abolitionist movement and spent the remainder of his life fighting for the equality and rights of blacks as well as women.

ANSWERS

CHOOSING THE TOPIC SENTENCE THAT FITS:

Paragraph 1:

3. Many athletes falsely believe that protein improves athletic performance by increasing muscle mass.

Paragraph 2:

4. Although junk food advertisements are being blamed for children's poor dietary habits, regulating these ads would not address the real source of the problem: lack of parental guidance.

CREATING A TOPIC SENTENCE THAT FITS:

POSSIBLE ANSWERS:

1) On inventors:

Doing well in school does not always demonstrate intelligence or future success.

2) On eating disorders:

The images of beauty we are surrounded by are unrealistic and impossible to attain and make many women feel unattractive and deeply unhappy with themselves.

3) On Deborah Blum's article:

The female approach to interacting with one another is more harmonious and democratic.

INSERTING APPROPRIATE TRANSITIONAL WORDS:

ANSWERS

Possible answers:

(1) Many people think that heavy fishing of a lake will eventually cause a serious depletion of the stock of fish; **HOWEVER (contrast)** in a lake with a limited food supply, heavy fishing often increases the fish supply.

(2) I didn't finish my homework, I'm behind in the reading, and I didn't study for the exam today;

THEREFORE (cause/effect) I think I'm going to fail the class and have to take it again.

(3) The torrential rains in the Los Angeles area were highly destructive to the economy; **EVEN THOUGH (concession)** the rains brought much needed water to the farmers, the destruction to property and crops was enormous.

(4) Today, college women are finding many acceptable alternatives to the "graduate and get married" pattern of the past. Many women **FOR EXAMPLE (illustration)** are pursuing graduate degrees or joining the military.

(5) She had acquired some bad habits over the years of impatience and procrastination; **FURTHERMORE (additional examples)** she started smoking and stopped working out.

MAKING PARAGRAPHS COHESIVE AND LOGICAL USING TRANSITIONS:

Possible answers:

Obstetricians perform too many cesareans, **SO** they can schedule deliveries for their own convenience, **AND** they can avoid sleepless nights and canceled parties. **ADDITIONALLY**, they resort to cesareans in any difficult delivery to protect themselves against malpractice suits. **MOREOVER**, cesareans involve larger fees and hospital bills than normal deliveries **BECAUSE** cesarean patients spend about twice as many days in the hospital as other mothers.

The National Institutes of Health confirmed that doctors were performing many unnecessary cesarean sections; **AS A RESULT**, they suggested ways to reduce their use. The recommendation was widely publicized; **NEVERTHELESS**, the obstetricians apparently failed to take note. In 1985, the operation was performed in 16.5 percent of United States' births, **YET** in 1992, 24.7 percent of the births were Cesareans.

IDENTIFYING TRANSITIONAL WORDS AND PHRASES:

Using one of the body paragraphs from the essay on Frederick Douglass's *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, underline all the transitional words AND the transitional phrases:

After secretly learning to read and write on his own, Douglass discovered that freeing his mind led to anguished torment as he was unable to free himself from the entrenched institutions of slavery but change was set in motion. Being awakened to the stark realities of his condition only served to plunge Douglass into despair: "As I read and contemplated the subject, behold! that very discontentment which Master Hugh had predicted would follow my learning to read had already come, to torment and sting my soul to unutterable anguish (84). Once Douglass's eyes were opened, he invariably suffered: "... I would at times feel that learning to read had been a curse rather than a blessing. It had given me a view of my wretched condition, without the remedy. It opened my eyes to the horrible pit, but to no ladder upon which to get out. In moments of agony, I envied my fellow-slaves for their stupidity" (84). So is ignorance bliss? The answer for us to live in a fair and decent world has to be no, never. To be ignorant allows others not only to make choices for you but to limit your choices without you even realizing it. Not knowing the factors and people who shape your life, enables those in power to act in their own self-interest and have no accountability when doing so. It also makes people unable to recognize when they are victimized by unjust situations, and if you cannot see the problem, then you can never demand or bring about change. After Douglass understood the evils of slavery, he suffered initially and even entertained thoughts of suicide, but later he escaped to the north and became an influential leader in the abolitionist movement and spent the remainder of his life fighting for the equality and rights of blacks as well as women.

What, Why, and How?

10

INTEGRATING SOURCES:

Plagiarism:

- * **Definition and repercussions**
- * **Honesty Pledge**

Quoting and Paraphrasing

Smoothly Integrating Quotations

- * **Never drop quotes**
- * **Connect quotes to introductory phrases**
- * **Follow quotes with an explanation of their significance**
- * **Properly cite and punctuate quotes**

Researching:

- * **Evaluating outside sources**
- * **Search strategies**

WHAT IS PLAGIARISM?

While some cultures may not insist so heavily on documenting sources of words, ideas, images, sounds, etc., American culture does. To be fair and ethical, you must always acknowledge your debt to the writers of the sources you use. Uncredited use (both intentional and unintentional) of somebody else's words or ideas is plagiarism, which is a serious academic offense.

The following acts are considered plagiarism:

- (1) Copying words or ideas from someone else without giving credit
- (2) Failing to enclose borrowed language in quotation marks
- (3) Changing words but using the sentence structure of a source
- (4) Mixing an author's phrases with your own without citation or quotes
- (5) Turning in someone else's work as your own

WHY IS PLAGIARISM BAD?

- Plagiarism is stealing and stealing is illegal. We all know that stealing physical property is a criminal offense but you should also know that stealing intellectual property, which is protected under copyright law, is also a criminal offense.
- You can't strengthen your own writing skills (skills necessary to be successful in college, the workplace, and life) if you are submitting the work of someone else and not doing the work yourself.
- You lose the trust and goodwill of your instructor.
- You lose your own satisfaction and self-pride that comes from earned accomplishments.

WHAT WILL HAPPEN IF I PLAGIARIZE?

- You will receive a failing grade of "F" on the plagiarized assignment.
- Your name can be submitted to the dean to be added to a list of students who have been guilty of plagiarizing, and this list can be shared with your current and future instructors.
- You may be referred to the College Disciplinarian for further sanctions which range from a warning to expulsion from Skyline College.

HOW DO I AVOID PLAGIARIZING?

[Chapter 10: Integrating Sources](#) shows you how to best select and properly integrate your sources and [Chapter 5: MLA Conventions](#) shows you how to properly cite your sources within the paper and at the end on a Works Cited page. Another way to avoid plagiarizing is to begin the semester by making a good faith “honesty pledge.”

Honesty Pledge

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

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

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

Student name:

G-Number:

Email:

Phone number:

Student signature:

WHAT IS QUOTING AND PARAPHRASING?

When you are asked to write about or analyze text(s), you will use quotes and paraphrases from them. What is the difference between quoting and paraphrasing?

- **Quoting:** Is using the direct language from another person either in full sentences or groups of words and putting the borrowed language between quotation marks.
- **Paraphrasing:** Is putting the ideas or arguments of another person entirely into your own words.

WHY QUOTE VERSUS PARAPHRASE?

Before you use a quotation, decide if you can use your own words (paraphrase) to express the author's ideas. If you include too many quotations, readers form the impression that you cannot think for yourself. However, in text-based writing, you will want to include some quotes, so you keep your analysis of the text central to your discussion.

Use quotations when...

- **the original language is as important as the ideas it contains**, that is, when the author's words are so articulate or expressive that they deserve to be preserved.
- **the original language is concise**, and a paraphrase would be too wordy.
- **the original language is from an established authority** who could lend extra credibility to your claims.
- **the original language itself is the object of analysis**, a situation that happens most commonly when writing about literature.

HOW DO I PROPERLY QUOTE AND PARAPHRASE?

- **When you quote**, you want to enclose all borrowed language between quotation marks and then provide an in-text citation that cites the source. In MLA formatting, the in-text citation generally includes the author's last name and the page number in parenthesis after the quote (Garcia 21). See [Chapter 5: MLA Conventions](#) for more detail.
- **When you paraphrase**, you are deciding that an author's ideas but not his/hers exact words are important to your point. A paraphrase should not change the ideas, but it can eliminate or change words, often in order to condense a long sentence that contains details unnecessary to your point. Even though you are not quoting, you still need to credit the source you are paraphrasing by making it clear in the context of your discussion or by citing it as you would a quote.

EXAMPLE

Quoting and Paraphrasing

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

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

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

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

PRACTICE

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

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

Quote:

Paraphrase:

Partial Paraphrase:

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

Quote:

Paraphrase:

Partial Paraphrase:

WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO SMOOTHLY INTEGRATE QUOTATIONS?

When you are incorporating the direct language of others into your own writing, you want that integration to be fluid and seamless. You don't want your reader to get lost or confused as you transition from your voice and ideas to another person's. You want to use quotations in a way that clarify, support, and strengthen your writing.

WHY IS THIS IMPORTANT?

- Readers can better understand the relevance of smoothly integrated quotations.
- Readers can clearly see the connection between an integrated quotation and what it is trying to prove or illustrate.
- Readers can be better convinced by evidence presented in smoothly integrated quotations.
- Readers don't experience being lost or frustrated by quotations that appear unrelated, inappropriate, or off topic.

HOW DO I SMOOTHLY INTEGRATE QUOTATIONS?

I. **NEVER drop quotes.** A dropped quote is a quote from someone else that is placed in your writing but it stands alone and is not introduced and not integrated into a sentence of your own. A dropped quote interrupts the flow of your writing, as the reader must jump abruptly from your words to someone else's and back again. Also, if you're not integrating direct quotations into your own writing, you're probably not giving your reader the context they need to understand the quote.

Think of a quote as a helium balloon that needs an anchor to hold it down in your essay:

		
Dropped quote: A number of journalists have been critical of genetic engineering. “The problem is, no one really knows the long-term effects of such complex genetic manipulation—and the potential dangers to humans and the environment are substantial” (Turner 21).	In order to successfully integrate quotations into your writing, you need to introduce or in some way lead into the quotation so that readers know whose words are being quoted or why the quotation is important.	Integrated quote: A number of journalists have been critical of genetic engineering. Lisa Turner, in an article for the magazine <i>Better Nutrition</i> , targets the unpredictable nature of this new technology: “The problem is, no one really knows the long-term effects of such complex genetic manipulation—and the potential dangers to humans and the environment are substantial” (21).
The quote stands on its own, and it's not clear who Turner is or why this person is quoted. The relevance of the quote is not anchored so floats away in the reader's mind.	Tie a string to your balloon! In writing, that means creating a phrase that introduces, connects and anchors the quote to what you are discussing.	In this sentence, the quote is anchored. We know who said it and why she is an authority, and it now flows in the logic of the sentence.

II. Connect quotes to phrases that introduce them.

Here are a few approaches for creating introductory phrases for quotes:

1) Identify the speaker and context of the quote

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

2) Lead in with your own idea

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

3) Formulas

- In (title of source), (author) writes/ argues/ explains/ describes, "quote" (#).

Example: In I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings, Maya Angelou writes, "In Stamps the segregation was so complete that most Black children didn't really absolutely know what whites looked like" (20).

- According to (author) in (title), "quote" (#).

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

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

Also, by choosing an **appropriate verb**, you can make your stance clear and the description more alive and engaging:

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

PRACTICE

Integrating Quotes using introductory Phrases:

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

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

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

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

Quote integrated into a sentence:

Method #2: Lead in with your own idea:

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

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

Quote integrated into a sentence:

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

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

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

Quote integrated into a sentence:

III. Follow quotes with an explanation of their significance. After the quote, provide your own reasoning and analysis explaining the significance and relevance of the quote.

Here are a few approaches to ensure the inclusion of analysis and significance for the quotes you select:

APPROACH 1: SAY, MEAN, MATTER?

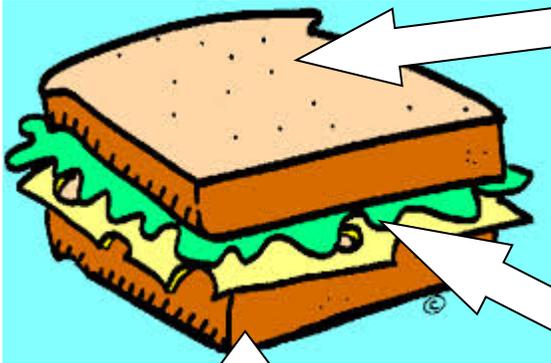
“Say, Mean, Matter” is a 3-step approach to select good quotes, understand them, and then analyze them.

PRACTICE

SAY: What does the text say?	MEAN: What does it mean?	MATTER: Why does it matter?
Find one or more significant quotations from the text. Write the quote(s) word for word in this column.	Using your own words paraphrase/summarize what the quote(s) mean.	Comment on why the quote(s) matter to you and what significance they have in the world. Explain how the excerpt(s) advance the author's message as well as how they connect to an argument you could make based on them.

APPROACH 2: QUOTE SANDWICH

Using the quote sandwich assures you properly introduce a quote and include the necessary analysis.



INTRODUCING THE QUOTE: The top part of the sandwich is the introduction to the quote. Lead into the quote with context that tells how the quote connects to your discussion. You'll follow this introductory phrase with a comma or a colon and then the quote.

Questions to consider:

Who said the quote? Are the person's credentials relevant? Is there other important context? What idea or argument does the quote illuminate?

THE QUOTE: Follow the introductory phrase with the "meat" of the sandwich, which is the quote. After the quote, cite the source. For MLA style, you'll usually include the author's last name and the page number in parenthesis.

To consider:

You don't want quotes to be too long and "take over" your paper. Your quote must express an important idea. Don't use quotes to summarize for you. Choose quotes that are thought-provoking and clearly illustrate your claims.

THE ANALYSIS/SIGNIFICANCE: The bottom part of the sandwich, holding it all up, is your own reasoning and analysis explaining the relevance and significance of the quote and its connection to your discussion.

Questions to consider:

What are the implications of the quote that are not stated?
So what does this quote reveal that was not evident before?
How does the quote prove your argument?

EXAMPLE

Quote Sandwich

Topic sentence: In the autobiographical work, *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, the author's experience with education sharpens his views on the depravity of slavery, both for the slave and his master.

Top bread or Introduction: One of his masters begins to teach him how to read and at first, Douglass finds her to be a "kind and tender-hearted woman" (2). However, their slave-master relationship soon disintegrates.

Meat or quote: He writes, "Slavery proved as injurious to her as it did to me...The first step in her downward course was in her ceasing to instruct me. She now commenced to practice her husband's precepts. She finally became even more violent in her opposition [to my reading] than her husband himself" (2). **Bottom bread or**

analysis: Not only does it become more difficult to find time and support for learning to read, but the very nature of slavery also demoralizes both Douglass and his slave-owner. The woman refuses to instruct him any longer, and opposes his education even more than her husband, for she fears that once Douglass learns how to read, the slave-master relationship will change; he will question his enslavement. Because she feels threatened, she becomes a cold-hearted and fierce woman. Fortunately, Douglass learns to read without continued instruction, and in spite of direct and deliberate attempts to keep him from learning.

IV. Properly cite and punctuate quotes.

Properly cite all quotes and put all borrowed words inside quotation marks.

How to do in-text citations is covered more thoroughly in [Chapter 5: MLA Conventions](#), but here is a quick reminder of the basic MLA in-text citation format:

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

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

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

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

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

Note: Do not use commas, p., pgs., or any other such notation in the citation.

Properly punctuate sentences that integrate quotes.

(1) **Use quotations marks** at the beginning and end of any word, phrase, line, or passage you quote.

"A foolish consistency is the hobgoblin of little minds," wrote Ralph Waldo Emerson.

(2) **Commas and periods** go inside quotations marks.

After the professor stood up quietly and said, "I do not expect to continue at this position any longer," the other professors at the meeting stared at her in amazement.

(3) **Periods go outside** of parenthetical citations.

Malcolm X asserted, "Most students are potential revolutionaries...when you have an illegal, immoral, and unjust situation, it should be changed" (54).

(4) **Semi-colons, colons, and dashes** go outside quotation marks.

Baker focuses on two choices that cause young women "to be unclear about their goals": their interest in family life and their desire for professional success.

(5) **Question marks and exclamation points** go inside quotation marks, if they are part of the original quotation, but outside, if they are part of the sentence.

It was not all clear however, after the president exclaimed, "That is not an acceptable alternative!" Did you ever hear of someone suggesting that we remove all windmills "super fast or immediately, whichever comes first"?

(6) Use **square brackets** whenever you need to substitute or add words to a quotation. You can change individual words and then put them in brackets [] so that the quote fits your sentence grammatically.

Sonny would "as soon as he came in from school, or wherever he had been when he was suppose to be at school [go] straight to that piano and [stay] there until suppertime" (Baldwin 275).

- (7) **Single quotation marks** are placed inside regular quotation marks when you have a quote within a quote: Professor Stevens claimed that he "always asks his students Professor Begley's question about 'the meaning of a college education' in order to start off the discussion."
- (8) Sometimes you will want to leave out material in the middle of a passage, quoting the most important words. When you do this, use an **ellipsis ...** which are three dots. Use these three dots if the omitted passage does not contain a period and four dots if it does:
Fadiman observes that the doctors at MCMC "could hardly be expected to 'respect' their patients' system of health beliefs...since the medical schools they attended never informed them that diseases are caused by fugitive souls and cured by jugulated chickens" (61).
- (9) If you decide to use **a quotation of more than four lines**, set it off from the rest of your essay by indenting half an inch on each side of the entire quote and continue double-spacing throughout. You do not need to put quotation marks around this block quotation, unless it is actual dialogue. The period goes after the quote and before the parenthetical citation.

Gatsby experiences a moment of clarity while standing with Daisy on his dock. Fitzgerald writes:

Possibly it had occurred to him that the colossal significance of that light had now to him vanished forever. Compared to the great distance that had separated him from Daisy it had seemed very near to her, almost touching her. It had seemed as close as a star to the moon. Now it was again a green light on a dock. His count of enchanted objects had diminished by one. (98)

(10) In deciding whether to **quote or underline text titles**, use the following guidelines:

- Use **quotation marks** (" ") around the titles of **shorter works** such as short stories, essays, articles, poems, chapter names, song names.

SHORT STORY: Richard Christian Matheson's "Red"

ESSAY: "A Tale of Two Sitcoms" by Steven D. Stark

ARTICLE: "Generation Next" by Chris Smith

POEM: Lois-Ann Yamanaka's "Haupu Mountain"

CHAPTER NAME: "Let's Go Mexico!" from How to Be a Chicana Role Model

SONG: "Livin' La Vida Loca" by Ricky Martin

- **Underline or italicize** the titles of **longer works** such as books, novels, periodicals, newspapers, plays, movies, TV series, and album names.

BOOK: *Errors & Expectations* by Mina Shaughnessy

NOVEL: *Island of the Sequined Love Nun* by Christopher Moore

PERIODICAL: *Newsweek*

NEWSPAPER: *The San Francisco Bay Guardian*

PLAY: *Rosencrantz and Guildenstern Are Dead* by Tom Stoppard

MOVIE: *Chicken Run*

TV SERIES: *Buffy the Vampire Slayer*

ALBUM: *Less Than Jake's Losing Streak*

PRACTICE

LOCATING THE APPLIED QUOTING ADVICE

In this paragraph from an essay on Malcolm X's "Learning to Read" locate the following features from the quoting advice in this section:

1. paraphrasing

2. quote analysis

3. proper page citation

4. quote used to prove an argument

5. partial paraphrasing

6. phrases that integrate the quotes

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

WHAT IS GOOD RESEARCH?

Selecting good research involves supporting your ideas with credible sources which means being able to evaluate the quality of outside sources. Doing good research also involves using smart search strategies.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

- You will lose credibility and not be convincing if your sources are questionable or not reputable.
- You could end up presenting false information which will mislead your argument, your reader and yourself.
- You will save yourself a lot of time if you learn how to search effectively using focused and systematic approaches.
- You will engage in a larger academic community that will broaden your thinking, understanding of, and connection to the issues and topics you are investigating.

HOW DO I DO IT?

HOW DO I KNOW WHAT KIND OF SOURCE TO LOOK FOR?

When you write a research paper, you need to support your thesis by using academic quality sources. Sources come in many shapes and formats but some of **the most common include:**

- articles from magazines, newspapers or journals,
- books (either print or e-books),
- web pages
- other media (e.g. video or audio sources)
- personal interviews
- non-published documents (e.g. letters, flyers, handouts, etc.)

Before you begin to search for sources to support your ideas, you need to learn how to decide what are credible, academic-quality sources. Often the easiest sources to dig up won't pass muster as valid sources for a college research paper.

HOW DO I KNOW IF A SOURCE IS TRUE, ACCURATE AND OF REASONABLE QUALITY?

To evaluate any source you find, you first need to find out the identity of the author or group that wrote or created the source, as well as the names(s) of the organization that published or produced the source. If you cannot identify these, stop here! Only sources that can be identified can be determined to be credible, right?

You should not use any source whose author/organization cannot be identified.

If you *can* identify both the author and the publisher of the source, you'll want to find out something more about them to determine whether they have the expertise or qualifications to produce a credible source for a college research paper. Here is a good question to ask yourself: **Is the author of my source an expert in his/her field?**

HOW DO I EVALUATE A SOURCE ONCE I HAVE VERIFIED IT?

Here are some important criteria to use in evaluating the quality of a source:

Criteria 1: Length and substance of the text: Does this source provide a substantive, in-depth discussion of the topic, or merely a cursory, superficial overview? Is this a brief “sound-bite,” or a longer, more in-depth analysis? (In general, for web pages with less than about 10 medium-length paragraphs of text would be considered brief.)

Criteria 2: Author’s purpose: Is this a straightforward summary or overview of the topic, such as you would find in an encyclopedia article? Or is the author presenting a new interpretation, view, or explanation of the topic?

Criteria 3: Academic quality and reading level of the text: Is this a serious, complex, detailed, academic treatment of the topic, or is it lighter “popular” discussion geared for the general public?

Criteria 4: Originality of the text: Is this original writing, or is it copied and compiled from other sources? For a web site, is this primarily a list of links?

Criteria 5: Objectivity: Is the text primarily personal opinion rather than an objective discussion? If the text is primarily opinion, is this clearly stated, i.e. is the author clear about the fact that he/she is presenting a *subjective* view of the topic? Does the author acknowledge that there might be *other* worthy points of view?

Criteria 6: Sources & Documentation: Where did the author gather the information presented? Was it from original research, experiments, observation, interviews, books and documents? If lots of factual information is given, does the author cite his/her sources? Verify that the author used authoritative sources to back up his/her arguments and conclusions.

HOW DO I EVALUATE MAGAZINE, NEWSPAPER OR JOURNAL ARTICLES?

Magazine, newspaper and journal articles are typically reviewed and edited by publishers, editorial boards and copy editors before they are published. However, it’s still important to evaluate articles on your own using the same criteria we’ve discussed. Remember to:

- Check the article’s **author(s)** just as for other types of sources, and
- Check the **publication** (magazine, newspaper or journal) in which the article is published. If you’re not certain if the publication is valid for research, check the publication’s website to find out more about it. See if the publication has a Wikipedia article that might give some background on the publication. Is the publication linked to an educational institution or professional organization?
- Has the author **cited** his/her sources in footnotes or at the end of the article?
- Additionally, check the **date** of the publication. Is the research presented recent enough to be useful to your topic?

HOW DO I EVALUATE A WEB PAGE?

Web pages *can* contain valuable information for your research. However, information that you find on the web must be evaluated *even more carefully* than information found in books or articles. Why? In contrast to books and articles (which are reviewed for accuracy and quality by publishers, editorial boards or reviewers before they can be published), *anyone can create a web page* with no screening at all. Therefore, it's especially important that you carefully evaluate information from the Internet if you intend to use it for your research.

When you evaluate a web source, you'll need to ask yourself a few essential questions:

1. What do you know about the author of the site?

Is the author an expert in his/her field --or just someone with an opinion? Remember: If you can't identify a reputable author and/or organization responsible for the page, you should not cite it for college research.

a) Web pages by/for individual authors

If an **individual** has written the page and/or site, determine the author's qualifications by asking:

- Is biographical information about the author available?
- What is his/her background in terms of education, experience, occupation, position, affiliation, publications, etc.
- Why does or doesn't this make him/her an expert?

Tip: Do a Google search to see if the author's name comes up in other web pages. Can you find reliable information about the person and determine his/her credibility?

b) Web pages by organizations

If an **organization** has authored the page and/or site, is information available about that organization, including its purpose or history? **Tips:**

- Look for a link such as "Who we are", "About Us", "Philosophy," "Background," etc. on the page or the site home page.
- Is it an impartial group (like a university) or a group established to promote an idea or point of view (like the National Rifle Association or a political party or a religious group)?
- Do a Google search to see if the institution's name comes up in other web pages. Can you find reliable information about the organization?

2. What is the basic purpose of the site?

Knowing the author's reason for providing the information is key to evaluating it. It's the same kind of common sense you use to make decisions every day. Understanding the purpose of the site will help you judge its validity for your research. Which type of site would you think is most objective? Would you trust a commercial site to provide objective information when you know the organization's goal is to make a profit? Is the site:

- **Scholarly?** It's written by researchers or experts in the field See: popular magazines vs. academic journals.
- **Professional?** It's written by and primarily for those in a specific profession.
- **Popular?** It's written for the general public. See: popular magazines vs. academic journals.
- **Advocating?** It's promoting particular opinions/causes, including **blogs**
- **Commercial?** It's promoting/selling services or products, or including advertisements for products or services.

3. What type of site is it?

Identifying the domain type within the URL will give you additional clues about the type of site you've found, and therefore about your source of information. Ask yourself: which type of site do you think is most likely to provide information that is objective? Of high academic quality?

Some of the most common domain types are:

.edu: an educational institution (often reliable, but can be anything from scholarly research to students' personal pages)

.gov: a government body (usually dependable)

.org: a non-profit organization (may or may not be biased), may be relatively objective or may present any political point of view

.com: a commercial enterprise (may be trying to sell or promote a product or service)

.net: originally for networking organizations, such as internet service providers, but now often used as an alternative to .com

HOW DO I EVALUATE INFORMATION FROM BOOKS?

Not surprisingly, to evaluate information from books, you can reuse your six criteria. Most importantly:

- Check the book's **author(s)** just as for other types of sources,
- Check the **publisher** (the company or organization that edited, designed, printed and distributed the book) of the book. What to look for?
 - Some publishers are known for publishing particular types of books and have reputations for producing a certain level of quality in content and academic level. For example, a university press is a publisher closely affiliated with a university. University press books are considered to be highly respectable and reputable. They are often identified by (you'll never guess) the words "university" and "press" in their names. Example: University of California Press.
 - Various academic and professional organizations also publish books which can be extremely valuable for researchers because the materials tend to be written by experts in a field.
 - Be careful about using self-published books! These books are less likely to have been reviewed by professionals in the field for the accuracy of the information presented.

You're ready to start searching. But hold on! Though it's natural to want to dive right in, you'll save a lot of time and effort by devising a strategy before you do.

WHAT'S THE BEST STRATEGY TO SEARCH FOR MY SOURCES?

Before you begin searching for the perfect information on your topic, you should prepare for your search.

1. Divide the research topic into "concepts" (different subtopics or elements). Concepts should not include question words, e.g. "who", "what", "why", nor words describing the relationship of different concepts, e.g. "effect of", "impact on." For example, a specific research question might be: *How did Frederick Douglass regard women's rights with respect to the abolition movement ? Were his views on these topics contradictory?*

Look at the words in your research topic and identify the main ideas or "concepts."

This research question can be divided into two or three "concepts":

1. Frederick Douglass
2. women's rights
3. abolition movement

2. Next, for each of the three concepts, think of other search words or phrases that might be used for the same idea.

Place an "OR" between each search word for the same concept. (The "OR" tells the search engine to look for documents with at least one of the words in each concept). For example,

1. Frederick Douglass
2. women's rights OR women's suffrage OR suffragist*
3. anti-slavery OR abolition* OR "abolition movement"

HOW DO I USE ARTICLE DATABASES?

The best way to find good quality sources for college research papers will almost always be to use an **article database accessible through the college library website**.

On the Skyline College Library homepage, the "Quick Article Search" box will allow you to search for articles in tens of thousands of magazines, journals and newspapers, as well as eBooks, in the EbscoHost premium databases. Searches from the Quick Article Search box *do not* provide the full searching capabilities of the EbscoHost databases. To do a more precise search, you should use the "Advanced Search" mode by clicking the "**Advanced Search**" link. You can email yourself the articles you find in your search.

To access this and other article databases from home or off-campus, you will need a PLS library card, which is available for free from Skyline College Library (or any public or community college library in San Mateo County. Remember to access the database links from the Skyline Library homepage).

You can see a list of all of the databases available by clicking on the "**Select a Database by Subject/Title**" pull-down menu. To select a database to search, click on any title from the menu and then click the "**GO**" button.

HOW CAN I USE GOOGLE TO FIND ACADEMIC SOURCES?

Let's strategize. How can we use Google to search for information on our topic?

How did Frederick Douglass regard women's rights with respect to the abolition movement ?

When using Google, it is most effective to put quotation marks (" ") around any **search phrases**-- any group of more than one word that should be searched together in a specific order. For example, for our topic, "**women's rights**" and "**abolition movement**" are search phrases.

Also place an **OR** between each search term or search phrase for the same concept (The **OR** tells Google to look for documents with at least one of the words in each concept). So a Google search for our topic would look like this: "*Frederick Douglass*" **AND** "*women's rights*" **OR** "*women's suffrage*" **AND** "*abolition movement*"

HOW CAN I LIMIT MY GOOGLE SEARCH FOR BETTER RESULTS?

1. Limit your Google search to a specific domain

When searching the Web, it can be very useful to limit your search to just websites with a particular domain type, such as **.edu** for college or university sites, **.gov** for government sites or **.org** for organization sites. These domains will commonly have better quality sites than .com sites.

In *Google*, you can use the powerful **site:** command to limit the search to a specific domain. To limit the search to just .edu sites, for example, you would add: **site:.edu** to your search. To limit the search to just .org sites, add: **site:.org** to your search, or to search for just .gov sites, add: **site:.gov** to your search.

Here is an example of how we limited our search to only .edu sites by adding: **site:.edu** to the search: "*Frederick Douglass*" **AND** "*women's rights*" **OR** *suffrage* **AND** "*abolition movement*" **and site:edu**

2. Use Google's Similar option

Another useful Google feature is the "Similar" option. When you find one page in a Google results page that provides very good information on your topic, you can find other pages that have similar information by clicking on the pull-down symbol to the right of the web address for that page (just below the title of the page on the Google results list) and then click on the "Similar" link. Google will then display a list of similar web pages.

3. Limit Google to News Articles

A basic Google search will find all types of web pages, but you can limit Google searches in various ways to improve your search results. One easy way to limit on Google is **Google News**, which includes only newspaper articles. To limit to Google News after doing a general Google Web search, click on the **News** button on the Google task bar below the search box on the results page (or if the **News** button is not shown, click on the **More** pull-down menu bar below the search box on the results page and select **News** from the menu). After clicking the News button, the results change--from web pages to news articles.

4. Using Google Scholar

When you *only* want to find information written by academics, Google Scholar - Google's academic search engine - is a good place to go. Instead of searching for websites, Google Scholar searches a wide range of academic articles and books from academic publishers, professional societies, online repositories, and universities. In many cases, the sources are only abstracts (summaries) of articles, which do not provide the full-text of the article (or a significant charge is required for the full article), however you may usually be able to retrieve the full-text of these articles by using the Skyline College Library Article Delivery Service (if you are a Skyline College student doing research for a class assignment.) Go to: scholar.google.com

ANSWERS

Potential answers for QUOTING, PARAPHRASING, AND PARTIAL PARAPHRASING EXERCISE

Quote 1: Howard Zinn

Quote: Howard Zinn conveys to his students his strong convictions that no one has the right to oppress another under any circumstance, “I made clear my abhorrence of any kind of bullying, whether by powerful nations over weaker ones, governments over their citizens, employers over employees, or by anyone on the Right or Left, who thinks they have a monopoly on the truth” (7).

Paraphrase: Zinn shares his support of equality for all people and his anti-oppression viewpoints with his students.

Partial Paraphrase: Zinn fearlessly shares his controversial political views such as his “detestation of war and militarism” (7).

Quote 2: Martin Luther King, Jr.

Quote: King looks to our historical background in the U.S. to understand why we are a people so driven by violence: “We are a nation that worships the frontier tradition, and our heroes are those who champion justice through violent retaliation against injustice” (24).

Paraphrase: King asserts it is harder to practice non-violence in the U.S. where we admire people who are willing to commit violence.

Partial Paraphrase: King sadly observes that the “highest measure of American manhood” (24) is a person’s willingness to commit violent revenge.

Potential answers for INTEGRATING QUOTES USING INTRODUCTORY PHRASES EXERCISE

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

Senora Valencia describes the severe division that exists in her homeland of Hispanola due to Trujillo’s bloody dictatorship, “On this island, you walk too far and people speak a different language. Their own words reveal who belongs on what side” (Danticat 304).

Method #2: Lead in with your own idea:

Villasenor captures the decadence of the United States through the hungry eyes of Roberto, a young boy who risks going north to work illegally, “They did not have the tanates to go up north and break through the wall of electric fences and enter the land of plenty, the U.S. of A., a land so rich that what garbage they throw away in one day could feed entire pueblos” (31).

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

In *The Color of Crime*, Katheryn K. Russell exposes: “Racial targeting and abuse by police is costly. U.S. taxpayers have paid tens of millions of dollars in police brutality lawsuits. Between 1992 and 1993, Los Angeles county alone paid more than \$30 million to citizens victimized by police brutality” (45).

APPLYING THE QUOTING ADVICE:

Here's how the quoting advice was applied in the essay on Malcolm X's "Learning to Read":

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

1. Paraphrasing

5. Partial paraphrasing

3. Page number in parenthesis after quote

6. Phrases that lead into and integrate the quotes

4. Quote used to prove argument

2. Analysis following the quote

What, Why, and How?

11

Timed Writing

Reviewing the elements of an essay
Breaking down a prompt
Creating a rough outline
Managing your time
Practicing
Additional tips
Timed writing checklist

WHAT IS TIMED WRITING?

Also called timed essays, essay exams, or in-class essays, these essays require you to demonstrate disciplinary knowledge by producing a writing sample within a limited time period. Timed writing measures your raw writing ability and your skill at thinking under pressure. It also reflects your ability to quickly recall, synthesize, and analyze detailed material. One of the major skills that is being tested in a timed writing exam is your ability to write to a prompt. A prompt is simply the exam question or writing task. In a timed exam, your thesis will generally be your answer to the prompt.

WHY STRENGTHEN THIS SKILL?

Being skilled at timed writing is important because...

- oftentimes when you transfer to another college, you will be required to take a timed essay placement exam or graduate exit exam, so placing higher will save you time and money spent on taking additional classes and later enable you to get your degree.
- some large survey courses base the majority of the student grade on in-class timed exams.
- it improves your own mental agility—being able to think quickly and logically is an invaluable skill.
- in college and in life, you will be required to compose arguments (written and verbal) on the spot, so the better you are at it, the more convincing and successful you will be.
- American culture highly values polished written skills, so the more adept you are at crafting well written responses and proposals quickly, you'll be the one who gets better grades, gets hired, gets the promotion, and will get more respect due to your effective communication skills.

HOW DO I DO IT?

Timed writing is challenging, so break down the task into manageable stages:

- 1. Review the elements of an essay (so you are sure to craft a good one).**
- 2. Know how to successfully break down a prompt.**
- 3. Create a rough outline.**
- 4. Have a time management plan.**
- 5. Practice!**

Reviewing the elements of an essay

Writing in a timed situation can be stressful so go in having a clear and confident sense of your goal: to produce a focused, organized, developed, proofread essay. Even in a timed situation, you will be expected to write an essay with the standard essay elements so here is a review of what to include:

FOCUS-THESIS:

One of the major skills that is being tested in a timed writing exam is your ability to write to the prompt. Your thesis will be your direct answer or response to the question or task in the prompt.

A thesis needs to be arguable (contain your opinion).

No opinion—not a thesis: In Sarah Katin’s “Naked,” the narrator tells of her uncomfortable experience in a Korean bathhouse.

Arguable thesis with opinion: In Sarah Katin’s “Naked,” the narrator’s experience in a Korean bathhouse reveals that American notions of nudity are unhealthy and harmfully produce feelings of shame and this distances women from each other.

You will want to make your thesis immediately clear to your reader, so it is best to put your thesis statement in your introductory paragraph. Then stay focused on proving that thesis throughout the essay. Anything that does not directly prove your thesis and respond to the prompt should not be included in the essay.

ORGANIZATION:

Considering both your argument and your allotted writing time, select an appropriate number of main points you can adequately develop, and present them in a clear order, so the essay proceeds smoothly and logically from one point to the next. Be sure to put your main supporting points into separate paragraphs, so there is a clear beginning, middle and end as opposed to a long, uninterrupted block of text. **Here are some common methods of organization:**

- *Climax:* Present your ideas so they build to a climax, ending with your most dramatic examples.
- *Complexity:* Start with simpler ideas and build to more complex ones.
- *Familiarity:* Start with more familiar ideas and move towards newer ones.
- *Audience appeal:* Start with “safe” ideas and move to more challenging ones.
- *Chronological:* Present ideas in the time order in which they occurred.
- *Comparison/contrast:* Examine the similarities and/or differences between two or more items.

DEVELOPMENT:

Avoid a series of skimpy paragraphs that are too short to concretely prove your points. Each of your body paragraphs should be lead with strong topic sentences that are then proven with evidence and analysis. Ask yourself, “How do I know this is true?”

Include the elements of the **PIE paragraph** approach:

(P)oint: begin each paragraph with an arguable topic sentence that directly supports your thesis.

(I)nformation: provide clear and convincing evidence to illustrate the point in the form of examples, quotes and paraphrases from the text, facts, illustrations, personal knowledge, personal experiences, etc.

(E)xplanation: include your own explanation of the significance of the point and information in the paragraph. So what can we learn from this? So what is the significance? So what are the larger implications or impact?

SENTENCE CRAFTING:

In timed writing, you won’t have a lot of time to spend worrying over the spelling of a word or the placement of a comma. However, you also don’t want to turn in a piece of writing that contains excessive grammatical, punctuation, and/or spelling errors. **Therefore, set time aside at the end to proofread your essay.**

- (1) If writing by hand, you can double space so when you proofread and want to cross out confusing sentences or misspellings or add left out words or examples, you will have room and won’t risk confusing your reader.
- (2) Read carefully to catch confusing sentences, errors in subject-verb agreement, verb tenses, run together sentences, etc., and look for opportunities to join sentences.
- (3) If you discover a place where more concrete detail is needed, add examples and evidence as needed.

Breaking down a prompt

In timed writing, you will be given a prompt. Be sure to use techniques to effectively break down and fully understand that prompt before you begin the writing task. This will ensure you do not write off topic or miss important elements of the assignment.

It is essential to understand and identify key words within any writing prompt. Here are some commonly used command verbs used in prompts. It is not guaranteed these words will be used, but if they are, be sure you understand what each command is asking you to do:

Key Words Commonly Used in Writing Assignments/Prompts:

- Describe:** Write about the subject so the reader can easily visualize it; tell how it looks or happened. Use adjectives, adverbs and descriptive language to paint a mental image for you reader.
- Compare:** Analyze the similarities *and* the differences between two or more items.
- Contrast:** Look only at the differences between two or more items.
- Explain:** Give the meaning of something often answering the question “why”?
- Discuss:** Provide a broader range of possibilities that critically explore your topic.
- Argue:** Present a point of view or take a position and prove it. Don’t be concerned about taking the “right” or “wrong” position; just support a position soundly and consistently.
- Analyze:** Break the subject down into parts, and explain and critically examine the various parts.
- Criticize/Critique:** Point out both the positive and negative aspects of the topic.
- Evaluate:** Give your opinion of the value of the subject; discuss its strengths and weaknesses.
- Illustrate:** Make the point or idea by giving examples.
- Trace:** Tell about an event or process in chronological (time) order.
- Prove:** Show that something is true by giving facts or logical reasons.
- State:** Give the main points in a brief, clear form.

STEPS TO BREAK DOWN A PROMPT

Since you have a limited amount of time, do not waste any of it writing off topic. Follow exactly what was asked in the prompt. Try this approach:

- (1) **Read the prompt carefully and several times:** do not “rush in” and start writing as this puts you in danger of writing off topic or missing important parts of the prompt. Take a moment and read the prompt through several times.
- (2) **Sum up the topic in a few words:** What is the focus of the prompt? Narrow down the focus of the prompt in a word or two to help you mentally focus as well.
- (3) **Circle and/or underline the key words:** Circle or underline the command verbs or question words that are telling you do something or asking you about something.
- (4) **Identify and count the required steps in the writing task:** this is a crucial step in timed writing. You don’t want to overlook any parts of the question and get little to no credit for your work as a result. Number the parts of the prompt you need to address in your essay and oftentimes you can even use this as an informal outline for the essay.

PRACTICE

Use the method of breaking down a prompt

STEPS TO BREAK DOWN A PROMPT:

- (1) Read the prompt carefully and several times
- (2) Sum up the topic in a few words
- (3) Circle and/or underline the key words
- (4) Identify and count the required steps in the writing task

PROMPT:

In *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, Frederick Douglass contends “there can be no freedom without education.” Citing specific examples from the text, discuss this concept and examine how Douglass is a testament to this idea. Then explain how this concept can be applied today and what we can learn by applying Douglass’ words to a modern day example.

(1) Read the prompt carefully and several times

(2) Sum up the topic in a few words: _____

(3) Circle and/or underline the key words

(4) Identify and count the required steps in the writing task

Creating a rough outline

Outlining is the road map for the essay. And we all know that when you are rushing to get somewhere quickly, it is easier to get lost. Outlines make sure that you end up where you intended. For timed writing, you’ll make the most informal kind of outline in which you jot down your main points and possible supporting evidence. This kind of outline is for you only, and you don’t need to worry about making it more comprehensive if it does the job for you.

PRACTICE

Use the Douglass prompt you just broke down and create a rough outline for it.

Possible thesis:

Main supporting point:

Supporting evidence:

Managing your time

Since taking a timed exam puts you in the situation of having a limited amount of time to create a focused, organized, well supported essay, you better have a clear plan of how you will use your allotted time *before* beginning the exam. Suggested breakdown of time:

- 10-15% of time: **Prewriting:**
- (1) Read the prompt carefully, circling key words, counting parts
 - (2) Make a rough outline to determine your thesis, main supporting points and strongest evidence.
- 70-80% of time: **Write the essay:**
- (3) Write your essay following the outline.
 - (4) Skip lines in case you want to make some changes when you're proofreading after you complete the essay.
- 10-15% of time: **Proofreading:**
- (5) Proofread your essay carefully adding missed evidence, catching misspellings, putting in left out words, revising confusing sentences, joining sentences, etc. Wait until the end to proofread. Focusing on sentence-level concerns as you compose the essay will slow you down too much and potentially sacrifice essay content.

Practicing

We all know we are better at something when we practice. Were you a good driver the first time you got behind the wheel? If you've played a sport or an instrument over the years, how were your skills when you first started? The same is true for timed writing. The more you practice, the better, more confident, and more accomplished you become.

Also, when you have a timed written exam coming up, you can ask your teacher for a practice prompt or you can create one yourself. The best preparation you can do is to take a practice timed exam on the topic you are being tested on. Also, if you take a practice exam ahead of time, you can even make an appointment with your instructor to go over the practice exam and get valuable advice and feedback you can then directly apply on the graded exam.

Here are some practice prompts:

Prompt—English 100 in-class essay (30 minutes)

In his book, Jim Rogers explores the issue of music file sharing on the internet and he looks at how the record companies have tried to sue individuals, web sites, and internet service providers for copyright infringement. Do you feel any of these groups should be held financially responsible for sharing music? Why or why not? Do you feel anyone is harmed by music file sharing?

Prompt—English 846 midterm (90 minutes)

Analyzing their book *YouTube*, describe three moral or ethical concerns that Jean Burgess and Joshua Green address about YouTube. What are the authors' views about these concerns? Respond to and analyze each of these concerns giving your opinion on each. Finally, looking at these concerns together, explain how you feel this does or should shape the management and future of YouTube.

Prompt—English 110 midterm (75 minutes)

J.T. Rogers' play *The Overwhelming* is set during the 1994 Rwandan genocide of the Tutsis by the Hutus. Examine why you think the playwright decided to tell this tragic story of an African country through this family of Americans. Also, why construct the characters that he did: the middle-aged college professor trying to publish, his 17-year-old son who just lost his mother, and his second wife, a writer and an African-American woman? Examine how the use of these American characters affect and shape the larger story being told.

Prompt—History 100 practice midterm (75 minutes)

"History repeats itself.
Has to.
Nobody listens."

--Steve Turner

A famous maxim says that those who fail to remember and learn from the events of history—economic failures, wars, injustices, strife—are doomed to repeat them. By learning from historical events, by listening to the message of history, a nation or people can avoid repeating the errors of the past. Identify one such significant past event that has been covered in the reading, discuss its effects and explain why we should remember it.

Prompt—English 846 Final exam (2.5 hours)

Select three (3) of the authors and texts we have read this semester and examine how each author argues that greed and materialism function in our lives in the U.S. Explain who is mainly guilty of greed and who is most affected and how. Finally, explain what you feel, and analyze the larger impact of your views.

Prompt— English 100 Final exam (2.5 hours)

Compare the different ways that four of the authors that we have read this semester used activism to change their current system and to bring about social change, and explain what we can learn about effective approaches through this comparison. Finally, argue which of the four you feel was the most successful as a revolutionary and as you make your case, be sure to define "revolutionary" and "success" according to you, and explain the implications and importance of your findings.

Prompt— English 110 Final exam (2.5 hours)

Select three (3) of the authors and texts we have read this semester (one poem, one short story, and one play), and compare the characters the authors have created in order to examine the pressures women in particular face. Describe the gender-based expectations placed on these women and examine the impact. Finally, examine the connecting patterns that transcend location and time era in regards to the attitudes toward and treatment of women.

Additional tips

- **Relax:** You know what an essay is. You know that it has an introduction, several body paragraphs, and a conclusion. You have done essays before, and you know what you're doing now. The more you can take the exam in a calm and confident state, the better you will do.
- **Bring a watch or timepiece:** You want to be in control of your time and not the other way around, so be aware of the remaining time throughout the exam. Follow your time management plan but make adjustments as you see fit. For instance, if you budgeted 15 minutes for proofreading and in your last 15 minutes you don't yet have a conclusion, donate 5 minutes of your proofreading time to your conclusion. Be in control of your time so you can be sure that you complete all your tasks in the time allotted.
- **Check out the testing room in advance, if possible:** This way, you'll be better able to judge the amount of time you need to get there, and you'll be more familiar with the test setting.
- **Get plenty of sleep the previous night:** no one does well when sleep deprived. Stay in the night before an exam, study but you shouldn't be causing yourself stress by cramming last minute. Go to bed at a decent hour and be sure to have a healthy meal before the exam. Being physically prepared will improve your mental preparedness.
- **If you are prone to distraction:** sit apart from other test takers.
- **Listen to music:** some can focus better when listening to music. Check with your professor or the exam proctor ahead of time to see if it's ok to listen to music using headphones during the exam.

Timed writing checklist

Here is a checklist with an overview of the timed writing advice you can review before taking a timed exam:

- Think about focus-thesis: form an arguable thesis that responds directly to the prompt and stay focused on proving it throughout the essay. Put your thesis in the introductory paragraph. Anything in the essay that doesn't prove the thesis and wasn't asked about in the prompt is off topic.**
- Think about organization: choose an appropriate number of main supporting points you can adequately develop, present them in a logical order, and put each one into a separate paragraph.**
- Think about development: create well-developed paragraphs including the elements of PIE: (P)oint: strong topic sentences, (I)nformation: convincing evidence, (E)xplanation: your own reasoning and analysis.**
- Think about sentence crafting: save time at the end to proofread to correct any grammar, punctuation, or spelling errors and to improve sentence logic and flow.**
- Break down the prompt: read it carefully, sum up the topic in a word or two, underline/circle key words (command and question words), and number the different parts or tasks. Address all parts in the response.**
- Create a rough outline before you start writing, so you can stay focused on what was asked and be sure to address all parts of the prompt.**
- Make a time management plan dividing your allotted time for three tasks: 10-15% for prewriting, 70-80% for writing, 10-15% for proofreading.**
- Practice writing timed essays to strengthen skills before taking timed exams for a grade.**

ANSWERS

Possible answers for BREAKING DOWN A PROMPT:

STEPS TO BREAK DOWN A PROMPT:

- (1) Read the prompt carefully and several times
- (2) Sum up the topic in a few words
- (3) Circle and/or underline the key words
- (4) Identify and count the required steps in the writing task

(2) Sum up the topic in a few words: **TOPIC = FREEDOM THROUGH EDUCATION**

In *Narrative of the Life of Frederick Douglass*, Frederick Douglass contends “there can be no freedom without education.” Citing specific examples from the text, **(1) discuss** this concept and **(2) examine** how Douglass is a testament to this idea. Then **(3) explain** how this concept can be applied today and **(4) what** we can learn by applying Douglass’ words to a modern day example.

Possible answers for MAKING A ROUGH OUTLINE:

Possible thesis: **Frederick Douglass’s life proves that lack of education can lead to marginalization and this is still happening today with our urban poor and can be seen here in San Francisco.**

Main supporting point: **(1) discuss** how Douglass’ freedom was connected to him becoming educated.

Supporting evidence: He read *The Columbian Orator* and learned of a slave who argued so well his master set him free. He also learned from Sheridan a “bold denunciation of slavery and a vindication of human rights.”

Main supporting point: **(2) examine** how Douglass is a testament to the idea of freedom through education.

Supporting evidence: Through his determination of getting the white neighborhood boys to bring him books, he taught himself to read and eventually gained his own freedom and then fought for the freedom of others throughout his life as a human rights activist.

Main supporting point: **(3) explain** how poorly funded inner-city schools deny freedom to the students who have high rates of drop out, drug use, and incarceration.

Supporting evidence: Use personal knowledge of a news report on students who attended school in San Francisco’s Bayview-Hunter’s Point.

Main supporting point: **(4) what** can we learn? Explain how we have a form of modern-day slavery as the main victims of the underfunded inner-city schools are blacks and Latinos.

Supporting evidence: Use evidence I remember from reading Jonathan Kozol’s book *Savage Inequalities* to prove harmful outcomes of educational inequality and the cycles of poverty it produces.

STEPS TO BREAK DOWN A PROMPT:

- (1) Read the prompt carefully and several times
- (2) Sum up the topic in a few words
- (3) Circle and/or underline the key words
- (4) Identify and count the required steps in the writing task

Prompt—English 100 in-class essay (30 minutes) TOPIC = music file sharing

In his book, Jim Rogers explores the issue of music file sharing on the internet and he looks at how the record companies have tried to sue individuals, web sites, and internet service providers for copyright infringement. **(1) Do** you feel any of these groups should be held financially responsible for sharing music? Why or why not? **(2) Do** you feel anyone is harmed by music file sharing?

Prompt—English 846 midterm (90 minutes) TOPIC = 3 moral/ethical YouTube concerns

Analyzing their book *YouTube*, **(1) describe** three moral or ethical concerns that Jean Burgess and Joshua Green address about YouTube. **(2) What** are the authors' views about these concerns? **(3) Respond to and analyze** each of these concerns giving your opinion on each. Finally, looking at these concerns together, **(4) explain** how you feel this does or should shape the management and future of YouTube.

Prompt—English 110 midterm (75 minutes) TOPIC = use of American characters

J.T. Rogers' play *The Overwhelming* is set during the 1994 Rwandan genocide of the Tutsis by the Hutus. **(1) Examine** why you think the playwright decided to tell this tragic story of an African country through this family of Americans. Also, **(2) why** construct the characters that he did: the middle-aged college professor trying to publish, his 17 year old son who just lost his mother, and his second wife, a writer and an African-American woman? **(3) Examine** how the use of these American characters affect and shape the larger story being told.

Prompt—History 100 practice midterm (75 minutes) TOPIC = ONE significant past event

"History repeats itself.

Has to.

Nobody listens."

--Steve Turner

A famous maxim says that those who fail to remember and learn from the events of history—economic failures, wars, injustices, strife—are doomed to repeat them. By learning from historical events, by listening to the message of history, a nation or people can avoid repeating the errors of the past. **(1) Identify** one such significant past event that has been covered in the reading, **(2) discuss** its effects and **(3) explain** why we should remember it.

Prompt—English 846 Final exam (2.5 hours) TOPIC = greed and materialism in 3 texts

Select three (3) of the authors and texts we have read this semester and **(1) examine** how each author argues that greed and materialism function in our lives in the U.S. **(2) Explain who** is mainly guilty of greed **(3) and who** is most affected and how. Finally, **(4) explain** what you feel, and **(5) analyze** the larger impact of your views.

Prompt— English 100 Final exam (2.5 hours) TOPIC = activism of 4 authors

(1) Compare the different ways that four of the authors that we have read this semester used activism to change their current system and to bring about social change, and **(2) explain** what we can learn about effective approaches through this comparison. Finally, **(3) argue** which of the four you feel was the most successful as a revolutionary and as you make your case, be sure to define "revolutionary" and "success" according to you, and **(4) explain** the implications and importance of your findings.

Prompt— English 110 Final exam (2.5 hours) TOPIC = pressures women face in 3 texts

(1) Select three (3) of the authors and texts we have read this semester (one poem, one short story, and one play), and **(2) compare** the characters the authors have created in order to examine the pressures women in particular face. **(3) Describe** the gender-based expectations placed on these women and **(4) examine** the impact. Finally, **(5) examine** the connecting patterns that transcend location and time era in regards to the attitudes toward and treatment of women.

What, Why, and How?

12

LITERATURE

Fiction & Drama: types and terms

Sample essay on a short story

Poetry: types and terms

Poetry Chart

Sample essay on a poem

Literary Theories

WHAT ARE THE MAIN LITERARY FORMS?

The main literary forms are Fiction, Drama & Poetry.

Although each of the three major literary genres, **fiction, drama, and poetry** are different, they have many elements in common. For example, in all three genres, authors make purposeful use of **diction** (word choice), employ **imagery** (significant detail) and each piece of literature has its own unique **tone** (emotional quality). An important element that you will find in all three genres is **theme**, the larger meaning(s) the reader derives from the poem, story, novel or play.

Each of the literary genres is distinguished by its form: Fiction is written in **sentences and paragraphs**. Poetry is written in **lines and stanzas**. Drama is written in **dialogue**.

WHY IS KNOWING THEM IMPORTANT?

As you read different forms of literature you will need to know specialized vocabulary to be able to best understand, interpret, and write about what you are reading. Also, how you approach a literary text and what you focus on will depend on its literary form. For instance, **fiction and drama** are typically anchored by a reader's engagement with **characters** while many **poems** do not contain a character or tell a story. Therefore, **plot** is often not a factor in a **poem**. A **poem** can be an **impression or reflection** about a person, a place, an experience or an idea.

HOW DO I APPROACH EACH FORM?

FICTION



KNOW THE DIFFERENT TYPES OF FICTION:

Short Stories are usually defined as being between 2000-6000 words long. Most short stories have at least one “**rounded**” (developed and complex) character and any number of “**flat**” (less-developed, simpler) characters. Short stories tend to focus on one major source of conflict and often take place within one basic time period.

Novellas generally run between 50-150 pages, halfway between a story and a novel.

Novels don't have a prescribed length. Because they are a longer form of fiction, an author has more freedom to work with plot and characters, as well as develop sub-plots and move freely through time. Characters can change and develop over the course of time and the theme(s) can be broader and more intricate than in shorter forms of fiction.

DRAMA



KNOW THE DIFFERENT TYPES AND STRUCTURE OF DRAMA:

Drama Types:

Tragedy – generally serious in tone, focusing on a protagonist who experiences an eventual downfall

Comedy – light in tone, employs humor and ends happily

Satire – exaggerated and comic in tone for the purpose of criticism or ridicule

Experimental – can be light or serious in tone. It creates its own style through experimentation with language, characters, plot, etc.

Musical – can be light or serious. The majority of the dialogue is sung rather than spoken.

Drama Structure:

Plays are organized into **dialogue, scenes and acts**. A play can be made up one act or multiple acts. Each act is divided into scenes, in which a character, or characters, come on or off stage and speak their lines. A play can have only one character or many characters. The main character is the **protagonist** and a character who opposes him/her is the **antagonist**.

The plots of plays typically follow this pattern:

- **Rising Action** – complications the protagonist must face, composed of any number of conflicts and crises
- **Climax** – the peak of the rising action and the turning point for the protagonist
- **Falling Action** – the movement toward a resolution

COMMONALITIES OF FICTION AND DRAMA TERMS:

Both fiction and drama are typically anchored by plot and character. They also contain literary themes as well as having other elements in common, so we will look at literary terms that can be applied to both of these literary forms.

FICTION AND DRAMA TERMS:

PLOT: Plot is the unfolding of a dramatic situation; it is what happens in the narrative. Be aware that writers of fiction arrange fictional events into patterns. They select these events carefully, they establish causal relationships among events, and they enliven these events with conflict. Therefore, more accurately defined, plot is a pattern of carefully selected, casually related events that contain conflict.

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

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

QUESTIONS ABOUT PLOT: What conflicts does it dramatize?

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

CHARACTERS: There are two broad categories of character development: simple and complex. **Simple (or “flat”) characters** have only one or two personality traits and are easily recognizable as stereotypes—the shrewish wife, the lazy husband, the egomaniac, etc. **Complex (or “rounded”) characters** have multiple personality traits and therefore resemble real people. They are much harder to understand and describe than simple characters. No single description or interpretation can fully contain them. For the characters in modern fiction, the hero has often been replaced by **the antihero**, an ordinary, unglamorous person often confused, frustrated and at odds with modern life.

QUESTIONS ABOUT CHARACTERS: What is revealed by the characters and how they are portrayed?

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|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Are they simple, complex, dynamic or static?• If they are complex, what makes them complex?• What are the traits of the main characters in the story?• Do they change? How and why?• What events or moments of self-realization produce these changes?• What do they learn?• Does what they learn help or hinder them? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What problems do they have?• How do they attempt to solve them?• Do they experience epiphanies (life changing moments of insight, discovery or revelation)?• What emotional reactions do the main characters have and in reaction to what?• Do they have traits that contradict one another or cause internal conflicts?• How do they interact with one another?• How do they relate to one another? |
|--|--|

FICTION AND DRAMA TERMS:

THEME: The theme is an idea or point that is central to a story, which can often be summed up in a word or a few words (e.g. loneliness, fate, oppression, rebirth, coming of age; humans in conflict with technology; nostalgia; the dangers of unchecked power). A story may have several themes. Themes often explore historically common or cross-culturally recognizable ideas, such as ethical questions and commentary on the human condition, and are usually implied rather than stated explicitly.

QUESTIONS ABOUT THEME: To help identify themes ask yourself questions such as these:

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|---|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Is the title or are the character names related to the theme?• Does the main character change in any way? Realize anything important?• Does the author or do the characters make any important observations about life, human nature or human behavior?• Are themes revealed through actions, dramatic statements or personalities of characters?• If characters convey conflicting values, which values does the work seem to be defending?• Are there repeating patterns or symbols? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What image of humankind emerges from the work? How is society portrayed?• Are characters in conflict with their society?• If the society is flawed, how is it flawed?• What control over their lives do the characters have?• What are the moral issues or conflicts in the work?• What did you feel after you read the story? What part of your life connected with the story and where did that connection happen?• What ideas are implied by the total impression of the work? |
|---|---|

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

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

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

MORE FICTION AND DRAMA TERMS:

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

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

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

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

FORESHADOWING: The anticipation of something, which will happen later. It is often done subtly with symbols or other indirect devices. We have to use **inferential thinking** to identify foreshadowing in some stories, and often it occurs on an almost emotional level as we're reading, leading us further into the heart of the story.

EXPOSITION: The opening portion of a story that sets the scene, introduces characters and gives background information we may need to understand the story.

INTERIOR MONOLOGUE: An extended exploration of one character's thoughts told from the inside but as if spoken out loud for the reader to overhear.

STREAM OF CONSCIOUSNESS: A style of presenting thoughts and sense impressions in a lifelike fashion, the way thoughts move freely through the mind, often chaotic or dreamlike.

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

CLIMAX: The moment of greatest tension when a problem or complication may be resolved or, at least, confronted.

RESOLUTION, CONCLUSION or DENOUEMENT ("untying of the knot"): Brings the problem to some sort of finality, not necessarily a happy ending, but a resolution.

PRACTICE

Using the literary vocabulary and questions, let's analyze a literary text.

Read the memoir, "[Learning to Read](#)," by Jessica Powers which can be located in Chapter 1: Critical Reading in the "Faculty-Written Texts" section. Powers employs many of the elements of fiction in this autobiographical piece. When you have finished reading, answer the questions below.

Questions about plot:

1. What is the main conflict in the story?
2. What causes the conflict?
3. Is the conflict external or internal?
4. What is the turning point in the story?
5. How is the main conflict resolved?

Questions about character:

1. Is the main character simple or complex? Explain.
2. What are the traits of the main character? Make a list.
3. Does the main character change? Describe.
4. What steps does she go through to change? Make a list.
5. What does she learn? Describe.
6. Does the main character experience an epiphany? Describe.

Questions about theme:

1. What does the story show us about human behavior?
2. Are there moral issues raised by the story? Describe.
3. What does the story tell us about why people change?

EXAMPLE

A sample essay written on fiction (a short story)

Last name 1

Student name

Professor name

English 110

Date

Please note: All paragraphs directly prove the thesis (underlined). How? Each paragraph uses the PIE paragraph approach: each starts with the **Point** (an arguable topic sentence—in **bold**—that directly proves the thesis and states the one point that will be addressed in that paragraph; then **Information** from the poem is used in the form paraphrases and smoothly integrated quotes; then this is followed with **Explanation** telling “so what?” is the importance/significance?

Women, Are You Living for Yourself or for a Man?

A woman in her 40s who never marries or has children is often met with concern, suspicion or pity and there is even a pejorative word for her, “spinster.” In contrast, a man in his 40s who never marries or has children is often viewed positively as a bachelor or a playboy or simply as a free man. This double standard forces many women to live for others first and themselves second, something a man is never asked to do. This was especially true in the early 1900s when women were discouraged from having careers outside of the home and were encouraged to have their primary focus in life be caring for their husband, children and home. Mary E. Wilkins Freeman the author of the short story “A New England Nun,” presented women from this era with a story of a woman who rebels against the usual adherence to duty, submission, and self-sacrifice. Through the story of her main character Louisa, Freeman offers an alternative to the role American society had expected women to play. Freeman proves there are advantages to be had for women who break the bonds of socially created gender roles by declining to get married and have children, and instead create a life entirely their own, one in which they are not tied down by the needs of others and advantageously avoid the negative influence brought on by the judgements and expectations of a man.

Although Louisa’s engagement promised security and stability, it is immediately clear that the return of Louisa’s long-awaited fiancé threatens to destabilize the ordered and serene life she had created for herself. Because her fiancé Joe Dagget had to work overseas for 14 years, Louisa had a taste of something not many women of her time experienced, socially approved independence. During this time, Louisa became quite content with her solitary life. Louisa developed a passion for caring for her

EXAMPLE

A sample essay written on fiction (a short story)

Last name 2

home and did chores because it pleased her, which is a far cry from the feelings most women in that era experienced in caring for a house, husband and children. Upon her fiancé's return, the presence of masculinity upsets the ideal environment Louisa had established in her life and Freeman illustrates this when the couple's first reunion ends in chaos. As Joe is leaving Louisa's house, he stumbles over a rug which knocks over her basket of sewing supplies, and as the yarn spools helplessly unravel across the floor Louisa says stiffly to Joe, "Never mind, I'll pick them up after you're gone" (65). As her yarn unravels, Louisa gets a preview of what Joe's presence will do to her life. Louisa's meticulous care for her home and her appreciation for cleanliness and order shows that having a place of her own and maintaining her preferred surroundings gave her a sense of pride and placed power and control over her life in her own hands.

Another way marriage threatens Louisa is that it would make her dependent. A stipulation for marriage during the early 20th century that would have had a devastating impact on Louisa's life was that all her treasured possessions would legally become her husband's property. Louisa discovered many of her passions whilst living independently. Among those were her china set that she used daily, her photo albums, her books, her sewing supplies that she grew to call good friends, her dog Caesar, and most of all her home. In addition to the transfer of possessions following matrimony, women also no longer had control over what they did with their time. In Louisa's case, she would be forced to become a servant of both her new husband, his mother, and their future children. Her time would no longer be her own as she would become the cook, laundress, seamstress, and caretaker for others. The independence that Louisa cherished would be replaced with servitude, duty, and dependence on a man she barely knew.

The predominate message for women, yet not for men, is that their lives will be incomplete, empty, and without purpose if they do not marry and have children, trapping some women in miserable lives. Without socially accepted alternatives, some women get married and have children who would be better off doing neither. Shouldn't a person want to take on the challenging task of caring for others rather than producing more unhappy marriages and checked out parents who feel distanced from and

EXAMPLE

A sample essay written on fiction (a short story)

Last name 3

resentful of their children? The pressures, however, on women to marry and have children back then persist today, and this needs to change. The ending that Freeman created in her story proposes that some women should choose to live for themselves. After Louisa breaks off her engagement, she sees the endless possibilities for her future, “She gazed ahead, through a long reach of future days strung together like pearls on a rosary, every one like the others, and all smooth and flawless and innocent, and her heart went up in thankfulness” (72). At this point, Louisa is no longer marrying Joe, but she does not perceive life without love or intimacy as any terrible loss. Instead, she sees a life full of freedom and potential.

We mustn't continue to limit the potential of women by making them conform to limited gender roles. An article written by the UN Women's Secretary General for International Women's Day 2017 claims that, “Around the world, tradition, cultural values and religion are being misused to curtail women's rights, to entrench sexism and defend misogynistic practices.” Even though women in the 21st century have deviated from being dependent on the financial stability provided by a man, conventional views continue to limit their growth by assigning them to feminine type jobs and denying them leadership positions. In addition to inequality in the workplace, women are often juggling both work-life and domestic-life. Louisa's story stresses the importance of being a strong woman in a restrictive society and emphasizes the precious rewards that are yours to possess when you alter your path based on your own decisions. The worth of a woman should not be judged by marriage and children because the worth of man certainly is not.

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POETRY



Types of Poetry

Poetry can be written in two general categories, **formal** or **free verse**. **Formal verse** has set rules and structures that dictate how it must be written. For example, a **sonnet** is written in fourteen lines that follow a set rhyming pattern. **Free verse** follows what poet, Denise Levertov, called “organic form,” meaning that a poem can be any shape or size it needs to be to communicate its message.

Some different types of Formal Verse:

Sonnet: a poem that is metered and rhymed of 14 lines usually in iambic pentameter

Villanelle: a French form of 19 lines in iambic pentameter with only two rhymes

Sestina: an unrhymed poem that places the same six words in varying patterns through six stanzas, ending with a two-line stanza

Haiku: a Japanese form of three lines in which the first and third lines contain 5 syllables and the second line contains 7 syllables

Types of poetry styles:

Narrative: tells a story

Imagist: uses rich sensory imagery

Lyrical: expresses strongly felt emotion and is written in a shorter form

Persona: relies on a character whose voice speaks the poem

Confessional: speaks openly about a poet’s personal life

Satirical: uses humor to make a point

Sound: relies on sounds rather than ideas to create meaning

Concrete: takes on the literal shape of its subject

Experimental: creates its own style through experimentation with language, shape, meaning & form

Epic: deals with a mythic, legendary or historic event and often focuses on a hero and is written in a longer form

Occasional: marks a particular occasion, like a birthday, dedication, death or marriage

POETRY TERMS:

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

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

QUESTIONS ABOUT THE SPEAKER:

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

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

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

QUESTIONS ABOUT IMAGERY:

- | | |
|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What senses does the poet appeal to?• What analogies are implied or stated directly?• Why does the poet use these particular images and analogies?• Is metaphor used in the poem? To reveal what? | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• How are the descriptive images used to create atmosphere and mood?• What is the relationship between the descriptive images and the speaker’s state of mind?• What dominant impression do the images make? |
|--|--|

MORE POETRY TERMS:

ALLITERATION: the repetition of the same sound at the beginning of words, as in "he clasps the crag with crooked hands."

ALLUSION: a reference in a poem to a historical or literary character, event, idea or place outside the piece of writing.

AMBIGUITY: a quality of certain words and phrases whereby meaning is unclear -- often used intentionally to create multiple layers of meaning.

BALLAD: a songlike, narrative poem with a recurring refrain and four-line stanzas.

CONCEIT: an extended, elaborate and often farfetched comparison that continues throughout a poem.

CONCRETE POETRY: poems that use the physical arrangement of words on the page to mirror meaning such as a poem about a car that is car-shaped.

CONSONANCE: repetition of similar sounds in the final consonants of words as in torn/burn, add/read, heaven/given.

COUPLET: two rhymed lines of verse -- when separated or self-contained, called a closed couplet.

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

ELEGY: a poem of mourning and lamentation often associated with death.

END RHYME: a rhyme in which the last words of two or more lines of poetry rhyme with each other.

END-STOPPED LINE: a line of poetry that ends with a period, colon or semi-colon.

ENJAMBMENT: the continuation of a line in a poem so that it spills over into the next line.

EPIC POEM: a lengthy narrative poem, ordinarily concerning a serious subject containing details of heroic deeds and events significant to a culture or nation.

EXTENDED METAPHOR: a metaphor that continues throughout the piece of writing.

FREE VERSE: poetry with no regular pattern of meter or rhyme. It avoids strict adherence to metrical patterns and to fixed line lengths. But it is not entirely "free," for it uses other ways of creating rhythm and sound patterns.

HYPERBOLE: extreme exaggeration such as "he's as strong as an ox".

LINE BREAKS: where a poet chooses to end one line and start another.

METAPHOR: comparison between two essentially unlike things without the use of "like" or "as".

METER: the underlying regular beat in a poem; ex: pentameter has five stressed syllables to a line.

PERSONIFICATION: figurative language that endows something nonhuman with human qualities as in "the trees whispered in the wind."

PROSE POEM: a poem written with straight left-hand margins in paragraph form like prose.

REFRAIN: the same line or group of lines repeated at intervals in a poem.

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

SIMILE: a comparison between two unlike things using "as" or "like" or "as if".

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

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

STANZA: a grouping of lines, somewhat like a paragraph in prose.

STRESS: an accent that makes one syllable stand out from the others in a word or phrase -- used in metrical poetry.

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

PRACTICE

Poetry Chart: Poetry is challenging and requires the reader to actively engage to illicit meaning. Here is a chart to help you apply poetry concepts to analyze a poem:

<p>Paraphrase: Put the poem into your own words to better understand it. Read the poem several times out loud before you try to summarize it.</p>	<p>Form and Style: What form does the poem use? Formal? Free verse? Is the rhythm fast or slow? What is the style of the poem? Narrative? Confessional? Epic? How does the form and style shape the content?</p>	<p>Title: What is revealed in the title? How does it connect to the content of the poem? Is the title referenced again in the poem? Does it connect to the poem's theme?</p>
<p>Speaker: Who is the speaker? Is the speaker (or narrator) the same person as the author? How do we know? What are the speaker's concerns? Mood? What are the main traits of the speaker? Is the speaker interacting with anyone else in the poem?</p>	<p>Setting: Is the setting described or made clear? Where does it take place? When? What time of day? What season? Is the historical, political or social context important?</p>	<p>Turning Points: Are there turning points or moments of change? How does it begin? Is there a moment when the story, ideas, thoughts or descriptions change in order to get to the point at the end of the poem?</p>
<p>Tension: What is the conflict or point of tension in the poem? Is there an external or internal conflict? Physical, spiritual, moral, philosophical, or social? How is the tension in that conflict developed with poetic elements? Is it resolved? If so, how?</p>	<p>Diction: What can you learn by examining the particular word choices in the poem? Are certain sounds, words or phrases repeated? How is language used to evoke the senses? Set the tone? Is metaphor used? What imagery is present?</p>	<p>Theme: Is there a mood or overarching aspect of the poem? Are there repeated patterns in the poem that work together? How do the parts of the poem contribute to a connecting theme?</p>

PRACTICE

Use the Poetry Chart and the additional study questions to analyze the following poem:

Katharine Harer's poems have been published in literary journals, anthologies, and newspapers and on poetry websites, and she has written five books of poetry. Katharine has worked as a poet-teacher and as Statewide Coordinator of the California Poets in The Schools program, and she served as the Director of Small Press Traffic Literary Arts Center in San Francisco. For almost a decade, she co-coordinated the popular Poetry & Pizza series in downtown San Francisco. For the last thirty-six years she has taught English and Creative Writing at Skyline College (she started teaching at Skyline in 1978). She served as the faculty editor for the literary magazine, Talisman, for over twenty years. Katharine loves to perform her work, especially when accompanied by jazz musicians.

Rockaway by Katharine Harer

They stare at the ocean as if they're
looking for something, a certain curl a
ripple a break in the lacy
foam that unravels from the
hearts of waves

Slowly they undo their pants
all the while looking out beyond
themselves pull their wet suits on
carefully like women easing
nylons over their legs all
without looking away
 chests bare and soft
the rubber suit flapping at
their waists they savor every step
that takes them toward the waves

Some run like children
boards strapped to their wrists
others walk a slow, jagged line
disappearing and reappearing
patiently stroking the water
slipping inside the crashing
and coming out whole skimming
the thunder slick as glass
for as long as it lets them

When they come in
and stand dripping by their cars
faces calm from the tossing
and riding hair tangled
a salty wet glaze on their skin
when you'd think they'd had enough
of water
their eyes are still
searching the waves

Additional study questions on the poem “Rockaway”:

Questions About Craft:

1. Do you see any examples of figurative language (similes or metaphors) in the poem? Identify one or more examples.
2. What do the similes add to the poem?
3. Do you notice any alliteration in the poem? Identify one or more examples.
4. What does the alliteration add to the poem?
5. Try reading the poem out loud: what do you notice about the sounds and rhythms?
6. Look at some of the poet’s word choices (diction): pick out a few examples of words that help to create the scene and/or the feeling of surfing.

Questions About Structure:

1. Is this poem written in free verse? Explain.
2. Why do you think the poem is organized into four stanzas?
3. Why do you think the poet uses very little punctuation, such as commas and periods? How does the lack of punctuation affect the “feel” of the poem?

Questions About Theme:

1. How does the poem make you feel about the surfers it describes?
2. Notice how the poem begins and ends: what do you think the poet wants to tell us about the surfers?

EXAMPLE

A sample essay written on a Langston Hughes' poem

The following essay is a student's analysis of Langston Hughes' poem "I, Too"
(poem published in 1926)

I, too, sing America.

I am the darker brother.
They send me to eat in the kitchen
When company comes,
But I laugh,
And eat well,
And grow strong.

Tomorrow,
I'll be at the table
When company comes.
Nobody'll dare
Say to me,
"Eat in the kitchen,"
Then.

Besides,
They'll see how beautiful I am
And be ashamed —

I, too, am America.

EXAMPLE

A sample essay written on a Langston Hughes' poem

Last name 1

Student Name
Professor Name
English 110
Date

Please note: All paragraphs directly prove the thesis (underlined). How? Each paragraph uses the PIE paragraph approach: each starts with the *Point* (an arguable topic sentence—in **bold**—that directly proves the thesis and states the one point that will be addressed in that paragraph; then *Information* from the poem is used in the form paraphrases and smoothly integrated quotes; then this is followed with *Explanation* telling “so what?” is the importance/significance?

Creating Change by Changing Minds

When I log onto Facebook nowadays and scroll through my feed, if it's not advertisements, it's posts talking about the injustices of the world, primarily from racism. These posts are filled with anger and strong hostility. I'm not saying anger is the wrong emotion to feel when faced with injustice, but when that hostility is channeled into violence, this does not bring about justice or change. Long lasting and effective change can only be made through non-violent methods, which is demonstrated by Langston Hughes in his poem, "I, Too." In this short poem, Hughes gives many examples of how to effectively and non-violently address and combat racism.

Hughes first uses people's religious morality to enlist his readers to resist racism. He starts the poem with his black narrator asserting, “I am the darker brother” (2). Brother to whom? In the Christian religion, a predominate religion during the times of slavery in the U.S and beyond, the terms brother and sister are used to show equality and kinship, and this human connection transcends race. Everyone is equal as children of God, and are all heirs to the promises of divine love and salvation. Simply by the black narrator calling himself a brother, Hughes is attempting to appeal to white Christian Americans, and to deny this connection is to go against the teachings in the Bible about brotherhood. This is very powerful in multiple ways. Firstly, establishing a sense of brotherhood and camaraderie should make anyone who tarnishes that unity feel ashamed. Secondly if anyone truly wishes to receive God's mercy, they would have to treat everyone as equals, or be punished by God, or even be denied eternal life in heaven all together. This technique is effective and long-lasting because the fear of violence inflicted on a person is temporary, but damnation is eternal.

EXAMPLE

A sample essay written on a Langston Hughes' poem

Last name 2

Hughes further combats racism, not through threats of uprisings or reprisals, but rather by transforming hatred into humor and positivity. In response to his segregation, the narrator says, "They send me to eat in the kitchen/When company comes, /But I laugh, /And eat well/And grow strong" (3-7). With this, Hughes rises above racial exclusion and asks his reader to see it for what it is, ridiculous. He also shows how to effectively combat this injustice which is to learn from it and to feel empowered by not letting racist treatment from others hurt, define or hold you back. Additionally, this approach is an invitation to Hughes' white readers to be "in on the joke" and laugh at the mindless and unwarranted exclusion of this appealing and relatable person who is full of confidence and self-worth. Through his narrator, Hughes diffuses racial tensions in an inclusive and non-threatening way, but the underlying message is clear: equality is coming soon. We know he believes this when the poem's speaker states, "Tomorrow, /I'll be at the table/When company comes" (8-10). There is a strong assertion here that racism will not be permitted to continue, but the assertion is not a threat. Hughes carefully navigates the charged issue of racial unity here, particularly at the time he wrote this poem when segregation was in many places in the U.S. the law. The different forms of segregation—emotional, physical, financial, social—that blacks have suffered has and continues to result in violence, but Hughes here shows another path. Hughes shows that despite it all, we can still make amends and sit down at a table together. As a human family, we can overcome our shameful past by simply choosing to peacefully come together.

Finally Hughes uses American patriotism as a powerful non-violent method to unite his readers to combat racism. The poem concludes, "Besides, /They'll see how beautiful I am/And be ashamed –/I, too, am America" (15-18). Notice how he uses the word America and not American. He is not simply just an inhabitant of America; he IS America in that he represents the promise, the overcoming of struggle, and the complicated beauty that makes up this country. He is integral to America's past, present and future. He is, as equally as anyone else, a critical piece in America's very existence and pivotal to its future. As Hughes united his readers through religion and the use of

EXAMPLE

A sample essay written on a Langston Hughes' poem

Last name 3

“brother,” here he widens the net beyond religion and appeals to all Americans. As we say in our pledge of allegiance, we stand “indivisible with liberty and justice for all.” To hate or exclude someone based on race, therefore, is to violate the foundational and inspirational tenants of this country. Hughes does not force or attack in this poem, and he does not promise retribution for all the harms done to blacks. He simply shows that racism is incompatible and contradictory to being truly American, and this realization, this change of heart, is what can bring about enduring change.

It has been shown over and over that violence leads to more violence. Violence might bring about change temporarily, but when people are stripped of choice, violence will reassert itself. Some of the most dramatic social movements that have brought about real change have used non-violent means as seen in Martin Luther King Jr's non-violent protests helping to change U.S. laws and ensure Civil Rights for all, as seen in Gandhi's use of non-violent methods to rid India of centuries of oppressive British rule, and as seen in Nelson Mandela's persistent and non-violent approaches of finally removing Apartheid from South Africa. However, we are not these men. Most of us are not leaders of movements, but we are each important and influential. We as individuals can be immensely powerful if we choose to be. We can choose to apply the examples and advice from enlightened minds like Hughes, King, Gandhi, and Mandela. When we see on Facebook or in the news on in-person people targeting or excluding others, or inciting violence against a person or group based on race, or sexual orientation, or religion, or any other arbitrary difference selected to divide and pit us against one another, we can choose instead to respond with kindness, with humor, with positivity, and with empathy because this leads to the only kind of change that matters.

Works Cited

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WHAT ARE LITERARY THEORIES?

Literary theories are different perspectives, or angles, that we use to approach interpreting the literature we read. We can think of literary theories as “lenses” that allow us to “zoom in” on specific ideas, concerns, and issues, rather than on literary forms, conventions, and structures.

In short, literary theories are tools that help us make meaning of the literature we read. Understanding what these theories are and how they work provides us with tools that help us find meaning in what we have read.

WHY ARE THEY IMPORTANT?

Becoming familiar with literary theories allows us to formulate more focused, meaningful interpretations and ideas. Applying the basic, guiding principles of these theories helps us think critically about the literature and allows us to ask ourselves relevant, meaningful, and focused questions. Once we’ve asked these questions, we can then move on to answering them in a manner that allows us to “zoom in” on key issues and ideas.

Therefore, rather than looking at literature in a very general way, and rather than merely focusing on the technical aspects of a work, literary theories allow us to approach literature in a way that makes it easier for us to interpret and discover meaning than it would be without the guidance of the theories. Although multiple literary theories exist, it is important for us to remember that interpretations of literature are the result of applying a combination of these theories.

HOW DO I USE THEM IN A PAPER?

Familiarize yourself with basic principles associated with the literary theories and how readers might apply them to the literature they read. Once you have carefully read the assigned poem, play, story, or novel, look over your notes and the annotations you have made in response to the work, and highlight the comments and ideas that stand out for you.

Once you’ve reviewed the ideas in your notes and annotations, go on to ask yourself the following questions:

- Which literary theories can I connect to the ideas and issues I’ve identified?
- How are my ideas reflected in the literary theories?
- Which of my ideas do I want to explore further in relation to those theories?
- How can I further apply the principles of the literary theory or theories to get more meaning from the text and delve deeper into the meaning/ideas I already have?

For more specific questions that might be useful in helping you apply literary theories, take a look at the “Questions to Consider” at the end of each literary theory description below.

THE LITERARY THEORIES:

Historical/Biographical Criticism is a literary lens that allows readers to examine the realities of the historical period reflected in the work and/or the realities of the life and times of the author. To study a work using the historical/biographical literary lens, the reader's assumption is that the literary work is a reflection of the period in which it was written, and/or that the work is a reflection of the author's life and times. In other words, the reader assumes that the work has been shaped by historical events of the time (historical) and/or by events in the author's life (biographical). Approaching a literary work using the historical/biographical perspective requires the reader to engage in supplemental research related to the relevant historical period and the author of the work.

Questions to Consider:

- In what ways do the events and/or characters in the work parallel significant events and/or people represented during the time period or in the author's life?
- How might the work and its meaning have been shaped by events of the time period in which it was set or written?
- How might the work and its meaning have been shaped by events and/or people in the author's life?

New Criticism (also known as Formalist Criticism) examines the relationships between the ideas and themes in a literary work and its form. When applying this theory, the reader focuses on exploring the meaning of the literature and the way in which the meaning is conveyed in the text. In other words, the work's theme/meaning is reinforced and unified in the text's form (imagery, narrative structure, point of view, and other literary elements). In applying the New Criticism as an approach for understanding literature, very close analysis of and focus on the literary text is essential.

Questions to Consider:

- How do imagery and narrative point of view reinforce a theme or idea you've identified in the work?
- How does the plot contribute to supporting the meaning of a story you've read?

Archetypal Criticism is a literary lens requiring the reader to examine cultural and psychological myths that contribute to the meaning of the texts. As readers apply this theory, they assume that the literature imitates universal dreams of humanity and that recurring images, patterns, symbols, and human experiences, also known as archetypes, contribute to the form and meaning of the work. These archetypes may include what are known as motifs (recurring themes, subjects, ideas).

Questions to Consider:

- What symbols help to illustrate a common, universal struggle experienced by the protagonist of the story?
- How do the actions of the characters and/or the setting of the story reflect events/ideas that we find in other cultural stories and myths?

Gender Criticism (also known as Feminist Criticism) is a literary lens that allows the reader to critique dominant patriarchal and heterosexual language and ideas by exposing how a work reflects masculine, patriarchal, heterosexual ideology. Additionally, the reader may focus on examining how literary works are shaped by and/or convey messages about gender-related issues such as gender identity, sexual orientation, gender roles and expectations, gender dynamics, and gender-related power structures.

Gender criticism encourages readers to examine gender ideology and politics in literature and to critique oppressive patriarchal and masculine structures apparent in literary works.

Questions to Consider:

- In what ways is the work a commentary or critique of the dominant patriarchal ideologies in the society it depicts?
- What ideas about gender are reflected in the work?

Marxist Criticism argues that literature reflects the struggles between oppressed and oppressing classes. Readers applying Marxist criticism focus on examining the representation of socio-economic class structures, marginalization, materialism, class systems, and/or class conflict in literature. Readers also examine the way in which a literary work may espouse oppressive social and class structures.

In applying Marxist criticism, readers tend not to focus heavily on a literary work's aesthetic or artistic concerns, arguing that meaning is shaped by the work's depiction of class conflict and class distinctions, as well as its social and political concerns. In reading and critiquing literature, Marxist theorists tend to find themselves sympathetic to the working classes and to authors whose works challenge economic inequalities found in capitalist societies.

Questions to Consider:

- In what ways does the literature depict the struggles between the rich and the poor?
- How is the work sympathetic to the working class?
- How might the work be a critique or commentary about capitalism?

Deconstruction is an approach that requires readers to challenge the assumption that a work has a single, fixed meaning and that this meaning is accessed only through a close reading of the text alone. Deconstruction involves examining contradictions that exist within a text and accepting the idea that because a text can have a variety of meanings, some meanings may actually contradict others.

Readers employing deconstructionist criticism tend to focus not on *what* is being said but, rather, on *how* it is said in the writer's use of language. Because of this focus on the use of language, deconstructionists rely on a close reading of the text/words in order to make meaning.

Questions to Consider:

- White is a color that typically represents purity and innocence in our culture. How is the color white used to represent ideas that both support and contradict this meaning in the work?
- How might a theme in the work be negated by an opposing theme that also exists within the same work?

New Historicism is a literary lens through which readers find meaning by considering the context of the period during which the text was written. Readers who examine literature through a New Historical lens concern themselves with the political, social cultural, economic, and/or intellectual implications of the work.

Questions to Consider:

- How are the politics and policies of the time in which the work was written depicted in the events and characters of the work?
- In what ways are the social norms of the period reflected in the story, poem, play, or novel?

Cultural Criticism allows the reader to approach literature with the assumption that the work questions traditional, cultural (typically Western-European) ideologies and values and that most literary works espouse these dominant ideas. With this in mind, those who apply cultural criticism examine how literature challenges Eurocentric-based meaning, particularly by focusing on how works, especially those written by and about traditionally oppressed and/or marginalized groups or sub-groups, expose the identities, systems, values, norms, traditions, etc. of typically under-represented groups.

Questions to Consider:

- How does the work reflect the oppressive environment of the time in which it takes place or in which it was written?
- In what ways is the devaluation and/or marginalization of under-represented groups represented?

Psychological/Psychoanalytic Criticism involves the assumption that the work is a reflection of the personality, state of mind, feelings, and desires of the author. The Psychological/Psychoanalytic lens requires readers to delve into the psychology or personality of the author and/or characters to determine the meaning of the work. Readers employing the psychological/psychoanalytic approach examine the role of unconscious psychological drives/impulses and repressive behaviors in shaping human behavior.

Questions to Consider:

- In what ways does the story reveal the protagonist's struggle to assert his/her identity?
- How is the work a reflection of an individual's desire to act according to his/her impulses yet, at the same time, struggle against those impulses?

Reader-Response Criticism suggests that the experience of reading and the experiences that the reader brings to the reading determine the meaning of the work. In other words, meaning within literature is created as the reader experiences (reads) the work. As readers bring their own ideas, thoughts, moods, knowledge, and experiences to the text, meaning is created with little emphasis placed on the structural elements of the work (plot, narrative point of view, character, symbol, etc.). The interaction between the reader and the text determines the meaning of the work.

Questions to Consider:

- What attitudes do you and the main character of the story have in common? Have these attitudes led you to similar/different outcomes to those of the main character? How so?
- How would you have responded to the situations the characters find themselves in? Why would you have responded in such a manner?

What, Why, and How?

13

STYLE:

Simplicity
Point of View
Word Choice
Sentence Crafting
Sentence Combining
Parallelism
Commonly Misused and Misspelled

Style chapter overview:

Simplicity: Simplicity does not mean writing simple sentences. A series of short simple sentences can sound too simple and unsophisticated in academic writing. Simplicity in writing is trimming the fat which is eliminating the wordiness and saying what you want to say clearly and directly. A reader cannot be convinced of your point if they get lost in the sentences.

Point of View: Point of view refers to the position from which a writer “speaks” to their audience. Writers must be careful and maintain a consistent point of view. Academic writing should primarily rely on third person point of view to appear objective with minimal instances of first person point of view.

Word Choice: You want to choose the best, most effective words to form clear and convincing sentences. So what makes the best word choices? When writing academic essays, you want to use concrete and specific words that directly engage the senses and give precise meaning. Concrete words refer to objects that we can hear, see, feel, touch, and/or smell.

Sentence Crafting: You want to consciously create clear and focused sentences by using energetic verbs (replace the bland verb “to be” when you can), preferring the active voice (rather than passive voice), and choosing clear noun references (don’t use vague pronouns that don’t have a clear referent).

Sentence Combining: Trying to achieve simplicity in your writing does not mean writing only in short sentences. If your essays are filled with short sentences, they will read as choppy and the relationships between the sentences will not be as clear. Combining or joining sentences can convey your ideas more fluidly and logically. However, you also want rhythm in your writing which can be created through varied sentence length and structure. Include short sentences for impact.

Parallelism: Parallelism is giving two or more parts of a sentence a similar form so as to give the passage a definite pattern and to give the ideas the same level of importance and a balance.

Commonly Misused and Misspelled Words: As English teachers who read a lot of essays, we see some words that are regularly used incorrectly, and we see some words that are commonly misspelled. Consult the lists provided to avoid common errors.

WHAT IS SIMPLICITY IN WRITING?

“If you can't explain it to a six year old, you don't understand it yourself.” — Albert Einstein

“It is not a daily increase, but a daily decrease. Hack away at the inessentials.” — Bruce Lee

William Zinsser, an expert on writing and author of *On Writing Well*, said: “The sentence is too simple—there must be something wrong with it. But the secret of good writing is to strip every sentence to its cleanest components. Every word that serves no function, every long word that could be a short word, every adverb that carries the same meaning that’s already in the verb, every passive construction that leaves the reader unsure of who is doing what—these are a thousand and one adulterants that weaken the strength of a sentence.”

Simplicity does not mean writing simple sentences. A series of short simple sentences (He went to the store. The store was far. The day was hot. He was tired.) can sound too simple and unsophisticated in academic writing. You want complexity in your sentences, but that does not mean cramming in smart-sounding words and making long rambling sentences.

Simplicity in writing is trimming the fat which is eliminating the wordiness and saying what you want to say clearly and directly. A reader cannot be convinced of your point if they get lost in the sentences.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Simplicity in writing is beneficial because...

- (1) when you say things with a lot of extra words in them or make sentences long because you think that’s what teachers want, then the sentences are not always as easy to follow and can confuse your reader.
- (2) sentences that are clear and easy to follow are then easier for your reader to follow and eventually be convinced by the points that you are trying to make.
- (3) the more that writers can strip down their sentences to the most important parts, they can better control what they want to say and shape the meaning in the writing they are striving to convey.

Let’s try that again.

Simplicity in writing is beneficial because...

- (1) direct sentences are clearer.
- (2) direct sentences are more convincing.
- (3) writers can better control and shape meaning.

HOW DO I DO IT?

Take notice of common expressions that are needlessly wordy and trim them:

there is no doubt but that	no doubt (doubtless)
he is a man who	he
in a hasty manner	hastily
this is a subject which	this subject
owing to the fact that	since (because)
in spite of the fact that	though (although)
call your attention to the fact that	remind you (alert you)

A common violation of conciseness is the presentation of a single complex idea, step by step, in a series of sentences which might better be combined into one:

Macbeth was very ambitious. This led him to wish to become king of Scotland. The witches told him that this wish of his would come true. The king of Scotland at this time was Duncan. Encouraged by his wife, Macbeth murdered Duncan. He was thus enabled to succeed Duncan as king. (55 words)	Encouraged by his wife, Macbeth achieved his ambition and realized the prediction of the witches by murdering Duncan and becoming king of Scotland in his place. (26 words)
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The active voice is more concise and vigorous than the passive.

Passive:

The large chunks of debris covering the roof and clogging the drainpipes were removed by city workers.

Active:

City workers removed the large chunks of debris covering the roof and clogging the drainpipes.

The active voice can also strengthen bland expressions and wordy phrasing:

There were a great number of dead leaves lying on the ground.	Dead leaves covered the ground.
The reason that he left college was that his health became impaired.	Failing health compelled him to leave college.
It was not long before he was very sorry that he had said what he had.	He soon repented his words.

PRACTICE

Simplicity

Revise the following passages, avoiding wordiness and undesirable repetition.

A large number of people enjoy reading murder mysteries regularly. As a rule, these people are not themselves murderers, nor would these people really ever enjoy seeing someone commit an actual murder, nor would most of them actually enjoy trying to solve an actual murder. They probably enjoy reading murder mysteries because of this reason: they have found a way to escape from the monotonous, boring routine of dull everyday existence.

To such people the murder mystery is realistic fantasy. It is realistic because the people in the murder mystery are as a general rule believable as people. They are not just made up pasteboard figures. It is also realistic because the character who is the hero, the character who solves the murder mystery, solves it not usually by trial and error and haphazard methods but by exercising a high degree of logic and reason. It is absolutely and totally essential that people who enjoy murder mysteries have an admiration for the human faculty of logic.

But murder mysteries are also fantasies. The people who read such books of fiction play a game. It is a game in which they suspend certain human emotions. One of these human emotions that they suspend is pity. If the reader stops to feel pity and sympathy for each and every victim that is killed or if the reader stops to feel terrible horror that such a thing could happen in our world of today, that person will never enjoy reading murder mysteries. The devoted reader of murder mysteries keeps uppermost in mind at all times the goal of arriving through logic and observation at the final solution to the mystery offered in the book. It is a game with life and death. Whodunits hopefully help the reader to hide from the hideous horrors of actual life and death in the real world.

WHAT IS POINT OF VIEW?

Point of view refers to the position from which writers “speak” to their audience. Writers have a point of view in all types of writing (and speaking), including emails, text messages, essays, articles, stories, etc.

Writers have three different options for point of view:

- **First person point of view** makes direct references to the writer using the following pronouns: I, me, my, myself, mine, we, us, our, and ourselves.
- **Second person point of view** makes direct references to the reader using the following pronouns: you, your, yourself, and yourselves.
- **Third person point of view** directly states who or what the writing discusses without using first person pronouns; third person point of view uses the following pronouns: he, she, it, they, him, her, his, hers, its, itself, them, their, themselves, one, etc.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Although creative writing gives writers more flexibility with the point of view, **academic essays typically use third person point of view** (with minimal uses of first person point of view) because third person enhances credibility by appearing objective and also emphasizes the topic instead of the writer.

Here’s a guide for when you use which point of view and why:

- **First person point of view** allows writers to write about themselves when including specific personal examples (“The author’s criticisms are accurate which I know from having also served in the army as a young woman”). In some projects, first person point of view can be used to show how a writer’s research or ideas build on or depart from the work of others.
- **Second person point of view** allows the writer to speak directly to the reader so is helpful in “how to” instruction (like in this Rhetoric); however, this is not commonly used in academic writing because it can include your readers in beliefs they may not share (“When you listen to the president, you wonder how he got elected.”). Using “you” can also be imprecise (“You can drive around for hours looking for parking.” This is not true for all. This is more precise: “San Franciscans can drive around for hours looking for parking.”). Using “you” is also more informal and conversational. For these reasons second person is not commonly used in academic writing.
- **Third person point of view** allows the writer to appear objective and should be the primary point of view for academic essays and other formal types of communication.

HOW DO I USE IT?

As you write your essays, you will need to carefully consider how you use point of view so that your writing has a consistent voice throughout the essay. Let's look at some basics on using point of view.

1. Consistent Point of View—Writers must be careful and maintain a consistent point of view; as noted above, academic writing should primarily rely on third person point of view with minimal instances of first person point of view. When writers switch the point of view within a sentence, the sentences may be confusing.

- **ORIGINAL:** Students should make sure they register early for the Rock the School Bells conference since he will not have a chance to get tickets the day of the conference.
- **REVISED:** Students should make sure they register early for the Rock the School Bells conference since *they* will not have a chance to get tickets the day of the conference.

Another consideration for a consistent point of view relates to using plural nouns and pronouns instead of the singular forms; this approach helps writers be more concise and avoid the unnecessary use of “he/she” and “him/her.” While “he/she” and “him/her” may be grammatically correct, you can achieve a stronger voice and better style by minimizing the use of these phrases.

- **ORIGINAL:** A student should make sure he/she signs up early for the workshops he/she wants to attend for his/her classes.
- **REVISED:** Students should make sure *they* sign up early for the workshops *they* want to attend for *their* classes.

2. Personal examples—When you include personal examples or experiences to illustrate a point in an academic essay, you should not refer to yourself in the third person. On the contrary, you should definitely use first person point of view to avoid accidental changes in point of view as well as to avoid awkward references to yourself.

- **ORIGINAL:** Last year, Rachel Everett attended the Rock the School Bells conference, and I learned the history of hip hop. (NOTE: the writer, Rachel Everett, first refers to herself in the third person and switches to first person in the second half of the sentence)
- **REVISED:** Last year, I attended the Rock the School Bells conference, and I learned the history of hip hop.

3. Unnecessary use of first person—When writing academic essays, you will often need to make an argument, which requires you to state your opinion on the topic and sources. You do not need to use phrases like “I think/feel/believe” or “in my opinion.” If you have written a grammatically correct sentence, you will be able to simply delete these phrases (and *still* state your opinion).

- **ORIGINAL:** I think Dyson misses the point when he argues that older generations do not appreciate hip hop because to me many parents and grandparents do appreciate hip hop.
- **REVISED:** Dyson misses the point when he argues that older generations do not appreciate hip hop because many parents and grandparents do appreciate hip hop.

PRACTICE

Point of View

Revise the following sentences to make the point of view consistent.

1. A student should seek help from counselors to make sure they have student educational plans.
2. Professor Garcia's classes teach students critical thinking while it also helps them improve their writing.
3. A new student must work hard to learn about the college resources he or she may need as they begin their college careers.
4. If you want more active participation in class, teachers will appeal to different learning styles.

Revise the following sentences to remove the unnecessary use of first person.

5. Skyline College has great programs to help students get a good education, so I think local high school students should seriously consider starting their education here.
6. In my opinion, California should provide more funding to community college students because I believe education should be a top priority for the government.

WHAT IS WORD CHOICE?

Of course, it is what it sounds like: choosing the best, most effective words to form clear and convincing sentences. So what makes the best word choices? When writing academic essays, you want to use concrete words that directly engage the senses and give precise meaning. Here are some definitions of different types of words to consider:

- **Abstract words** refer to ideas or concepts rather than physical objects. For example, words like *love* and *hate* represent concepts with no physical referent.
- **Concrete words** refer to objects that we can hear, see, feel, touch, and/or smell; for instance, *tattoo* relates to something we can see and touch while you cannot touch, smell, or taste *justice*, an abstract term.
- **General words** refer to large classes of objects; for example, “jobs” and “video games” relate to general types of objects.
- **Specific words** refer to specific objects; for example, “high school teacher” and “*Call of Duty*” relate to specific jobs and video games.
- **Clichés** refer to overused word phrases and statements like, “Don’t judge a book by its cover.”

WHY IS WORD CHOICE IMPORTANT?

As you work on your academic essays, you want to create sentences that express clear, precise ideas to your readers. You want to be mindful about overusing abstract terms because your writing will lose clarity. In conveying the importance of favoring concrete terms in writing, French poet Alain de Lille once said, “Your sentences should be full of stones, metals, chairs, tables, animals, men, and women.”

Although abstract ideas have an important place in many academic essays, you will need to use concrete and specific language to clearly and effectively communicate your meaning to your readers. This also means that you should avoid using clichés because they do not show original thoughts and lack specific meaning.

HOW DO I APPLY IT?

As you revise your academic essays (and other types of communications), you will need to revise your sentences for concrete and specific language. Let's look at a few examples:

- 1. Abstract vs. concrete**—To give your reader a clear understanding of your meaning, you will often need to replace abstract terms with more concrete terms.
 - **ORIGINAL**: To develop a strong academic essay, you will need to work hard.
 - **REVISED**: To develop a strong academic essay, you will need to spend time prewriting, organizing your ideas, writing an outline, and completing multiple drafts.
- 2. General vs. specific**—Good academic essays will use specific language for more precise and clearer sentences.
 - **ORIGINAL**: The student found the class fascinating. (NOTE: the reader might need more information here; why does he find the class fascinating?)
 - **REVISED**: Jimmy found Professor Lachmayr's class fascinating because it focused on race and gender.
- 3. Clichés**—In everyday speech, we might use clichés, but academic writing requires more thoughtful ideas and originality. Thus, you should not use clichés in your writing; instead, think of more original and specific ways of stating your idea.
 - **ORIGINAL**: Because Jimmy submitted his essay late, he had to “pay the piper.” (NOTE: The cliché “pay the piper” needs to be replaced to indicate exactly what this means in reference to the late essay.)
 - **REVISED**: Because Jimmy submitted his essay late, he lost ten points and had to meet with Professor Williams.

PRACTICE

Word Choice

Revise the following sentences to replace abstract language with more concrete language and details.

1. I wrote a great research paper.
2. College students have a lot of freedom.

Revise the following sentences to replace general language for more specific language and sentences.

3. The book was very interesting.
4. Skyline College has a lot of great resources.

Revise the following sentences to replace the underlined cliché with more original and precise language.

5. John let the cat out of the bag when he told my parents which college I chose to attend.
6. Travelling to different parts of the world has taught me to not judge a book by its cover.

WHAT IS SENTENCE CRAFTING?

Sentence craft is consciously creating clear and focused sentences. Good writers work hard to edit their compositions on the sentence level. As you review each sentence of the essay, you will need to consider your reader to make sure you craft sentences (and paragraphs) that effectively express your meaning.

As with any skill, crafting clear sentences that effectively communicate your meaning requires a lot of practice, but with that practice you will become more adept and efficient at editing your sentences for clarity, focus, and style. Even the greatest writers continually review their sentences to ensure they clearly express their ideas to the reader.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Good writers know they must put in the time to make sure their reader clearly understands their writing, from a text message to an email to a college essay. Think of the times when you have said something that someone misinterpreted. If this happened in a conversation, you had the chance to explain yourself to make sure your “audience” understood your meaning.

However, when you write, your reader does not have the chance to ask you questions to clarify your meaning. Therefore, you must work hard to edit your sentences to accurately deliver your message to the reader the first time.

HOW DO I DO IT?

In this section, you will learn some techniques to help you craft clear, focused sentences.

1. **“to be” verb + verb ending in –ing**—When you find a sentence using this construction, drop the “to be” verb and make the verb ending in –ing the main verb of the sentence.
 - **ORIGINAL:** This book *is showing* the reader how hip hop can affect listeners.
 - **REVISED:** This book *shows* the reader how hip hop can affect listeners.
2. **There + “to be” verb**—When you find sentences that begin with “There is/are/was/were,” delete “there” and the “to be” verb and find the *real* subject of the sentence and think of an active verb to accurately describe the subject’s specific action.
 - **ORIGINAL:** There are many hip hop artists rapping about drugs, sex, and violence.
 - **REVISED:** Many hip hop artists rap about drugs, sex, and violence.
 - **ORIGINAL:** There is a difference between mainstream and underground hip hop.
 - **REVISED:** Some key differences distinguish mainstream and underground hip hop.

3. Passive voice (“to be” verb + past participle)—Sentences in passive voice start with the object of the action rather than the subject (or actor); instead of beginning the sentences with the object of the action, you should begin the sentence with the subject (actor) directly followed by the action. To accomplish this, you will need to identify the “who” or “what” that performs the action in the sentence and make the actor the subject of the sentence; drop the “to be” verb and replace it with a more active verb.

- **ORIGINAL**: The audience is influenced negatively by the violence in hip hop lyrics.
- **REVISED**: Violent hip hop lyrics negatively affect the audience.

4. “to be” as the main verb—Since good writing includes specific actions performed by specific actors, you will want to make sure you use active verbs instead of “to be.” If you use “to be” as the main verb of the sentence, you will need to revise the sentence by focusing on the specific action you describe. For example, look for other words in the sentence (i.e. nouns) based off verbs and use the verb form.

- **ORIGINAL**: Talib Kweli’s lyrics are both socially conscious and clever.
- **REVISED**: Talib Kweli creates both socially conscious and clever lyrics.

5. Noun forms of verbs + “to be”—Often writers end up with “to be” in their sentences when they rely on noun forms of verbs. Rather than using the noun form of the verb, you should use the verb form to show the action in the sentence.

- **ORIGINAL**: The specialization of magazines in hip-hop is something that started in the 1980s.
- **REVISED**: Magazines first specialized in hip-hop in the 1980s.

- **ORIGINAL**: Bakari Kitwana is the organizer of “Rap Sessions: Community Dialogues on Hip-Hop,” which supports political activism on college campuses throughout the United States.
- **REVISED**: Bakari Kitwana organizes “Rap Sessions: Community Dialogues on Hip-Hop,” which supports political activism on college campuses throughout the United States.

6. Unclear pronoun references—When you use pronouns to refer to other nouns in your sentences and paragraphs, you must make sure the reader can easily identify to whom or what the pronoun refers. You can accomplish this by simply using the specific noun rather than the pronoun.

- **ORIGINAL**: Skyline College holds a hip hop and education conference every year and has a new hip-hop learning community. This gives middle school and high school students an introduction to the College.
- **REVISED**: Skyline College holds a hip hop and education conference every year and has a new hip-hop learning community. The conference gives middle school and high school students an introduction to the College.

PRACTICE

Sentence Crafting

Revise the following sentences to replace the “to be” verb with an active verb.

1. I am studying nursing at University of San Francisco.
2. The psychology class is interesting to me because it focuses on how war affects soldiers.

Revise the following sentences to remove the “there + to be.”

3. There are many Skyline College students who want to transfer to a four-year university.
4. There is a major advantage to starting your college career at a community college.

Revise the following sentences to use active voice.

5. The application was sent yesterday by my sister.
6. The increase in college attendance was partially caused by a poor economy.

Revise the following sentences to use an active verb for the main verb of the sentence.

7. John is responsible for maintaining a 3.0 GPA so that he can transfer next Fall.
8. Counseling 100 is helpful for first-generation college students.

Revise the following sentences to use make the noun-form of the verb the main verb of the sentence.

9. Professor Smith is the teacher for my calculus class.
10. The student government president was a presenter at the awards banquet.

Revise the following sentences for clear pronoun references.

11. The book and movie told the same story, but it gives readers more insight into the characters' thoughts.
12. Though John and Mark both had full-time schedules last semester, he took this semester off to work.

WHAT IS SENTENCE COMBINING?

Trying to achieve simplicity in your writing does not mean writing only in short sentences. If your essays are filled with short sentences, they will read as choppy and the relationships between the sentences will not be as clear. Combining or joining sentences can convey your ideas more fluidly and logically. However, you also want rhythm in your writing which can be created through varied sentence length and structure. Include short sentences for impact.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Sentence combining helps you to...

- avoid the monotony of sentences that are brief and of equal length.
- draw attention to the ideas in the paper not to the repetitive and simple sentence structure.
- create rhythm through varied sentence length and structure.
- show the reader the relationships that exist among ideas of different importance.
- experiment with different methods of putting words together. Because there are countless ways to build sentences, the goal is not to find the one "correct" combination but to consider different arrangements to find the most effective.

HOW DO I DO IT?

Connections
In the Grammar chapter, see also "Appositives," "Coordinators," and "Subordinators."

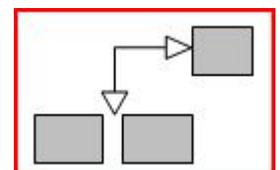
There are 3 main methods used to combine sentences:

I. **Coordinate** sentences when you want to equally emphasize the sentences.



II. **Subordinate** sentences when you want to emphasize one sentence over another.

III. **Embed** words, phrases and/or sentences to integrate ideas within sentences.



First, to understand how to combine sentences, we must have an understanding of the basic components of a sentence.

A **basic or simple sentence** contains a subject and a verb and can stand alone.

Examples: Fish swim. Dogs bark. People talk, laugh, and sing.

PRACTICE

In the following sentences, underline the subject (the doer of the action) once, and the verb (the action) twice.

- (a) Schools educate.
- (b) Better funding should be given to schools.
- (c) Students learn best in environments with quality materials and instructors.

To combine basic or simple sentences, there are 3 main methods used:

I. **Coordinate** sentences when you want to equally emphasize the sentences.



Coordination means to CONNECT two or more sentences. You join sentences through coordination when you want to give equal emphasis to each sentence.

Two ways to coordinate sentences:

- 1) Join sentences using a comma and conjunction (**For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So**)
Example: I like reading poetry, **but** I don't always understand it.
- 2) Combine related sentences using a semi-colon → ;
Example: I like reading poetry; I don't always understand it.

PRACTICE

Coordinate the following sentences by using one of the above methods.

- (d) Schools educate. Better funding should be given to schools.
- (e) Students learn best in environments with quality materials and instructors. Increased funding is difficult for schools to secure.
- (f) Better prepared students produce smarter citizens. More educated citizens raise the overall quality of a society.

II. **Subordinate** sentences when you want to emphasize one sentence over another.



First, to subordinate you have to know some subordinators:

Subordinators	
Contrast/Concession	although, while, even though, even if, whereas, though
Cause	because, since
Effect/ Result	so that, in that, in order that
Condition	if, unless, provided that
Time	after, before, as soon as, since, when, while, until, as

Subordination means to CONNECT one or more sentences with a subordinator. You join sentences through subordination when you want to give emphasis to one sentence over another. The sentence that begins with a subordinator receives LESS emphasis.

Two ways to subordinate sentences:

- 1) Join two sentences using a subordinator.
Example: Jenson spent a year traveling the world **because** he got fired from his job
- 2) Begin the sentence with a subordinator, which gives less emphasis to the beginning subordinated sentence.
Example: **Because** Jenson got fired from his job, he spent a year traveling the world.

Punctuation Note:

When a subordinator introduces a sentence, put a comma after the first clause.
Example: *After* she went to bed, she started to hear noises downstairs.

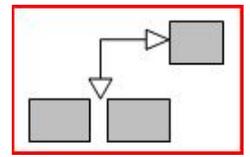
But if the subordinator comes in the middle of a clause, you don't need to set it off with a comma.
Example: She started to hear noises downstairs *after* she went to bed.



Subordinate *the following sentences by using one of the above methods.*

- (g) Schools educate. Better funding should be given to schools.
- (h) Students learn best in environments with quality materials and instructors. Increased funding is difficult for schools to secure.
- (i) We are going to have a better educated populace. State funding priorities are adjusted to provide larger budgets for school.

III. **Embed** words, phrases and/or sentences to integrate ideas within sentences.



First, to embed sentences, you want to be familiar with some words that are commonly used to embed sentences. Words such as:

who, whom, whose, which, that, when, where

Example: She had a goat. She loved it very much.

Embedded: She had a goat that she loved very much.

Example: His favorite girlfriend had just received an anonymous phone call. She was coming over later that evening.

Embedded: His favorite girlfriend, who was coming over later that evening, had just received an anonymous phone call.

Ways to embed sentences:

- 1) When the subject of the sentence is repeated in more than one sentence, look to embed.
Example: Audrey loves traveling. Audrey was leaving for China in May. She works with me.
Embedded: Audrey, a woman I work with who loves traveling, was leaving for China.
- 2) For whole sentences used to give little pieces of information, look to embed.
Example: I wanted to give Craig money to buy me tickets. Craig is my sister's boyfriend.
Embedded: I wanted to give Craig, my sister's boyfriend, money to buy me tickets.

PRACTICE

Combine each grouping of sentences into one sentence using embedding.

- (j) Pancho came to the party. He is Jose's cousin. He graduated from Stanford. He was top in his class.
- (k) The clown was juggling for twelve hours in the circus tent. The clown was exhausted. The circus tent was crowded. He was juggling next to the live animals acts. The animals smelled badly.
- (l) After 10 years, Suzanne achieved her goal. Her goal was to get a PhD from Berkeley. Her PhD was in English Literature. Her degree had an emphasis in French literature. The 10 years were grueling. Suzanne is my neighbor.

PRACTICE

Sentence Combining: Apply the different sentence combining techniques you have learned to make this paragraph more fluid.

Paragraph 1:

The Boston Red Sox were three games down. The Red Sox had to win the next four games to advance. Fans were worried. Boston had not won a World Series since 1918. No team had ever come back in the playoffs from a three-game deficit. All of the fans knew this. Red Sox fans watched anxiously as the fourth game of the ALCS began. Yankees fans watched confidently. They also knew that anything could happen. People wanted to watch a good series. They did not expect it to be such a nail-biter! David Roberts stole second base. This move would be remembered as the turning point of the series. Nobody believed the Red Sox would win that year. The Red Sox won that year. The Yankees would not win the World Series for another five years. In 2009, the Yankees won the World Series.

Now let's try **de-combining** sentences so we can appreciate the conciseness of well combined sentences and how it is easier to see the relationship among ideas when they are joined. Break this sentence down into its root sentences:

Paragraph 2:

Here's a thesis from an essay written on Malcolm X's "Learning to Read":

The characteristics that he shows of not giving up even in the face of overwhelming odds and applying good old-fashioned, and often tedious and repetitive, hard work and persistence have become frighteningly rare in the U.S. today where people have bloated senses of entitlement.

WHAT IS PARALLELISM?

Parallelism is giving two or more parts of a sentence a similar form so as to give the passage a definite pattern and to give the ideas the same level of importance and a balance. Here is a visual of what parallelism looks like:

Parallel elements:

Words	Infinitives	prepositional phrases	Subordinate clauses
singing	to wonder	at the time	when I saw her
dancing	to investigate	under the table	after they called

Non-Parallel elements:

Words	Infinitives	prepositional phrases	Subordinate clauses
to sing	since I wondered	at the time	to see her
dancing	to investigate	being nearby	after they called

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Parallelism helps to...

- improve the fluidity of sentences.
- process meaning more easily.
- emphasize the likeness between two or more ideas.
- create symmetry (balance) in writing
- add force to writing.

HOW DO I DO IT?

Here are some basic parallelism guidelines to apply in your writing:

- (1) Parallelism is used to balance nouns with nouns, prepositional phrases with prepositional phrases, participles with participles, infinitives with infinitives, clauses with clauses (**in** the cup, **on** the desk).
- (2) Parallelism is used with elements joined by coordinating conjunctions (especially **and**, **but**, and **or**).
- (3) Parallelism is used with elements in lists or in a series (**talked** on the phone, **ran** 5 miles, **saw** friends)
- (4) Parallelism is used with elements being compared (**X is more than / better than Y**).
- (5) Parallelism is used with elements joined by a linking verb or a form of be (like **being**, **is**, **were**).
- (6) Parallelism is used with elements joined by linking words (**either/or**, **neither/nor**, **not only/but also**).

PRACTICE

Parallelism:

Using the different approaches to creating parallel structure, fix the faulty parallelism in the following sentences.

(1) Parallelism is used to balance nouns with nouns, prepositional phrases with prepositional phrases, participles with participles, infinitives with infinitives, clauses with clauses (*in* the cup, *on* the desk).

Example: We want a candidate who has a sense of commitment, a good record in public office, and experience in foreign affairs.

Fix: At the store my duties are to keep the shelves stocked, I work the registers, and assisting customers.

(2) Parallelism is used with elements joined by coordinating conjunctions (especially *and*, *but*, and *or*).

Example: She likes to look, **but** not to listen. He wondered who he was **and** what he was doing.

Fix: She is both happy about the raise and she is feeling nervous about the extra responsibility.

(3) Parallelism is used with elements in lists or in a series (*talked* on the phone, *ran* 5 miles, *saw* friends)

Example: He found cleaning supplies **in the closet**, **under the sink** but not **in the garage**.

Fix: Wizards tend to have the same personality traits: craftiness, being resourceful, they are rebellious, and they have a lot of determination.

(4) Parallelism is used with elements being compared (*X is more than / better than Y*).

Example: **Driving** to New York can actually take less time than **flying** there.

Fix: Hearing her sing in person was ten times better than if you heard her on the radio.

(5) Parallelism is used with elements joined by a linking verb or a form of be (like *being*, *is*, *were*).

Example: **Being** Jim's friend means **being** understanding. To know her **is** to love her.

Fix: The passengers were preparing for departure while the flight attendants are going to try to get all the drinks served.

(6) Parallelism is used with elements joined by linking words (*either/or*, *neither/nor*, *not only/but also*).

Example: As young recruits, we were told **not only** what to do **but also** what to think.

Fix: They not only ate all the food in the house but they also didn't clean up the mess.

PRACTICE

Parallelism:

Using the different approaches to creating parallel structure, fix the faulty parallelism in the following paragraph:

Many college courses require students to write essays as part of the class curriculum. An academic essay for a college course should contain a thesis, body, and to conclude. It is important for students to perform some type of pre-writing or to cluster before typing is attempted on the computer. Pre-writing will usually help students to find and expand new ideas for the paper. After pre-writing, students should type a rough draft using their previous cluster. Students are always nervous in writing the rough draft and started the paper. It is better for students to write to the end of the rough draft than stopping every few sentences to check the grammar. If students do not expand their rough draft, the essay will not only be short but will be also disorganized. Revising the essay for a strong thesis, organization, and proper supporting is the most important part of the writing process. This is what separates the strong writers from the writers who are weaker. The final step in writing a college paper is editing. This is where students will check the paper for grammatical errors, proper punctuating, and spelling errors. A strong writing process will allow students to write a proper college essay.

WHAT ARE SOME COMMONLY MISUSED AND MISSPELLED WORDS?

As English teachers who read a lot of essays, we see some words that are regularly used incorrectly, and we see some words that are commonly misspelled. Here are lists to help you avoid these errors.

COMMONLY MISUSED WORDS

accept and **except** - *Accept* means to receive while *except* means to exclude.

affect and **effect** - *Affect* is usually a verb meaning to influence. *Effect* is usually a noun meaning result. *Effect* can also be a verb meaning to bring about.

a lot and **allot**. *A lot* means many; *allot* means to distribute something.

cite, sight and site. A *sight* is something seen; a *site* is a place. To *cite* is to quote or list as a source.

it's and **its**. *It's* is a contraction that replaces *it is*. *Its* is the possessive determiner corresponding to *it*, meaning "belonging to it."

lose and **loose**. *Lose* can mean "fail to win," "misplace," or "cease to be in possession." *Loose* can mean the opposite of tight, or the opposite of tighten.

of and have. In some dialects of spoken English, *of* and the contracted form of *have*, 've, sound alike. However, in standard written English, they are not interchangeable. Could of, would of, should of is non-standard English. Instead use *could have*, *would have*, *should have*.

past and passed. *Past* refers to events that have previously occurred while *passed* is the past tense of "to pass."

than, then - *Than* is used for comparisons; *then* means it came next.

there, their, they're - *There* refers to the location of something. *Their* means "belonging to them." *They're* is a contraction of "they are."

to, two, too - *Two* is a number, *too* means also, *to* is used with verbs (going to) or as a preposition.

weather, whether - *Weather* is what the meteorologist always predicts wrong; *whether* is used when making a choice.

who's, whose - *Whose* is possessive; *who's* is short for *who is*.

who, which, that: Do not use *which* to refer to persons. Use *who* instead. *That*, though generally used to refer to things, may be used to refer to a group or class of people.

your, you're - *Your* is something that belongs to you; *you're* is a contraction for *you are*.

COMMONLY MISSPELLED WORDS

a lot - Two words! We know this is listed under misused words as well but it is misspelled a lot!

accommodate - This word is large enough to accommodate both a double "c" AND a double "m."

argument - Let's not argue about the loss of this verb's silent [e] before the suffix -ment.

committed - If you are committed to correct spelling, you will remember that this word doubles its final [t] from "commit" to "committed."

conscience - Don't let misspelling this word weigh on your conscience.

conscientious - Work on your spelling conscientiously.

conscious - Try to be conscious of all the vowels after the "sc" in this word's ending.

definite (ly) - This word definitely gets confused as having an "a" in the middle but there are e's on the ends and i's in the middle.

grammar – If you're pointing out errors in grammar, then be sure not to end this word in "er."

independent - Please be independent but not in your spelling of this word. It ends in -ent.

indispensable - Knowing that this word ends on -able is indispensable to good writing.

mischievous - This mischievous word holds two traps: [i] before [e] and [o] before [u]. Four of the five vowels in English reside here.

misspell - What is more embarrassing than to misspell the name of the problem? Just remember that it is mis + spell and that will dispel your worry about spelling "misspell."

noticeable - The [e] is noticeably retained in this word to indicate the [c] is "soft," pronounced like [s]. Without the [e], it would be pronounced "hard," like [k], as in "applicable."

occasionally - Writers occasionally tire of doubling so many consonants and omit one but this word has 2 c's in the front and 2 l's in the back.

occurrence - Remember not only the occurrence of double double consonants in this word, but that the suffix is -ence, not -ance. No reason, just the English language keeping us on our toes.

perseverance - All it takes is perseverance and you, too, can be a (near-) perfect speller. The suffix is -ance for no reason at all.

playwright - Since they write plays, they should be "play-writes," right? Wrong. Remember that a play writer in Old English was called a "play worker" and "wright" is from an old form of "work" (wrought iron, etc.)

weird - This word is an exception to the rule about [i] before [e] except after...? So, rules can be broken!

ANSWERS

POSSIBLE ANSWERS FOR EXERCISE IN SIMPLICITY SECTION

ELIMINATING WORDINESS:

A large number of people enjoy reading murder mysteries regularly. As a rule, these people are not themselves murderers, nor would these people really ever enjoy seeing someone commit an actual murder, nor would most of them actually enjoy trying to solve an actual murder. They probably enjoy reading murder mysteries because of this reason: they have found a way to escape from the monotonous, boring routine of dull everyday existence.

Many people who do not desire to commit, see, or solve a murder still like to read murder mysteries to escape the monotony of everyday life.

To such people the murder mystery is realistic fantasy. It is realistic because the people in the murder mystery are as a general rule believable as people. They are not just made up pasteboard figures. It is also realistic because the character who is the hero, the character who solves the murder mystery, solves it not usually by trial and error and haphazard methods but by exercising a high degree of logic and reason. It is absolutely and totally essential that people who enjoy murder mysteries have an admiration for the human faculty of logic.

Murder mysteries are realistic fantasies because the characters are not pasteboard figures but believable, and the hero solves the mystery not haphazardly but with logic and reason. Murder mystery fans must admire logic.

But murder mysteries are also fantasies. The people who read such books of fiction play a game. It is a game in which they suspend certain human emotions. One of these human emotions that they suspend is pity. If the reader stops to feel pity and sympathy for each and every victim that is killed or if the reader stops to feel terrible horror that such a thing could happen in our world of today, that person will never enjoy reading murder mysteries. The devoted reader of murder mysteries keeps uppermost in mind at all times the goal of arriving through logic and observation at the final solution to the mystery offered in the book. It is a game with life and death. Whodunits hopefully help the reader to hide from the hideous horrors of actual life and death in the real world.

But murder mysteries are also fantasies. To enjoy the mystery, readers must suspend pity and play a game and not stop to feel sympathy for every victim or horror for every crime. Devoted readers focus on logic and observation to solve the game of life and death. Whodunits hide from hideous, real life horrors.

POSSIBLE ANSWERS FOR POINT OF VIEW SECTION

Revise the following sentences to make the point of view consistent.

1. A Student should seek help from counselors to make sure **he or she has** student educational plans. OR LESS WORDY: Students should seek help from counselors to make sure **they have** student educational plans.
2. Professor Garcia's classes teach students critical thinking while **they** also **help students** improve their writing.
3. **New students** must work hard to learn about the college resources **they** may need as they begin their college careers.
4. If **teachers want** more active participation in class, **they** will appeal to different learning styles.

Revise the following sentences to remove the unnecessary use of first person.

5. Skyline College has great programs to help students get a good education, so **I think** local high school students should seriously consider starting their education here.
6. **In my opinion**, California should provide more funding to community college students because **I believe** education should be a top priority for the government.

POSSIBLE ANSWERS FOR WORD CHOICE SECTION

1. I wrote a great research paper. **REVISED:** My research paper did an excellent job of incorporating evidence from both sides of the issue while also providing a clear, consistent argument.
2. College students have a lot of freedom. **REVISED:** College students have a lot of scheduling freedom as they can take classes during the daytime, evenings, and even online.
3. The book was very interesting. **REVISED:** *Drive* gave me a better understanding of how constant praise can negatively affect motivation.
4. Skyline College has a lot of great resources. **REVISED:** Skyline College offers health services, psychological counseling, academic counseling, tutoring, and career counseling.
5. John let the cat out of the bag when he told my parents which college I chose to attend. **REVISED:** John **accidentally revealed my secret** when he told my parents which college I chose to attend.
6. Travelling to different parts of the world has taught me to not judge a book by its cover. **REVISED:** Travelling to different parts of the world has taught me to **take the time to understand cultural differences and not make quick and inaccurate judgments**.

POSSIBLE ANSWERS FOR SENTENCE CRAFTING SECTION
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Revise the following sentences to replace the “to be” verb with an active verb.

1. I **study** nursing at University of San Francisco.
2. The psychology class **interests me** because it focuses on how war affects soldiers.

Revise the following sentences to remove the “there + to be.”

3. Many Skyline College students want to transfer to a four-year university.
4. There is a major advantage to starting your college career at a community college.

Revise the following sentences to use active voice.

5. My sister sent the application yesterday.
6. The poor economy partially caused the increase in college attendance.

Revise the following sentences to use an active verb for the main verb of the sentence.

7. John **must maintain** a 3.0 GPA so that he can transfer next Fall.
8. Counseling 100 **helps** first-generation college students begin their college career.

Revise the following sentences to use make the noun-form of the verb the main verb of the sentence.

9. Professor Smith **teaches** my calculus class.
10. The student government president **presented** at the awards banquet.

Revise the following sentences for clear pronoun references.

11. The book and movie told the same story, but **the book** gives readers more insight into the characters’ thoughts.
12. Though John and Mark both had full-time schedules last semester, **John** took this semester off to work.

POSSIBLE ANSWERS FOR EXERCISES FROM SENTENCE COMBINING SECTION
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UNDERLYING SUBJECTS AND VERBS IN A SENTENCE:

In the following sentences, underline the subject (the doer of the action) once, and the verb (the action) twice.

- (a) Schools educate.
- (b) Better funding should be given to schools.
- (c) Students learn best in environments with quality materials and instructors.

COORDINATING SENTENCES: (possible answers—answer can vary)

(d) Schools educate, **so** better funding should be given to schools.

OR Schools educate; **therefore** better funding should be given to schools.

(e) Students learn best in environments with quality materials and instructors, **but** increased funding is difficult for schools to secure.

OR Students learn best in environments with quality materials and instructors; **however** increased funding to is difficult for schools to secure.

(f) Better prepared students produce smarter citizens, **and** more educated citizens raise the overall quality of a society. OR Better prepared students produce smarter citizens; more educated citizens raise the overall quality of a society.

SUBORDINATING SENTENCES: (possible answers—answer can vary)

(g) **Because** schools educate, better funding should be given to schools.

(h) **Although** students learn best in environments with quality materials and instructors, increased funding is difficult for schools to secure.

(i) We are going to have a better educated populace **when** state funding priorities are adjusted to provide larger budgets for school.

EMBEDDING SENTENCES: (possible answers—answer can vary)

Combine each grouping of sentences into one sentence using embedding.

(j) Pancho, Jose's cousin who graduated from Stanford top of his class, came to the party.

(k) The exhausted clown was juggling for twelve hours in the crowded circus tent next to the live animal acts that smelled badly.

(l) After 10 grueling years, my neighbor Suzanne, achieved her goal, which was getting a PhD from Berkeley in English Literature with an emphasis in French literature.

GENERAL SENTENCE COMBINING EXERCISES: (possible answers—answer can vary)**Paragraph 1: Sentence Combining**

Three games down, the Boston Red Sox had to win the next four to advance, and fans were worried because they had not won a World Series since 1918. No team had ever come back from a three-game deficit. As the fourth game began, Red Sox fans watched anxiously while Yankee fans watched confidently. Anything could happen, and people wanted a good series, but no one expected such a nail biter! David Roberts stole second base, the series turning point. No one believed the Red Sox would win, but they did. The Yankees would not win the World Series for another 5 years until 2009.

Paragraph 2: Sentence De-Combining (1 sentence into 15 sentences)

The characteristics are rare.

He shows not giving up.

He doesn't give up in the face of overwhelming odds.

He shows applying good hard work.

He shows applying good persistence.

He shows applying old-fashioned hard work.

He show applying old-fashioned persistence.

He shows tedious hard work.

He shows tedious persistence.

He shows repetitive hard work.

He shows repetitive persistence.

They have become frighteningly rare.

Rare in the U.S.

Rare today.

People have bloated senses of entitlement.

POSSIBLE ANSWERS FOR EXERCISES FROM PARALLELISM SECTION

- (1) At the store my duties are to keep the shelves stocked, **to work** ~~I work~~ the registers, and **to assist** ~~assisting~~ customers.
- (2) She is both happy about the raise and ~~she is feeling~~ nervous about the extra responsibility.
- (3) Wizards tend to have the same personality traits: craftiness, **resourcefulness** ~~being resourceful~~, **rebelliousness** ~~they are rebellious~~, and ~~they have a lot of~~ determination.
- (4) Hearing her sing in person was ten times better than **hearing** ~~if you heard~~ her on the radio.
- (5) The passengers were preparing for departure while the flight attendants **were trying** ~~are going to try~~ to get all the drinks served.
- (6) They not only ate all the food in the house but ~~they also~~ **left** ~~didn't clean up the~~ a mess.

Possible revisions to the paragraph:

Many college courses require students to write essays as part of the class curriculum. An academic essay for a college course should contain a thesis, body, and **conclusion** ~~to conclude~~. It is important for students to perform some type of pre-writing or **clustering** ~~to cluster~~ before **they start typing** ~~typing is attempted~~ on the computer. Pre-writing will usually help students ~~to~~ find and expand new ideas for the paper. After pre-writing, students should type a rough draft using their previous cluster. Students are always nervous in writing the rough draft and **starting** ~~started~~ the paper. It is better for students to write to the end of the rough draft than **to stop** ~~stopping~~ every few sentences to check the grammar. If students do not expand their rough draft, the essay will not only be short but ~~will be~~ also disorganized. Revising the essay for a strong thesis, organization, and proper **support** ~~supporting~~ is the most important part of the writing process. This is what separates the strong writers from **the weak writers** ~~writers who are weaker~~. The final step in writing a college paper is editing. This is where students will check the paper for grammatical errors, proper **punctuation** ~~punctuating~~, and spelling errors. A strong writing process will allow students to write a proper college essay.

What, Why, and How?

14

GRAMMAR

Adjectives and Adverbs
Appositives
Articles
Commas
Contractions
Coordinators
Dangling Modifiers

Fragments
Possessives
Run-Together Sentences
Subject & Verb Identification
Subject-Verb Agreement
Subordinators
Verb Tenses

Grammar chapter overview:

Adjectives and Adverbs: These are words you can use to modify—to describe or add meaning to—other words. Adjectives modify nouns or pronouns. Examples: young, small, loud, short, fat, pretty. Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, other adverbs, and even whole clauses. Examples: really, quickly, especially, early, well.

Appositives: Appositives modify nouns for the purpose of offering details or being specific. Appositives begin with a noun or an article (a, an, the), they don't have their own subject and verb, and they are usually set off with a comma. Example: The car, an antique Stingray, cost ten thousand dollars.

Articles: The English language has definite (“*the*”) and indefinite articles (“*a*” and “*an*”). The use depends on whether you are referring a specific member of a group (definite) or to any member of a group (indefinite).

Commas: Commas have many uses in the English language. They are responsible for everything from setting apart items in a series to making your writing clearer and preventing misreading.

Contractions: Apostrophes can show possession (the girl's hamster is strange), and also can show the omission of one or more letters when words are combined into contractions (do not = don't).

Coordinators: Coordinators are words you can use to join simple sentences to equally stress both ideas you are connecting. You can easily remember the seven coordinators if you keep in mind the word FANBOYS (For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So).

Dangling Modifiers: All modifiers, words that add clarity, describe, or add detail to other words in a sentence, must be clearly and logically connected to their implied subjects, the grammatical subject of the clause nearest to the modifier. When they are not logically connected, they are called dangling modifiers.

Fragments: A sentence must contain a subject-verb unit; a fragment is a group of words that pretends to be a sentence but doesn't actually have a valid subject-verb unit. Example: Since they broke up.

Possessives: To show ownership of things, people or concepts, we use possessives. A common way to form the possessive is to add apostrophe + s. Example: the books of the student → the student's books.

Run-Together Sentences: Run-together sentences are the result of combining two or more complete sentences together without an acceptable joiner. Acceptable joiners for connecting independent clauses include: coordinators, subordinators, and semi-colons (;).

Subject & Verb Identification: Two of the most important parts of speech are subjects and verbs. Verbs are words that indicate action or a state of being, words like: write, run, tell, have, be, look, feel. The subject of a sentence performs the action(s) indicated by the main verb; that is, the subject is the doer of the action.

Subject-Verb Agreement: In the present tense verbs must agree with their subjects: both must be singular, or both must be plural. Examples: I breathe the air. He breathes the air. You must add an –s or –es at the end of the verb when the subject is a singular third person (he, she, it).

Subordinators: Like coordinators, subordinators can join simple sentences but they de-emphasize one of the ideas. Sentences with a subordinator (words such as *although*, *since*, *when*, *even though*, *because*) need to be connected to an independent sentence. Example: *Since she studied*, she got an A.

Verb Tenses: Tense refers to the form a verb takes in a sentence, whether to express the present, past or future.

Adjectives & Adverbs

What are they?

Adjectives and adverbs are words you can use to modify—to describe or add meaning to—other words.

Connections
See also “Commas” and “Dangling Modifiers.”

Adjectives modify nouns or pronouns. Examples of some common adjectives are: young, small, loud, short, fat, pretty. You can also identify many adjectives by the following common endings.

- | | | |
|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| -able: honorable, useable | -ic: frantic, scientific | -less: ruthless, careless |
| -al: parental, economical | -ive: festive, disruptive | -ous: joyous, rebellious |
| -ful: forgetful, soulful | -ish: selfish, boyish | |

Adverbs, on the other hand, modify verbs, adjectives, other adverbs, and even whole clauses. Adverbs can tell us *how* something is done, *when* it is done, and *where* it is done. Examples of some common adverbs are: really, quickly, especially, early, well, immediately, yesterday.

While many adverbs do end with “-ly”, don’t take this for granted: some adverbs, like “almost” and “very” do not end this way, and some words that do end in “-ly”, like “lively,” are actually adjectives.

Comparatives and Superlatives

Many adverbs and most adjectives generally have three forms: the normal form; the comparative form, which you can use to compare two things; and the superlative form, which you can use to compare three or more things. The following chart gives you some guidelines for forming the comparative and superlative forms of adjectives and adverbs.

Rules	Examples		
	Normal	Comparative	Superlative
Short adjectives & adverbs: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add –er for comparative • Add –est for superlative 	Green Big Hungry	Greener Bigger Hungrier	Greenest Biggest Hungriest
	Soon Late	Sooner Later	Soonest Latest

Rules	Examples		
	Normal	Comparative	Superlative
Longer adjectives & most longer adverbs ending in -ly: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Add “more” + adjective/adverb for comparative • Add “most” + adjective/adverb for superlative 	Delicious Incredible	More delicious More incredible	Most delicious Most incredible
	Slowly Easily Brightly	More slowly More easily More brightly	Most slowly Most easily Most brightly
Irregular adjectives and adverbs have special forms	Good Bad Little (amount) Many	Better Worse Less More	Best Worst Least Most
	Well Badly	Better Worse	Best Worst

When using comparative and superlative forms, keep the following in mind:

- Many adverbs indicating time, place, and degree (i.e. tomorrow, here, totally) do not have comparative or superlative forms.
- Adjectives and adverbs that indicate an absolute or unchangeable quality should not be used with comparative and superlative constructions. Such absolute modifiers include words like final, main, impossible, perfect, unavoidable, unique.

Placement of Adjectives & Adverbs

Misplaced adjective or adverbs can cause confusion, as in the following example:

- Shaken not stirred, James Bond drank his martinis.

The writer is probably referring to the martinis, but the way this sentence is written, it implies that James Bond himself is shaken and not stirred.

For more information about misplaced adjectives and adverbs, see “Dangling Modifiers.”

Adjectives

In order to avoid confusion, try to place adjectives as close as possible to the nouns or pronouns they modify. Most one-word adjectives come right before the nouns they modify. In the examples below, the adjectives are double-underlined and the nouns they modify are in italics.

- He made a delicious *dinner*.
- The hungry *girls* devoured it quickly.
- Their full *stomachs* pushed against their jeans.
- But they couldn't resist the incredible *dessert*.

One major exception to this rule is when an adjective follows a linking verb (i.e. is/are, was/were, feel, smell, taste, look, believe). For example:

- *Dinner* was delicious.
- The *girls* were hungry.
- Their *stomachs* felt full.
- *Dessert* looked incredible.

Be careful. Sometimes writers will use adverbs with a linking verb when what they really want is an adjective, or vice-versa. Choosing the adjective versus the adverb form of the same word has big implications for the meaning of a sentence. For example:

Adjective	Adverb
I feel bad. (I feel ill, depressed, apologetic)	I feel badly (I'm bad at feeling)

Multiple-word adjective phrases generally follow the noun or pronoun they modify, but occasionally can come before.

- The *girl* snoring in the next room woke up her roommate.
- The *customer* annoyed with the slow service complained to the manager.
- Proud of her youngest son, his *mother* showed his picture to strangers on the bus.

Adjective clauses—easy to identify because they start with the words “who,” “whom,” “whose,” “which,” “that,” “when,” and “where”—follow the noun they modify. For example:

- She had a *goat* that she loved very much.
- His favorite *girlfriend*, who he thought was coming over later that evening, had just received an anonymous phone call.

Adverbs

As with adjectives, adverbs need to be placed where the reader can clearly understand the meaning you intend. Adverbs are a bit more flexible, however. Both single-word and multiple-word adverb phrases can generally be placed either before or after the words they modify. In the examples below, the adverbs and adverb phrases are underlined and the words they modify are in italics. For example:

- The lion *jumped* skillfully through the flaming hoop.
- The lion skillfully *jumped* through the flaming hoop.
- Before next Wednesday, *she* needed to cash her paycheck.
- *She* needed to cash her paycheck before next Wednesday.

Punctuating Adjectives and Adverbs

Adjectives

To help you decide whether or not you should use a comma when separating two or more adjectives, ask yourself the following two questions:

- Can the order of the two adjectives be reversed?
- Can the word "and" be put between the adjectives?

If either answer is yes, then the adjectives are coordinate, and you should use a comma. For example:

- Jessica is an ambitious, intelligent woman.
- Jessica is an intelligent, ambitious woman. [order reversed] 😊
- Jessica is an intelligent and ambitious woman. [added "and"] 😊

If you cannot reverse the order of the adjectives or add "and" to the adjectives, then they are cumulative, and do not require a comma. For example:

- Roger has fourteen silver horns.
- Roger has silver fourteen horns. [The reversed order does not work.] ❌
- Roger has fourteen and silver horns. [The added "and" does not work.] ❌

Adverbs

Place a comma at the end of an adverb phrase when it comes at the beginning of the sentence. For example:

- After some thought, she decided to buy her cousin's used car.

For more detailed information on when to use commas with adjectives and adverbs, please see the "Commas."

PRACTICE

A) Identify the adjectives and adverbs in the following sentences by underlining the adjectives twice and the adverbs once. .

For example: The one-eyed green aliens stepped cautiously out of their spaceship.

1. Their timid leader tentatively put one fat, calloused foot on the grass.
2. She then gingerly placed the other foot down.
3. She paused, thoughtfully scratched her forehead, and then started to waddle quite gracelessly toward a dim light.
4. Soon the braver aliens followed her but the more cowardly aliens hung back inside the door of the silver spaceship.
5. Suddenly, they heard a short, high-pitched yelp.
6. The youngest alien had stepped accidentally on the tail of a small furry creature, and both of them cried out instinctively.
7. The little alien regained his composure right away and, curious about the strange creature, he carefully reached down to pick up the frightened mouse.
8. The mouse, still terrified, dashed away.
9. It ran over the sensitive toes of several aliens who squealed loudly
10. The resulting commotion distracted the group, and they didn't notice the two young children slowly riding up on their creaky three-speed bicycles.

B) Create more detailed sentences by adding your own adjectives and adverbs to modify the words in italics. For example:

- The *star* *punched* the *photographer*.

The reclusive movie star violently punched the pushy photographer.

1. The *island* was populated by *birds* that *soared* over the trees.
2. It was also populated by *tourists* who stayed at the *resort* and *sat* by the *pool*.
3. The *man* in a *suit* was *reading* a *magazine* on his morning commute to work.
4. The *woman* next to him *sighed* as the train *stopped* in a tunnel.
5. The neighbors *gossiped* about the *people* who lived in the *house* on the corner.
6. UPS delivered *packages* to the back door and *strangers* in *cars* visited.
7. The students in the computer lab *talked* to each other and *worked* on their essays.
8. The *tutor* *helped* the *boy* with his *homework*.
9. The *children* *ate* the *ice cream*.
10. A *bully* *grabbed* one of the cones and *stuffed* it in his *mouth*.

Appositives

What are they?

In your essays, you often want to use long, complex sentences to draw your reader in, to avoid the chopiness that comes from a series of short sentences, and to provide clear and vivid detail. While adjectives can modify nouns (the *blue* car), sometimes nouns themselves—appositives—also modify nouns for the purpose of offering details or being specific. Sometimes these appositives will be called noun phrase appositives (or NPAs).

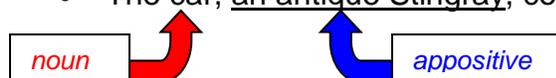
Connections
For more help combining sentences, see “Adjectives and Adverbs.”

What does an appositive look like?

- It will begin with a noun or an article (a, an, the).
- As a phrase, it will not have its own subject *and* verb.
- It will be usually set off with a comma, but occasionally is separated with a colon (:) or dash (—).

Examples:

- The car, an antique Stingray, cost ten thousand dollars.



- Martha, Beth's older sister, came to the open-mic night with her guitar.
- To the baseball game Roger brought all his goodies: balls, a glove, a hat and a sign.
- She took her medication—pain killers and cold medicine—and hid them in her suitcase.

Create Your Own Appositives

Because you may be writing a whole new sentence to give just a little piece of information to your reader, try to make your writing less choppy and repetitive by using an appositive to combine the ideas.

You might have:

- I wanted to give Droopy to the SPCA before she attacked.
- Droopy is my sister's ferocious pit bull.

These sentences could easily be combined:

- I wanted to give Droopy, my sister's ferocious pit bull, to the SPCA before she attacked.

What happened to create the appositive? The writer noticed that the second sentence, “Droopy is my sister's ferocious pit bull” only gave more information about Droopy, who had already been introduced in the previous sentence. That additional information is dropped into the first sentence after the noun it modifies. Remember to use commas to set off the NPA.

A Note on Colons and Dashes

You may be wondering when a colon or dash is appropriate to set off an NPA. Most of the time a comma will do just fine. Sometimes, though, you will wish to call more attention to the information in apposition—draw the reader’s eyes to it—and in those instances, a dash (which is made with *two* hyphens “—”) may do the trick. A colon is usually used when the NPA is a series or list of items (“I brought her favorite fruit: apples, oranges and peaches.”)

PRACTICE

Exercise 1 – Noun Phrase Appositives – Sentence Combining

Combine the following sentences using NPAs.

Example: I want to take the painting to the museum for donation. The painting is a Van Gogh.

CORRECT: I want to take the painting, a Van Gogh, to the museum for donation.

-
1. The lunch was cheap, served cold, and brought an hour late. The lunch was a bowl of soup.
 2. Maxwell’s car topped fifty miles per hour—but barely. His car was a sleek Corvair.
 3. The student body voted “no” on the resolution even though it would have benefited them explicitly. The student body is a confused group of adults whose only interest in common was the college’s location.
 4. The pilot was stranded for twelve hours inside of his jet. The pilot was a former Air Force mechanic. His jet was a Cessna Skylane.
 5. I want to speak on the important subjects. The important subjects are philosophy, linguistics and chemistry.
 6. After six long years Alec finally achieved his lifelong goal. The goal was a scholarship to a good college.
 7. Even though you’re willing to forfeit the prize, I think you should wait a week or two—until you know you won’t need the money. The prize would be my salary for a whole year.
 8. The bear came to our tent, peeked in, and went on his merry way. The bear was a sleepy grizzly.
 9. Camped around the fire, each of us stared at the night sky. The fire was a glowing source of warmth. The night sky was a bowl full of sparkling stars.
 10. Mrs. Peterson warned us that we would have only one more day to hand in the assignment. Mrs. Peterson is my least favorite teacher.

Exercise 2 – NPAs – Sentence Combining

For each of the following sentences, add one or more NPA to give the reader additional information. Make up whatever you like! (Hint: find the noun(s) in the sentence to look to see what can take an NPA.)

Example:

- The textbook fell from my desk.

CORRECT: *The textbook, a giant collection of poetry, fell from my desk.*

1. My best friend lost the race.
2. Bill Clinton took first prize for his book.
3. Joanne told Larry to go for a ride on his boat.
4. Napoleon discovered the “trapple.”
5. My binder contains one hundred papers and two pamphlets.
6. The dog bit Bill in the leg before he could run into a house.
7. Her shirt nearly blinded me.
8. Abe Lincoln probably didn’t use Log Cabin syrup.
9. I like the school’s newest building.
10. Cindy took the money to the bank.

Articles

What are they?

The English language has definite (“*the*”) and indefinite articles (“*a*” and “*an*”). The use depends on whether you are referring to a specific member of a group (definite) or to any member of a group (indefinite).

<u>Indefinite Articles: “a” and “an”</u>	<u>Definite Article: “the”</u>
<p>You will use an indefinite article when referring to any member of a group or one your readers are not yet familiar with.</p>	<p>You will use the definite article when referring to a specific member of a group.</p>
<p>The indefinite article “<i>a</i>” is used when the word following it (which may be a noun or an adjective) begins with a consonant or with a consonant sound.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ a dog○ a computer○ a onetime sale <p>The indefinite article “<i>an</i>” is used when the word following it begins with a vowel (<i>a</i>, <i>e</i>, <i>i</i>, <i>o</i>, or <i>u</i>).</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ an apple○ an ellipsis○ an umbrella	<p>The consonant and vowel rules that apply to “<i>a</i>” and “<i>an</i>” do not apply to the use of “<i>the</i>.”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">○ the neighbor’s dog○ the nice nephew○ the mooing cows○ the building○ the red hairdryer○ the airplane
<p>If you were to say, “Juan set his keys on <i>a</i> table,” it would tell the reader that Juan chose any table, an unspecific table, one of many.</p> <p>If you were to say, “Marcus goes swimming in <i>a</i> lake on Fridays,” the reader understands that <i>which</i> lake Marcus chose really isn’t important, and might even change from week to week.</p>	<p>If you were to say, “Juan set his keys on <i>the</i> table,” it would tell the reader that Juan chose a specific table, one you may have already mentioned.</p> <p>If you were to say, “Marcus goes swimming in <i>the</i> lake on Fridays,” the reader understands that it is a specific lake, and that he goes to the same place each week.</p>

Plural Indefinite Article - *some*

You will use the word “some” before a plural noun (or its modifying adjective):

- some hairs
- some boxes

The singular: I put all of my clothes in a box I found in the basement.

The plural: I put all of my clothes in *some* boxes I found in the basement.

Plural Nouns

Plural nouns do not require an indefinite article: “I love apples,” instead of “I love an apples.” (You must use the definite article if you have already introduced the idea or are referring to a specific member of a group: “I love *the* apples grown across the street.”)

Non-count Nouns

Non-count nouns, which include concepts and ideas that cannot be counted in number, may or may not require an article: no one hard and fast rule applies. You can write “Kindness spreads like wildfire,” instead of “A kindness spreads like wildfire,” or “The kindness spreads like wildfire” (unless you are referring to a specific kindness mentioned elsewhere in your writing, as in “the kindness you showed me”).

Proper Nouns

Proper nouns, which name a particular person, place or thing, sometimes take the article “*the*” and sometimes do not.

- Soda is damaging to your teeth, but everyone still drinks it.
- *The* soda in my cup is flat, so I think I will throw it out.
- We are going to meet at *the* White House.

Do not use “*the*” before:

- names of countries (except *the* Netherlands, the United Arab Emirates, and *the* United States)
- names of cities, towns or states
- names of streets
- names of lakes and bays (except a group of lakes—*the* Great lakes)
- names of mountains (except mountain ranges—*the* Rockies)
- names of continents
- names of islands (except island chains—*the* Canary islands)

Do use “*the*” before:

- names of rivers, oceans and seas
- points on the globe
- geographical areas
- deserts, forests, gulfs and peninsulas

Adapted from:

<http://www.owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/esl/eslart.html> 3/14/06 – 10:00AM & *The Brief Holt Handbook, Fourth Edition*, Kirsznner & Mandell, 2004

PRACTICE

Exercise 1 – Definite and Indefinite Articles

Fill in the blank for each sentence using either *a*, *an*, or *the*, or leave the space blank if none is needed.

Example:

I was going to the beach where my cousin Willie lost his board in the waves.

1. Last week _____ seagull dropped his fish onto my car.
2. Maria took out _____ garbage before reading.
3. _____ surfboard cut through the waves as she sped toward the beach.
4. Sculpture is _____ interesting art form, whether in metal, clay or uranium.
5. I love picnics—especially when I remember _____ food.
6. My house is falling apart, _____ shutters are in disrepair, and _____ windows are broken.
7. The brothers met to discuss _____ possible solution.
8. I went to the lab to work on _____ computer, but they were all taken.
9. Well, professor, _____ alien came and stole my gray matter before I could finish my homework.
10. This semester _____ same student violated his restraining order.
11. She passed him to avoid _____ confrontation involving _____ police.
12. I want to go to _____ part of Ukraine where they speak _____ Russian dialect.
13. The assistants found _____ theme that meant the most to them, and they wove it carefully into _____ handbook they could be proud of.
14. _____ airplane's tires skidded down _____ Los Angeles Airport's main runway before knocking out _____ baggage cart and _____ fuel truck.
15. I am studying _____ American history in school, but only after I pass my Biology class and ace _____ final exam.

Commas

What are they?

Commas have many uses in the English language. They are responsible for everything from setting apart items in a series to making your writing clearer and preventing misreading. Correct comma use is a difficult skill to master since it requires a combination of grammar knowledge and independent stylistic judgment.

Connections
For more help understanding sentence combining, turn to “Coordinators” and “Subordinators.”

Sentence Combining

When you are joining ideas, phrases or clauses within a sentence, you often will use a comma for punctuation.

An **independent clause**, also known as a simple sentence, is a group of words that contains a subject and a verb AND can stand alone as a sentence. For example

- The child went to the dentist.
- His girlfriend is angry.
- She will buy a new pair of shoes.

You can join an independent clause with another independent clause using a coordinator (FANBOYS) and a comma:

- Angelo rides his bike, and Mary takes the bus.
- Marguerite grabbed the diamonds, but Oliver sold them on the black market.

You can easily remember the seven coordinators by keeping in mind the word “**FANBOYS**” :

For And Nor
But Or Yet So

A dependent clause is a group of words that contains a subject and a verb BUT it cannot stand alone because it starts with a subordinator, words like although, while, since, because, if, until, after. For example:

- When the child went to the dentist
- Because his girlfriend is angry
- Although she will buy new shoes

You will use a comma after a dependent clause to join it to the independent clause that finishes the thought:

- Even though Michael was allowed to go to the concert, his mother made sure he had completed all his homework.

However, if you reverse the order and put the independent clause first and the dependent clause second, you do not need a comma:

- His mother made sure he had completed all his homework even though Michael was allowed to go to the game.

Series

You will use commas to separate items in a series containing three or more coordinate elements.

- Ron, Maria, and Jessica play soccer every day after school.
- My favorite vegetables are Brussels sprouts, spinach, and cauliflower.
- I want either fettuccini alfredo, eggplant parmesan, or the linguine with clams in a white sauce.

You will use commas to separate items in a series of two or more coordinate adjectives—adjectives modifying the same idea independent of each other.

- It should be a *slow, lazy* day.
- Seven years passed in a *destructive, whirling* blur.
- He brought his *sleek, shiny* bicycle.

Commas are not required when the adjectives are cumulative, or when they describe different aspects of the same noun.

- Donnie sold me *ten gold* bowling balls.
- My favorites are the *lazy white* clouds.
- He ordered a *delicious chocolate* cake for the party.

Comma-Adjective Rule

To help you decide whether or not you should use a comma when separating two or more adjectives, ask yourself the following two questions:

- Can the order of the two adjectives be reversed?
- Can the word “*and*” be put between the adjectives?

If either answer is yes, then the adjectives are coordinate, and you should **use** a comma.

- Jessica is an ambitious, intelligent woman.
 - Jessica is an intelligent, ambitious woman. [order reversed] 😊
 - Jessica is an intelligent *and* ambitious woman. [added “*and*”] 😊

If you cannot reverse the order of or add “*and*” to the adjectives, then they are cumulative, and **do not** require a comma.

- Roger has fourteen silver horns.
 - Roger has silver fourteen horns. [The reversed order does not work.] ❌
 - Roger has fourteen *and* silver horns. [The added “*and*” does not work.] ❌

Setting off Nonessential Elements

Some modifying elements of a sentence are essential, restricting the meaning of a modified term, while others are nonessential and do not restrict the modified term's meaning. These nonessential elements, which can be words, phrases, or clauses, are set off with commas.

	<u>Nonessential</u> (Nonrestrictive)	<u>Essential</u> (Restrictive)
Adjective Clause	<p>Students, <i>who use the majority of the Health Center's services</i>, claim to be especially sick this year.</p> <p><u>All students claim to be sick this year.</u></p>	<p>Students <i>who play any school sport</i> will receive free tickets to final game.</p> <p><u>Only students who play a school sport receive the tickets, not all students.</u></p>
Prepositional Phrase	<p>The professor, <i>with a wink</i>, dismissed her class early.</p> <p><u>Removing the phrase "with a wink" doesn't change the meaning of the sentence.</u></p>	<p>The professor <i>with no students</i> is good for very little.</p> <p><u>The prepositional phrase "with no students" tells what kind of professor is good for very little; it is essential.</u></p>
Verbal Phrase	<p>Popular politicians, <i>campaigning in every small town in America</i>, wave the American flag and kiss babies.</p>	<p>The politician <i>campaigning for president</i> has no time for a meaningful personal life.</p>
Appositives	<p><i>The Big Lebowski</i>, a 1997 Coen Brothers film, is a modern mystery and a Western rolled into one.</p>	<p>The great American movie <i>The Big Lebowski</i> popularized the nickname "Dude."</p>

When deciding whether information is nonessential or essential, ask yourself this question:

- Is the modifier essential to the meaning of the noun or subject it modifies?

NO: Nonrestrictive (use commas)

YES: Restrictive (no commas)

Transitional Words and Phrases

Transitional words and phrases qualify, clarify, and make connections between ideas. They are usually set off with commas when they introduce, interrupt, or come at the end of a clause.

Transitions	
however	for example
therefore	on the other hand
thus	typically speaking
nevertheless	as a result
furthermore	alternatively

- Nevertheless, she took the bus knowing it would be late.
- On the other hand, money is money and I have to pay my rent.
- Rare horses, however, are something I would consider buying.

Note: When you use a transitional word to combine two independent clauses, you must use a semicolon or punctuate them as two separate sentences.

- Diamonds are rare; however, the coal that makes them is abundant.
- The best dogs raced first; therefore, the spectators all went home before it rained.
- Laughter is the best medicine; of course, penicillin also comes in handy sometimes.
- I wanted to finish quickly. Unfortunately, I still had three exams afterward.

Quotations

In most cases, use commas to set off a direct quotation from the identifying tag (*he said, she screamed, I wrote* and so on).

- Thoreau said, "To be awake is to be alive."
- "To be awake is to be alive," Thoreau said.
- "To be awake," Thoreau said, "is to be alive."
- "To be awake is to be alive," Thoreau said. "I have never yet met a man who was quite awake."

If the quoted text contains an exclamation point or a question mark, do not use a comma in addition:

- "Should we bring the casserole tonight?" he asked.
- "I love those children!" the father screamed.

Adapted from:

http://owl.english.purdue.edu/handouts/grammar/g_commaess.html 3/23/06 – 1:00PM &
The Brief Holt Handbook, Fourth Edition, Kirschner & Mandell, 2004

PRACTICE

Exercise 1 – Commas – Dependent & Independent Clauses

Add commas where necessary in the sentences below. Some sentences will not require one.

Examples:

Although my mother told me not to get her a gift, I decided to make her a scrapbook.

I want to give more money to her charity, but I think the IRS already took too much of my salary.

-
1. Lately Katherine has wanted more companionship even though she rather likes to be alone.
 2. Jerry vies for her attention but she has so much on her own mind as she suffers through this ordeal.
 3. But whereas Alec acts like a friend he also wants Katherine's admiration.
 4. So that she will be found innocent Miss Smatter will write another's confession.
 5. Jerry eats his sandwich as coolly as the others do yet he can't shake the feeling of deception and mistrust.
 6. Sabrina thinks that the apartment's rent is trivial while Kelly thinks it crucial.
 7. Although Rachel has little say in the matter her friends could use the advice.
 8. Because her dog was hit by a car he walks with a substantial limp.
 9. The doctor set it with pins and even though he didn't scratch at it he was still forced to wear a giant collar.
 10. Either the bill is paid within the month or the doctor will send a collection agency for the money.

Exercise 2 – Commas – Series and Adjectives

Add commas where necessary in the sentences below. Some sentences will not require one.

Example:

I want to pick fragrant , colorful daffodils , roses , and lilies for my sister's birthday party.

1. Lately Martin has been picking giant swollen mushrooms from his yard.
2. Sue won the “Vegetable Prize of the Day” that included carrots turnips and leeks.
3. Most people don't know that their favorite chips contain preservatives artificial flavors and MSG.
4. The three tall brothers took the brilliant shining vitamins before playing sports.
5. Watching movies reading books sleeping and exercising are my favorite weekend activities.

Exercise 3 – Commas – Essential and Nonessential Items

Add commas where necessary in the sentences below. Some sentences will not require one.

Example:

- The racing fans , who rarely wave pennants , showed up in full force on Sunday.
-

1. Shelly my mother's step-sister gave me thirty dollars last week.
2. The campus police who rarely arrest any faculty members are responsible for patrolling all night long.
3. The man walking his dog down the street looks like my great-uncle Ted.
4. My grandmother with a terrible scream alerted me to the fire in her closet.
5. Doug gave me three helpings of dessert which was a crème brûlée.
6. Speaking as if he was consumed with fury Louis yelled to the audience.
7. The actor with no siblings starred in the blockbuster movie *Grammar Cop*.
8. The helicopter a Grasker A-7 flew over the vast and empty desert.
9. His wife the fifth one before Jane and after Cecilia always worried their marriage wouldn't last.
10. “Sonny's Blues” the famous story by Baldwin contains rich allegory that weaves along with fascinating symbolism a rich fabric of text accessible to most readers.

Exercise 4 – Commas – Transitions

Add commas and/or semicolons where necessary in the sentences below.

Example:



- Nevertheless, I wanted to go to the farm to see the llamas.

-
1. I didn't want to see the whole country however I did want to visit the biggest states and prettiest parks.
 2. On the other hand Martin said that Oklahoma is worth skipping.
 3. Alternatively I dream about the open road even if it is scary sometimes.
 4. My car takes five quarts of oil typically speaking.
 5. I made the motel reservations already therefore I should leave next week.
 6. Pharmaceuticals as a result are becoming more and more expensive.
 7. Thus I will need to buy a new car before I set off on Sunday.

Exercise 5 – Commas – Quotations

Add commas where necessary in the sentences below.

1. "Imagination is more important than knowledge" Albert Einstein wisely once asserted.
2. Walt Disney offered excellent advice when he said "The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing."
3. Do you agree with the assertion made by Socrates "An unexamined life is not worth living"?
4. "To be or not to be?" is one of the most quoted phrases from Shakespeare's plays.
5. "Live as if you were to die tomorrow" Gandhi advised. "Learn as if you were to live forever."
6. In *Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley puts a forth a shocking assertion "Most men and women will grow up to love their servitude and will never dream of revolution."

Contractions

What are they?

Apostrophes can show possession (*the girl's hamster is strange*), and also can show the omission of one or more letters when words are combined into contractions. You would use a contraction to shorten and combine words. This is a list of the most common contractions.

Connections
For more help with contractions, see "Possessives."

<u>Long Form</u>	<u>Contraction</u>
I am	I'm
I had	I'd
I have	I've
it is	it's
we will	we'll
they will	they'll
we are	we're
they are	they're
do not	don't
does not	doesn't
did not	didn't
let us	let's
is not	isn't
are not	aren't
should not	shouldn't
will not	won't
cannot	can't
would not	wouldn't
could not	couldn't
you would	you'd
who is	who's

In formal writing, contractions are not used as frequently (if at all). Some instructors allow contractions in assignments, and some do not. You should check with them about their policy if it is not clear from the syllabus. If you do use contractions, however, be sure to include the apostrophe in place of the letters you omit.

PRACTICE

Exercise 1 – Contractions

In each of the sentences below, combine the words in long form into contractions.

Example: When John returns, he (will not) _____ want to eat dinner.

Correct: When John returns, he won't want to eat dinner.

1. The team is busy typing at the desk, but (they are) _____ not going to stay long.
2. It (is not) _____ that their parents are mean, but they (do not) _____ spend any time with them.
3. (You would) _____ have to be crazy to eat that fast food.
4. Paragraphs (are not) _____ my favorite thing to study, but they beat spelling.
5. In two more days (we will) _____ be sailing around the world.
6. The second student from the left (would not) _____ turn in his test on time.
7. (Let us) _____ see what (I am) _____ doing next week so I (do not) _____ double-book.
8. (Who is) _____ coming to the party tomorrow?
9. This really (is not) _____ what I envisioned when I agreed to get paid.
10. The co-op (does not) _____ have any cereal unless (you are) _____ buying it in bulk.
11. In fact, (it is) _____ cheaper, healthier, and (should not) _____ be any less fresh.
12. (I have) _____ had a good experience at that store.
13. The food I brought home (would not) _____ ever go to waste.
14. (They will) _____ bag it for you and (will not) _____ drop anything.
15. (I am) _____ a fan of going to a co-op like this instead of the large chain stores.

Coordinators

What are they?

Coordinators are words you can use to join simple sentences (aka **independent clauses**) and show the logical connections between ideas.

Use **coordinators** when you want to equally stress both ideas you are connecting; if instead you want to de-emphasize one of the ideas, use a **subordinator**.

Connections
See also the
“Subordinators” and
“Commas.”

You can easily remember the seven coordinators if you keep in mind the word FANBOYS:

Coordinators	Logical Relationship	Sample sentences
F	FOR	Cause/Effect I expect to see lots of green on Friday, <i>for</i> it is St. Patrick’s Day.
A	AND	Addition The Irish bars will be packed, <i>and</i> the beer will be flowing.
N	NOR	Addition of negatives I won’t drink green beer, <i>nor</i> will I drink a Shamrock Shake.
B	BUT	Contrast I like the color green, <i>but</i> I don’t think it’s an appetizing color for a beverage.
O	OR	Alternative Guinness is always a good choice, <i>or</i> if you’re driving, water is a better choice.
Y	YET	Condition I have to wake up early the next morning, <i>yet</i> I don’t want to be anti-social.
S	SO	Cause/Effect One of my friends is having a party, <i>so</i> I will probably drop by for a while.

Punctuation

Unless the clauses are quite short, put a comma before the conjunction when it joins two independent clauses.

- She brought home a big bag of Halloween candy that should have lasted weeks, but by the next day her little brother had eaten it all.
- He's tall but she's short.

PRACTICE

Join the following sentences with the coordinator that most clearly expresses the logical relationship between the two ideas being connected. Hint: you should use each coordinator only once.

, but he

For Example: Calvin had his heart set on being a physics major. ~~He~~ was horrible at math.

1. He could not understand geometry. He could not understand physics.
2. He took extra classes. The tutor couldn't seem to help.
3. He worked incredibly hard. Everyone in the math department was willing to help him.
4. He realized he would have to improve. He was going to have to give up his ambition to become a great physicist.
5. The other students could build catapults out of popsicle sticks and rubber bands. Calvin's catapult couldn't even launch a pebble.
6. Calvin's experiments were always unique. They proved that some basic law of nature no longer existed.
7. Calvin finally realized that he did not have it in him to be the next Stephen Hawking. He changed his major to English.

Dangling Modifiers

What are they?

All **modifiers**, words that add clarity, describe, or add detail to other words in a sentence, must be clearly and logically connected to their **implied subjects**, the grammatical subject of the clause nearest to the modifier. For example, in the following sentences we can easily connect the underlined modifiers with their implied subjects, which are underlined twice.

Connections

See also the “Identifying Verbs & Subjects” and “Adjectives & Adverbs.”

- Happy with her new hula hoop, the young girl skipped down the street.
- Invigorated by the sunny weather, we decided to go on a picnic in Golden Gate Park.
- Before buying a hybrid car, my brother used to ride a motorcycle.

But sometimes, when writers use modifiers carelessly, their implied subjects are illogical. For example:

- In examining his argument closely, the point at which he went wrong can be seen.
- To network more effectively, Scientology is practiced by many actors.
- Polite and respectful, the visiting teacher was impressed with the children’s manners.

The way the first two sentences are written, they imply that the point somehow examined his argument and that Scientology is trying to network more effectively—neither of these ideas make any sense. The third sentence, while not as obviously illogical, suggests that the visiting teacher was polite and respectful, not the children—almost certainly not what the writer intends.

Misleading or illogical constructions like these are called dangling modifiers. Dangling modifiers most often come at the beginning of a sentence, as in the examples above, but they can also come at the end of a sentence.

- In my English class, attendance was stressed, taking off points for late arrivals and early departures.

The way this sentence is written, it implies that attendance takes points off for late arrivals and early departures—an illogical statement.

Fixing Dangling Modifiers

In order to fix a dangling modifier, you need to revise your sentence so that the implied subject makes sense. You can do this by asking yourself “*who is logically doing the action of the modifier*”? For example:

Original Sentence	Revised Sentence
<p><u>In examining his argument closely</u>, the <u>point</u> at which he went wrong can be seen.</p>	<p><i>Who is examining his argument? <u>we</u></i> <u>In examining his argument closely</u>, <u>we</u> can see the point at which he went wrong.</p>
<p><u>To network more effectively</u>, <u>Scientology</u> is practiced by many actors.</p>	<p><i>Who is trying to network more effectively? <u>actors</u></i> <u>To network more effectively</u>, many <u>actors</u> practice Scientology.</p>
<p><u>Polite and respectful</u>, the visiting teacher was impressed with the children’s manners.</p>	<p><i>Who is polite and respectful? <u>the children</u></i> <u>Polite and respectful</u>, <u>the children</u> impressed the visiting teacher with their manners.</p>
<p>In my English class, <u>attendance</u> was stressed, <u>taking off points for late arrivals and early departures</u>.</p>	<p><i>Who stresses attendance? the <u>teacher</u></i> In my English class, the <u>teacher</u> stressed attendance, <u>taking off points for late arrivals and early departures</u>.</p>

PRACTICE

Read each sentence, underlining the introductory modifier and double-underlining the implied subject. Does the modifier logically connect with the implied subject? If the implied subject does not make sense, revise the sentence.

For example: Thought to have originated in the Indian Subcontinent, Eastern Europe is now home to many Roma, better known as gypsies.

(*Is Eastern Europe thought to have originated in India?* No, the Roma are, so we need to revise this sentence.)

Revised: Thought to have originated in the Indian Subcontinent, many Roma, better known as gypsies, now live in Eastern Europe.

1. Reacting with suspicion and hostility to the Roma's distinct culture and nomadic lifestyles, they have historically been discriminated against by some native Europeans.
2. Taken to the extreme, persecution included enslavement and executions.
3. Known as the *Porajmos*, or the "devouring," in World War II, the Nazis carried out an attempted genocide that killed between 200,000 and 800,000 Roma.
4. Derogatory stereotypes are still perpetuated, characterizing the Roma as tramps and thieves.
5. Both embodying and transcending the sadness of this history, an important expression of traditional Rom culture is music.
6. Developed in Spanish Roma communities, the outside world is probably most familiar with flamenco music.
7. Brought to the Americas, Roma music has contributed to Cuban salsa, mambo, rumba and guajira music: Mexican mariachi music; and even American country music.
8. A celebration of the range and vitality of gypsy music, the Roma director Tony Gatlif made the excellent documentary *Latcho Drom*.

Fragments

What are they?

In English, a sentence must contain a subject-verb unit; a fragment is a group of words that *pretends* to be a sentence but doesn't actually have a valid subject-verb unit.

Connections
For a more detailed discussion of these terms, see the "Subjects & Verbs" and "Subordinators."

Common Sources of Fragments

1. The fragment is a **dependent clause**, a group of words that contains a subject-verb unit but cannot stand alone because it begins with a **subordinator**. For example:

- *Since* they broke up
- *Although* I am her cousin
- *Unless* you stop doing that
- *Because* he was tired

Other common subordinators include: though, even though, while, whereas before, after, if, when, as soon as.

2. The fragment is a **phrase**, a group of words that does not contain a subject-verb unit (a subject doing a verb). Many times, phrases are easy to identify. For example:

- A long, strange trip
- Lost in the supermarket
- Jenny from the block
- The richest man in Babylon

Two types of phrases can be a bit trickier to spot, however, because they contain words that *look* like verbs but aren't acting as part of a valid subject-verb unit:

A. **-ing clauses**: Without a form of the verb "to be," **-ing** words cannot be part of the main subject-verb unit. For example:

- The man eating a fig
- The coyote howling at the moon

B. **"Who, whom etc." clauses**: Verbs that are separated from the subject by the words "who," "whom," "whose," "when," "where," "that," and "which" cannot be part of the main subject-verb unit. For example:

- The woman *who* disobeyed and got a ticket
- The apple *that* she ate
- The garden *which* she had to leave

Strategies for Fixing Fragments

In order to turn a fragment into a complete sentence, you have a couple of options.

1. Often you simply need to combine a fragment with a neighboring sentence to produce a grammatically complete sentence. For example:

Fragment (in italics)	Complete sentence
Rocio made that mistake too. <i>But only when she wasn't paying attention.</i>	Rocio made that mistake too, but only when she wasn't paying attention.
<i>Daydreaming about the weekend.</i> I missed my exit.	Daydreaming about the weekend, I missed my exit.
<i>My chatty next door neighbor.</i> She loves to gossip.	My chatty next door neighbor loves to gossip.
I've never been back to El Salvador. <i>Since I left ten years ago.</i>	I've never been back to El Salvador since I left ten years ago.

2. Other times, you'll need to complete the sentence by supplying the missing subject or verb, or by attaching an independent clause

Fragment (in italics)	Complete sentence
<i>A laboratory for the study of animal life in the South Pacific.</i>	A laboratory for the study of animal life is situated in the South Pacific.
<i>The girl who wanted an 'A' in her English class.</i>	The girl who wanted an 'A' in her English class re-wrote each essay three times.
<i>The man thoughtfully scratching his beard.</i>	The man was thoughtfully scratching his beard.
<i>Since I only had a cookie for breakfast.</i>	Since I only had a cookie for breakfast, I was starving by lunchtime.

PRACTICE

A) Read the following groups of words and determine if they are grammatically complete sentences or if they are fragments.

For example: Going to community college *fragment*

1. A noticeable mistake which was on the flyer.
2. Whenever I get tired of doing my math homework.
3. The building across from the library is condemned.
4. My roommate who intends to finish college in four years.
5. My other roommate has been in college seven years.
6. Before the semester began.
7. The teacher who liked to listen to the sound of his own voice.
8. Because mid-terms are just about to start.
9. If I could be left alone to do my homework.
10. Although I don't usually enjoy hard work, I love studying Japanese.
11. Listening to tapes in the language lab is really time consuming.
12. The boy typed on the Mac in the computer lab.
13. The essay that I have to write.
14. While I was eating my lunch at the campus center.

B) Read the following sentences and fix any fragments you find.

For example: Sometimes, life is like a movie. A cheesy romantic comedy to be exact.
Sometimes, life is like a movie, a cheesy romance comedy to be exact.

1. Anxious about his love life. He decided to visit a fortune-teller.
2. The fortune-teller asked for fifty dollars. And the names of his favorite movie stars.
3. Consulted her astrology charts and closely examined his palms.
4. She predicted someone important would soon come into his life. A tall, dark stranger.
5. While he was skeptical that such a clichéd prediction could come true.
6. The day that he would meet the stranger was cold and foggy. He was sipping hot chocolate at his favorite café.
7. The stranger who would change his life. She walked in the door and ordered a hot chai.
8. She asked if she could share his table. Because the other tables were full of students studying for their midterms.
9. Looking up from his crossword. He smiled and said yes.
10. As she sat down in the table across from him.

C) Now, read the following paragraph and a) underline any sentence fragments that you find b) fix these fragments by combining them with adjacent sentences or supplying missing words.

In "The Lottery," author Shirley Jackson implies that human beings are mindless, static creatures. Who cannot or will not free themselves from the domination of tradition. Even when a ritual has lost all purpose or value. This theme is dramatized in her own tale of a town's annual selection of one of its residents. For sacrifice at the hands of his or her neighbors. On June 27th of every year, the head of each household draws a lot from an old black box. To see whether someone in the household is the fated one.

On the day of the story's action, the proceedings are supervised by Joe Summers. An old-timer who oversees square dances, the teenager's club, and the Halloween program. The townsfolk are in a festive mood. Approaching the oncoming massacre of a neighbor with no more concern than they give to the milking of a cow. They are not troubled that they no longer know the reason for the ritual. The purpose that prompted their forebears to initiate the proceedings. They simply consider the drawing a necessity. One of the town's vital activities. Old Man Warner exemplifies the majority of the villagers. Sheep-like, he follows the dictates of tradition unquestioningly. "There's always been a lottery," he says. And, by implication, always will be.

Possessives

What are they?

To show ownership of things, people or concepts, we use possessives. The possessive form looks like this:

- The dog belonging to the boy shed hair on the floor.
- The talent of the singer is apparent after seeing her show.

Connections
For additional
apostrophe-related
material, see
“Contractions.”

But a simpler, more common and concise way, is to change the noun that does the possessing:

- The *boy's* dog shed hair on the floor.
- The *singer's* talent is apparent after seeing her show.

With a few exceptions, the following two rules cover nearly all you need to know about forming possessives:

1. To form the possessive of a noun, add apostrophe + s.
 - the books of the *student* → the *student's* books
 - the toys of the *girl* → the *girl's* toys
2. If the noun already ends in s, just add an apostrophe at the end of the word.
 - the books of the *students* → the *students'* books
 - the toys of the *girls* → the *girls'* toys

If a proper noun (a name) ends in -s, you may choose to add either apostrophe + s, or just the apostrophe alone, depending on whether you would pronounce the extra -s.

Moses' followers OR *Moses's* followers

Remember: Do not use -'s when you are simply showing the plural form:

CORRECT: Charbroiled eggplants are served here.

INCORRECT: Charbroiled eggplant's are served here.

Adapted from Fog City Fundamentals, Fourth Edition, Altman & Deicke, 1998

PRACTICE

Exercise 1 – Possessives

Rewrite each underlined group of words, using apostrophes to show possession.

Examples: Nancy liked the shape of the laptop.

the laptop's shape

Jo often borrowed the comb belonging to Nancy.

Nancy's comb

-
1. Nancy was driving along with Jo in the car owned by Beth.
 2. The tires of the car screeched to a halt after a confession.
 3. Not even the defroster could fight the fog of the windows.
 4. The two avoided the snow by walking underneath the leaves of the trees.
 5. The hands of Jo were cold; warming them wasn't entirely out of the question.
 6. "The attitudes of people just aren't ready for this," Nancy said.
 7. The two looked to the snowflakes of the sky and saw white dusty stars floating by.
 8. "We should go home and sit before the heat of the fireplace," Jo said.
 9. "The mugs that belong to Beth should hold enough hot chocolate to warm us up."

Other Forms of Possessives

Joint Possession: The following pairs of nouns show joint ownership; two or more people own the same thing.

the string belonging to Rich and Eddie ⇨ Rich and Eddie's duck

the children of Bob and Edward ⇨ Bob and Edward's children

Rule: Nouns showing joint ownership have apostrophe + s added to the noun nearest the thing possessed.

Individual Possession: The following pairs of nouns show individual ownership. (Rich and Eddie probably do not own the same socks, nor do Bob and Edward use the same toothbrush.)

the socks belonging to Rich and Eddie ⇨ Rich's and Eddie's socks

the toothbrushes of Bob and Edward ⇨ Bob's and Edward's toothbrush

Rule: Nouns showing individual ownership have apostrophe + s added to each noun.

When NOT to use apostrophe + s:

Do not use 's to form possessive pronouns:

<u>Pronouns</u>	<u>Adjective Possessive Pronoun</u> (requires a subject to modify)	<u>Possessive Pronoun</u>
he	his	his
she	her	hers
it	its	n/a
we	our	ours
you	your	yours
they	their	theirs
I	my	mine

Which possessive pronouns belong in the following examples?

This is Kimberly's handbook. This is her handbook. The handbook is hers.

Those are Jessie's records. Those are _____ records. The records are _____.

That is Frank and Todd's car. That is _____ car. The car is _____.

The tall vase belongs to you. The tall one is _____ vase. The vase is _____.

Exercise 2 – Possessives

Rewrite each underlined group of words, using apostrophes to show possession.

Examples:

- The flavor of the coffee was unusual. ⇨ the coffee's flavor
 - I live in the home of my parents. ⇨ my parents' home
 - We went to the wedding of Joe and Kay. ⇨ Joe and Kay's wedding
 - He ironed the clothes of Pete and May. ⇨ Pete's and May's clothing.
-

1. The combined losses of the North and South were the greatest in any American war.
2. The president took away some of the responsibilities of the chief-of-staff.
3. We loved the shoes of George and Sara.
4. She was insulted by the rude remarks of her sister-in-law.
5. I couldn't stand the behavior of Alan and Jennifer.
6. The information of the ambassador was mostly incorrect.
7. The voyages of Magellan and Columbus were controversial.
8. The novels of Fitzgerald and Nabokov are among the most admired in modern literature.
9. One of the most famous events in American history is the journey west of Lewis and Clark.
10. Don't forget the birthday of your mother-in-law.

Run-Together Sentences (RTS)

What are they?

Contrary to popular belief, run-together sentences are not simply sentences that are too long. Instead, run-together sentences are the result of combining two or more **complete sentences** together without an **acceptable joiner**.

Connections
See also the “Subject & Verb Identification,” “Coordination,” and “Subordination.”

A **complete sentence**, also known as an **independent clause**, contains a subject-verb unit and can stand alone.

Acceptable joiners for connecting independent clauses include:

- Coordinators (FANBOYS: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so)
- Subordinators (words such as although, since, when, even though, if)
- Semi-colons (;)

We’ll look at these acceptable joiners more closely in a moment, but first let’s take a look at what CANNOT connect complete sentences. In the example sentences below, subjects are underlined once and verbs underlined twice so you can see the different independent clauses.

Problem	RTS example:
Commas cannot connect two complete sentences—this type of RTS also referred to as a <i>comma splice</i>	His older <u>sister</u> <u>hit</u> him, the <u>boy</u> <u>started</u> to cry.
Transition words , with or without a comma, cannot connect two complete sentences—this can be another type of <i>comma splice</i>	He <u>took</u> four ibuprofen, <u>then</u> his <u>headache</u> <u>faded</u> away.
Not using anything to connect complete sentences is also incorrect—this is also known as a <i>run-on sentence</i>	My <u>teacher</u> <u>writes</u> RTS in the margins of my essay I <u>do</u> not <u>know</u> what she means.

Since it is easy to confuse transition words with coordinators and subordinators, we’ve included a chart on the next page to help you out.

Logical Relationship	Coordinators (CAN join sentences)	Subordinators (CAN join sentences)	Transition Words (CANNOT join sentences)
Addition	and		also, further, additionally, furthermore, moreover, similarly
Contrast	but, yet	although, while, even though, even if, whereas, though	however, still, nevertheless, otherwise, on the other hand, instead, nonetheless, alternatively
Cause	for	because, since	
Effect	so	so that, in that, in order that	therefore, thus, consequently, hence, as a result
Choice/ Alternative	or, nor		on the other hand, conversely
Condition		if, unless, provided that	otherwise
Time		after, before, as soon as, since, when, while, until, as	then, next, previously, subsequently, afterwards

How to Fix Run-Together Sentences

Use a coordinator (also known as a conjunction)

One way to fix a run-together sentence is to insert a comma and a coordinator to join the two independent clauses. For example:

Original RTS	Grammatically Correct Sentence
Her older <u>sister</u> <u>hit</u> him, the <u>boy</u> <u>started to cry</u> .	His older <u>sister</u> <u>hit</u> him, so the <u>boy</u> <u>started to cry</u> .

When you use a coordinator to fix a run-together sentence, make sure that you choose one that indicates the correct logical relationship between the two ideas you are connecting; the chart on the previous page can help you figure this out.

Use a subordinator

Another way to fix a run-together sentence is to use a subordinator to join the two independent clauses. For example:

Original RTS	Grammatically Correct Sentence
<u>He took</u> four ibuprofen, his <u>headache faded</u> away.	His <u>headache</u> <u>faded</u> away as soon as <u>he took</u> four ibuprofen. As soon as <u>he took</u> four ibuprofen, his <u>headache</u> <u>faded</u> away.

As you can see from the examples above, subordinators don't always need to be placed in the middle of sentence; they can also come at the beginning. When you do place the subordinator at the beginning of a sentence, you need to put a comma after the end of the first clause.

As with coordinators, when you use a subordinator to fix a run-together sentence, you need to make sure that you choose one that indicates the correct logical relationship between the two ideas you are connecting.

Use a semi-colon

A third way fix run-together sentences is by joining the two independent clauses with a semi-colon.

Original RTS	Grammatically Correct Sentence
My <u>teacher</u> <u>writes</u> RTS in the margins of my essay <u>do</u> not <u>know</u> what she means.	My teacher writes RTS in the margins of my essay; (however,) I don't know what she means.

You can pair a semi-colon with a transition word, but remember that transition words alone *cannot* join sentences. If you do use a transition word, be sure that it is one that indicates the correct logical relationship between the ideas you are connecting.

Split the RTS into two sentences

One final way to fix a run-together sentence is to spit it up into two independent clauses. For example:

Original RTS	Grammatically Correct Sentence
My <u>teacher</u> <u>writes</u> RTS in the margins of my essay <u>do</u> not <u>know</u> what she means.	My teacher writes RTS in the margins of my essay. I don't know what she means.

When you fix run-together sentences in this way, just be careful that you don't end up with a series of short, choppy sentences.

PRACTICE

A) Fix the following run-together sentences using one of the seven coordinators (FANBOYS: for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so).

yet

For example: I don't usually watch reality TV, ^ I do love a show called *Project Runway*.

1. At the beginning of the season there are fourteen aspiring fashion designers, in the end only three people get to show at Olympus Fashion Week in New York.
2. The supermodel Heidi Klum hosts, famous designers serve as guest judges.
3. The contestants must take the design challenges seriously every week the loser goes home.
4. Some of the contestants have huge egos, they are unnecessarily competitive.
5. I don't have TiVo I am going to my friend's house to watch the season finale.

B) Fix the following run-together sentences using a **subordinator**.

since

For example: ^ Many students have to cover their own living expenses, they work full-time.

1. She needed a part-time job, books and tuition were expensive this year.
2. She would have preferred not to have to work retail, the only job she could find was at a shoe store in the mall.
3. The customers were frequently demanding and rude, she liked her co-workers.
4. She had been working for a month, her employee discount kicked in.
5. She paid off her credit card bill, she was planning to buy a new pair of shoes.

C) Fix the following run-together sentences using a semi-colon; you can also include an appropriate transition word.

For example: As people get older they tend to get wiser; sometimes they also get fatter.

1. Orville was almost thirty-five his tummy had started to stick out.
2. His wife worried that his eating habits were unhealthy, she tried to encourage him to eat more fruits and vegetables.
3. Orville was not as concerned he would eat six cookies a meal without feeling guilty.
4. On the radio, Orville had heard that drinking green tea could help you lose weight he decided to stop drinking coffee that very day and put his coffee machine away.
5. Only he didn't really stop drinking coffee, he just stopped making it at home and went to the neighborhood café instead.

D) The following sentences are taken from actual student essays. Fix the RTS errors using an appropriate strategy; remember to think about the logical relationship between ideas when choosing a strategy.

1. The legalization of prostitution would actually help reduce crime, the prostitute wouldn't be a victim of extortion or beatings.
2. Police could stake out a street crime area instead of a brothel the effect would be safer streets and more efficient use of the police.
3. Not everybody is going to be so ambitious and work many will probably do nothing.
4. At one time people had responsibilities to their families and communities, now you only have to answer to yourself and no one else.
5. To some, divorce provides an easy out to their problems of getting along together, therefore they dissolve the marriage rather than work it out.

E) Now that you've had a chance to correct isolated sentences, try to find and fix the run-together sentences in the following paragraph.

Sleep is a subject we should all know a lot about, we spend one third of our lives sleeping. Even though everyone sleeps, scientists have only recently begun to understand what goes on when we sleep. They used to believe that the body repairs itself while asleep, there is some truth to this but the body also does this while awake. The brain does not simply shut itself off at night, it goes through a complicated series of chemical changes. Scientists have begun to chart these changes, working with complex instruments that measure brain-wave patterns. They have found that we do not move smoothly from being awake to being asleep, we pass through a cycle of four sleep stages. At each stage blood pressure and pulse rate drop, the body temperature also goes down. In the second stage the number and length of brain waves go up, while the sleeper's eyes begin to move rapidly back and forth behind their lids. Scientists call this activity rapid eye movements, or REMs, the activity that accompanies most of our dreaming. If a person is deprived of REM sleep, that person will soon become bad-tempered and irritable. A full night's sleep is not a single, unbroken state but consists of four or five of these multi-stage sleep cycles.¹

¹ Altman, Pam and Doreen Deicke, Eds. Fog City Fundamentals, 4th ed. Pearson Custom Publishing: Boston. 1998 p. 19. Sill need to correctly format citation.

F) One more time! Some of the sentences in the following paragraph are run-together; find these sentences and fix them using the most appropriate strategy.

In 1867, a chef at a hotel in Saratoga Springs accidentally dropped some thinly sliced potatoes into hot cooking oil, instantly the world found a new delicacy: the potato chip. At the time, Saratoga Springs was America's most fashionable resort, fads that started there usually found immediate success. Almost overnight, the potato chip became Saratoga's hottest item. The wide, tree-lined avenues were filled with people eating potato chips, the huge veranda of the United States Hotel was no different; it was filled with chip-eaters too. Some of the richest, most powerful people in the world consumed them regularly, for instance, the Vanderbilts could often be seen daintily plucking chips from paper cups on their stroll back to their mansion. The elegant "Saratoga chips" remained the delicacy of the wealthy until 1925, when the first chip factory was constructed in Albany, New York. The potato chip was no longer the snack of only the rich and famous, it became a common household item. Of course potato chips have changed a great deal in the last hundred years, now they come in various textures and flavors, some even stacked in paper tubes. Still, the next time you grab a handful of greasy, flavor-dusted chips, you might pause to remember the noble origins of that humble food.

Subject & Verb Identification

What are they?

Two of the most important parts of a sentence are subjects and verbs. Being able to identify subjects and verbs will allow you to create complete and clear sentences; it will also help you understand other grammatical concepts like fragments and run-together sentences.

Connections

See also the
"Verb Tenses."

Identifying Verbs

Verbs are easy to identify because they are words that indicate action or a state of being, words like: write, run, tell, have, be, look, feel. Verbs are the only part of speech that gets **conjugated**, that is, that changes tense in order to indicate a particular time frame. This chart contains examples of some of the more common verb tenses:

Present (today)	Past (yesterday)	Future (tomorrow)	Present Progressive	Present Perfect	Past Perfect
I <u>learn</u>	I <u>learned</u>	I <u>will learn</u>	I <u>am learning</u>	I <u>have learned</u>	I <u>had learned</u>
I <u>swim</u> .	I <u>swam</u> .	I <u>will swim</u> .	I <u>am swimming</u> .	I <u>have swum</u> .	I <u>had swum</u> .

For more a comprehensive description of verb tenses and guidelines for using them correctly, see "Verb Tenses."

Sentences can contain several types of verbs and verb-like words; what we're interested in is finding the **main verbs**, the words that drive the action of a sentence. While all verbs *can* be conjugated, main verbs are the ones that actually *do* change when the entire sentence changes tense. To find which words are acting as the main verbs in a sentence, then, try changing the tense. For example:

Original sentence:	New tense:
Running a marathon <u>is</u> not fun.	Running a marathon <u>will</u> not <u>be</u> fun.
Hoping to build up her portfolio, the supermodel <u>is going</u> to Paris.	Hoping to build up her portfolio, the supermodel <u>went</u> to Paris.
To escape their stress, Liz and Ryan <u>have been watching</u> bad reality TV.	To escape their stress, Liz and Ryan <u>will be watching</u> bad reality TV.
The bicycle <u>had been</u> left in the rain.	The bicycle <u>was</u> left in the rain.

Identifying Subjects

The **subject** of a sentence performs the action(s) indicated by the main verb; that is, the subject is the *doer* of the action: the diva was singing (the diva is doing the action of “singing”), the glass broke (the glass is doing the action of “breaking”), the audience started to applaud (the audience is doing the action of “applauding”).

To identify the subject of the sentence, you can ask yourself “who or what is (verb)?”

In the following examples, the subjects have been underlined once and the verbs underlined twice.

Sentence	Question → Subject
<u>Running</u> a marathon <u>is</u> not fun.	What is not fun? <u>running</u>
The <u>supermodel</u> <u>is going</u> to Paris.	Who is going to Paris? the <u>supermodel</u>
<u>Liz</u> and <u>Ryan</u> <u>have been watching</u> bad reality TV.	Who is watching TV? <u>Liz</u> and <u>Ryan</u>
The <u>bicycle</u> <u>had been</u> left in the rain.	What had been left in the rain? the <u>bicycle</u>

As you might have noticed, words that end in **-ing** can sometimes act like subjects:

- Running a marathon is not fun.

and sometimes they act as verbs:

- Liz and Ryan are watching bad reality TV.

As a general guideline, when an **-ing** word is preceded by a form of “be” (i.e. is, are, was, were), it is acting as a verb.

PRACTICE

Find the subjects and main verbs in the following sentences. Underline the subject(s) once and the main verb(s) twice.

For example: To cheer himself up, he watched old detective movies and ate ice cream.

1. After a long, rainy winter, the woman and her husband had become tired of their small apartment, so they decided to drive to a seedy part of town in search of excitement.
2. The couple had been cruising slowly down a side street, looking for some local nightlife, when they heard music coming from a small bar on the corner.
3. They had just left their car when some stray cats started fighting in a side alley.
4. When the couple walked in and sat down at the bar, nobody bothered to look up.
5. At one end of the bar, a tired-looking woman was languidly smoking her cigarette and expertly blowing out smoke rings.
6. The bartender was wiping down the counter and softly whistling to himself.
7. Hunched over a table in the back corner, four men were enjoying a friendly game of cards.
8. A sad Billie Holiday tune had been playing softly from an old jukebox, but once the song was over, the room went silent.
9. Suddenly, a man in the back stood and threw his cards down on the table, cursing loudly.
10. When he began to reach into his pocket, the couple looked at each other anxiously and then hurriedly backed out the door.

Subject-Verb Agreement

What are they?

In the present tense verbs must agree with their subjects: both must be singular, or both must be plural.

I	breathe	the air.	He	breath <u>es</u>	the air.
You	breathe	the air.	She	breath <u>es</u>	the air.
They	breathe	the air.	It	breath <u>es</u>	the air.

Connections

For more help identifying subjects and verbs see, "Subject & Verb Identification."

You must add an **-s** or **-es** at the end of the verb when the subject (or the entity performing the action) is a singular third person: **he**, **she**, **it**, or words for which these pronouns could substitute.

Examples

<u>He, She, It</u>	<u>All others</u>
<u>Roberto</u> <u>eats</u> all of the oranges.	<u>They</u> <u>eat</u> everything but the rind.
<u>She</u> <u>wonders</u> which constellations are hidden.	<u>I</u> <u>wonder</u> if Leo has already passed.
<u>It</u> <u>lasts</u> for another three hours or until they score.	<u>Veronica and Kevin</u> <u>last</u> as long as they can.

To Create the plural/singular

To make a noun plural, we usually add an **-s** or **-es**, as in the case of *jar* to *jars* or *box* to *boxes*.

A verb is singular, by contrast, when it is matched with a singular subject. A singular verb, then, usually has an **-s** or **-es** ending, as in the case of *talks* and *fixes*.

Finding the subject and verb

To successfully determine whether or not your subjects and verbs agree, you need to be able to locate them in your writing. The subject in a sentence is the agent that is doing whatever is done in the sentence. The verb is the action--what is actually done. Look at this example:

- The zebra runs down the street.

"The zebra" is the subject of this sentence, and "runs" is the verb.

Use Pronouns to Help

When the **pronouns** *he*, *she* or *it* are used as a subject in a sentence, the verb is always singular, and therefore will contain an **–s** or **–es** ending.

- He takes the money.
- She stacks the papers.
- It chimes hourly.

All other pronouns (I, you, we, they) require a plural verb (one without an **–s** or **–es** ending).

- They skate until March if the ice holds.
- We borrow money to pay our loans.

You can use these pronoun rules to determine whether your verb should be plural or singular. Let's look at a variety of subjects, and see which pronouns can replace them.

Subject	Pronoun substitute	Verb
John, Marion and Isaac	They...	grow.
The community forest	It...	grows.
The leading investigator	She...	
The Leaning Tower of Pisa	It...	

So, if you can substitute *he*, *she* or *it* for the subject, your verb ought to be singular (with an **–s** or **–es**).

Practice Exercises

Circle the correct verb for each sentence.

Tip: write the pronoun above the subject to help you identify whether the verb should be singular or plural.

(*He*)

1. Jordan (hang / hangs) the picture upside down above his futon.

()

2. *Starry Night* (contain / contains) eleven stars and one swirling moon.

()

3. The hammers (pound / pounds) the nails until each corner is flush against the wall.

()

4. Van Gogh's sister (take / takes) most of the credit for his genius.

()

5. The yellows in the painting (swirl / swirls) around the blue sky rather than the other way around.

Complicated subjects

Some subjects include phrases that might confuse you into choosing the wrong verb. The verb agrees with the subject, not the noun or pronoun in the phrase.

- Adjective clause
- The person who loathes cats plays only with their tails.
Subject to match
 - One of the brothers is missing.
 - The computer building, including all of the labs, closes its doors promptly at seven.

Subjects connected by “and” require a plural verb. Subjects connected by “or” or “nor” require a singular.

- John and Jeff drive downtown.
- A sandwich or muffin is fine.
- Neither rain nor shine helps the soccer field.

If a compound subject has both plural and singular nouns, follow the pronoun rule for the noun *closest* to the verb.

-
- One walnut or two acorns fill a squirrel for a day.

PRACTICE

Fill in the verb for each sentence.

Subject	Verb	
Martin and his mother	<i>play</i>	[to play] backgammon every day after work.
The junior or senior		[to march] in the Homecoming parade.
A plum, and not the carrots,		[to provide] valuable nutrients to the body.
Martha or Dan’s children		[to scribble] on the wall to create their art.
The banana’s peel		[to stretch] across the floor to make them trip.
Saving of electricity		[to take] strong initiative, but benefits all of us.
The group of friends		[to call] each card aloud to win the game.

Agreement Practice Paragraph: The Supreme Court

Underline each subject once, each verb twice, and fix any incorrect verbs. The first sentence is done for you.

The Supreme Court Justices rejoices after a particularly difficult decision. Though they usually lean on the chief justice to announce the ruling (unless he is in the minority) each celebrate in his or her own way. A reporter, speaking on the condition of anonymity, tells that in each session, the justices bickers back and forth even when they seem to agree. One or two bicker more than the others, but no one keep silent for long. All this bickering produces so much tension that when they finish a case, they all must go their separate ways until at least the following week when they repeat the whole process.

Subordinators

What are they?

Like coordinators (for, and, nor, but, or, yet, so), **subordinators** (see chart below) can join **independent clauses**, aka simple sentences, and can help you:

Connections
See also the
"Coordinators" and
"Fragments."

- Make your writing more fluid by connecting short sentences
- Make your writing more precise by showing your reader the logical relationships between ideas.

Let's take a look at some of the most common subordinators. As you can see from the sample sentences below, subordinators can appear either at the beginning or in the middle of a sentence.

Logical Relationship	Subordinators	Sample Sentence
Contrast/ Concession	although, while, even though, even if, whereas, though	Although the young blond heiress was often in the news, she had no talent.
Cause	because, since	He started to worry about finding a job because he was almost finished with his last semester of college.
Effect/ Result	so that, in that, in order that	She enrolled in cooking school so that she could become a pastry chef.
Condition	if, unless, provided that	If it is sunny this weekend, they are planning to have a barbeque.
Time	after, before, as soon as, since, when, while, until, as	Until my brother pays me back for last time, I am not lending him any more money.

Subordinators & Dependent Clauses (aka Subordinate Clauses)

Joining two independent clauses with a subordinator transforms one of them—the one which begins with the subordinator—into a dependent clause. Even though this clause will still contain a subject-verb unit, it cannot stand alone as a sentence.

Independent Clause (a complete sentence)	Dependent clause (no longer a complete sentence)
The young blond <u>heiress</u> <u>was</u> often in the news.	<i>Although</i> the young blond <u>heiress</u> <u>was</u> often in the news
<u>He</u> <u>was</u> almost <u>finished</u> with his last semester of college.	<i>Because</i> <u>he</u> <u>was</u> almost <u>finished</u> with his last semester of college

Dependent clauses pretending to be sentences are actually **fragments**, a grammar error you can read more about the “Fragments” section.

Subordinators & Emphasis

Unlike coordinators, subordinators do not give equal emphasis to the ideas they connect; instead, the clause that begins with a subordinator—the dependent clause—receives less emphasis. Compare the following two sentences:

- Although he wanted to see the movie, Guillermo did not want to spend ten dollars.
- Although he did not want to spend ten dollars, Guillermo wanted to see the movie.

In the first sentence, the subordinator “although” de-emphasizes Guillermo’s desire to see the movie; his reluctance to spend the money seems more important. In the second sentence, however, the subordinator “although” de-emphasizes Guillermo’s reluctance to spend the money, and his desire to see the movie seems more important.

Be careful, then, when deciding where to place the subordinator—this placement can change the meaning of your sentence.

Punctuation

When a subordinator introduces a sentence, put a comma after the first clause.

- *After* she went to bed, she started to hear noises downstairs.

But if the subordinator comes in the middle of a clause, you don’t need to set it off with a comma.

- She started to hear noises downstairs *after* she went to bed.

PRACTICE

A) Join the following sentences using an appropriate subordinator. For the first four sets of sentences, you'll see a hint about the logical relationship you should show.

For example: Some rodents and birds prey on cockroaches.

Man is their biggest foe. [CONTRAST]

While some rodents and birds prey on cockroaches, man is their biggest foe.

1. Cockroaches are a health menace to humans.
They carry viruses and bacteria that result in diseases from hepatitis to salmonella. [CAUSE]
2. Humans try to defeat cockroaches.
Cockroaches are very successful at surviving our attacks. [CAUSE]
3. Cockroaches are smaller than the humans who chase them.
They have extremely fast responses and sensitive receptors. [CONTRAST/CONCESSION]
4. There is no food.
Cockroaches subsist on glue, paper, and soap. [TIME]
5. They can't find glue, paper or soap.
They can draw on their body stores for three months.
6. Cockroaches are really desperate.
They will turn into cannibals.
7. Female Suriname cockroaches produce generation after generation of identical females.
They are able to clone themselves.

B) Join the following sentences with subordinators, making sure the word you choose indicates the appropriate logical connection between ideas.

1. They sat down with Red Cloud to discuss the purchase of the Black Hills. Whatever calmness the government commissioners still possessed must have been shaken.
2. Red Cloud calmly proposed that \$600 million seemed like a fair price. The region was so valuable to the Native Americans and appeared even more valuable to the commissioners.
3. The Native Americans had reconsidered their price tag. They suggested that \$6 million would be a reasonable offer.
4. The commissioners were too intimidated to negotiate. They returned to Washington and angrily recommended teaching the Native Americans a lesson.
5. The government immediately ordered all Native Americans to come onto the reservation at once. The demand was both illegal and impossible to comply with.
6. Most of the Native Americans could never know about the order. They were spread out all over the Black Hills.
7. The deadline came. Only one small band of Native Americans had come in.
8. The other Native Americans were now assumed at war with the government. The Indian Bureau turned the matter over to General Philip Sheridan.
9. It was a totally unprovoked war. No Sioux or Cheyenne had ever violated a treaty or actually attacked a U.S. citizen.

Verb Tenses

What are they?

Tense refers to the form a verb takes in a sentence, whether to express the present, past or future.

Connections
For more help identifying subjects and verbs, turn to "Subject & Verb Identification."

Examples

Simple Tenses

Present: I *learn*.

Past: I *learned*.

Future: I *will learn*.

Perfect Tenses

Present perfect: I *have learned*.

Past perfect: I *had learned*.

Future perfect: I *will have learned*.

Progressive Tenses

Present progressive: I *am learning*.

Past progressive: I *was learning*.

Future progressive: I *will be learning*.

Present perfect progressive: I *have been learning*.

Past perfect progressive: I *had been learning*.

Future perfect progressive: I *will have been learning*.

Simple Tenses

Present

The present tense indicates that an action is taking place at the time you express it, or an action that occurs regularly.

- We *wear* organic cotton shirts [an action taking place when it is expressed].
- I *watch* the documentary on PBS each Sunday night [an action that occurs regularly].

Past

The past tense indicates that an action is completed and has already taken place.

- Martin Luther King, Jr. *gave* his most famous speech in 1963 [an action completed in the past].
- As a girl, she *wondered* how her college degree would help her career [an action that occurred once or many times in the past but did not extend to the present].

Future

The future tense indicates that an action will or is likely to take place.

- Later today I *will rinse* the dishes [a future action that will definitely occur].
 - The defendant probably *will plead* innocent [a future action that is likely to occur].

Perfect Tenses

Perfect tenses designate actions that were or will be completed before other actions. You can form the perfect tenses with the appropriate tense form of the helping, or auxiliary, verb *have* plus the past participle.

Present perfect

The present tense indicates that an action is taking place at the time you express it, or an action that occurs regularly.

- We *have worn* organic cotton shirts [an action that began in the past and is finished at the present].
- She *has donated* extensively to UNICEF [an action that began in the past and extends into the present].

Past perfect

The past perfect tense indicates an action occurring before a certain time in the past.

- By 1995, Doctor Harvey *had built* the first artificial brain.

Future perfect

The future perfect tense indicates that an action will be finished by a certain time.

- By Thursday, the President *will have apologized* for his mistake.

Progressive Tenses

The progressive tenses express continuing action. You can form them with the appropriate tense of the verb *be* plus the present participle.

Present progressive

The present progressive tense indicates that something is happening at the time you express it.

- The worker *is hammering*, and her foreman *is watching* lazily.

Past progressive

The past progressive tense indicates two kinds of past action.

- Poe's writing *was becoming* increasingly bizarre and dark [a continuing action in the past].
- The mob tackled Jean-Luc Goddard while he *was introducing* the film [an action occurring at the same time in the past as another action].

Future progressive

The future progressive tense indicates a continuing action in the future.

- The government *will be monitoring* the phones in the lab.

Present perfect progressive

The present perfect progressive tense indicates action continuing from the past into the present and possibly into the future.

- The teacher *has been grading* since yesterday afternoon.

Past perfect progressive

The past perfect progressive tense indicates that a past action went on until another occurred.

- Before her promotion, Nico *had been working* on restoring open space on campus.

Future perfect progressive

The future perfect progressive tense indicates that an action will continue until a certain future time.

- On Tuesday I *will have been working* on this paper for six weeks.

Adapted from *The Brief Holt Handbook, Fourth Edition*, Kirsner & Mandell, 2004.

PRACTICE

Exercise 1 – Simple Past Tense

Fill in each blank with the correct past tense form of the verb provided.

Example:

PLAY We played dodge ball all afternoon.

FRY 1. We _____ the fish we caught in the lake.

STUDY 2. All of us _____ hard for the physics exam.

CRY 3. Mary _____ on his shoulder all through the movie.

MARRY 4. She _____ him on Tuesday and played slots that night.

TRY 5. Fred _____ to get in the concert by posing as a security guard.

SHOP 6. I _____ for all of my birthday presents at the art fair.

ADMIT 7. No one _____ that he was tired.

PLAN 8. Marty and Isabel _____ their marriage simply and loosely.

TERRIFY 9. The fireworks _____ the younger children.

Exercise 2 – Simple Past Tense

In each of the following sentences, underline any verbs that should have –ed or –d endings and supply the missing letters. Watch for time expressions (last week, yesterday, years ago) that indicate past time.

incorrect: The committee vote to adjourn yesterday.

correct: The committee voted to adjourn yesterday.

1. The driver ask for the exact fare last week.
2. Oliver use to live in Berkeley when he was a college student.
3. Katerina studied all the time and so she graduate from college last year.
4. College students are suppose to attend every class meeting.
5. Last Sunday, Laura listen to the drummers in the park.
6. Until I started school, I work twenty hours per week and study the rest of the time.
7. Finally Gayle's cat return home.
8. Several years ago I witness a crime and identify the criminal.

Exercise 3 – Perfect Tenses

Use the perfect tense to fill in the blank using the same time period (past, present, future) as the sample.

Example: Joan licks the popsicle. (present tense)

Joan has licked the popsicle. (present perfect tense)

(Remember: Perfect tenses for the verb *to run* are:

Present: she *has run*

Past: she *had run*

Future: she *will have run*)

1. Eric took piano lessons.

Eric _____ piano lessons since he was ten years old.

2. Tara raises as many children as she can.

Tara _____ as many children as she can.

3. Bill, on the other hand, will join the Coast Guard.

Bill, on the other hand, _____ the Coast Guard.

4. Alyssa gives a drawing to each of her friends.

Alyssa _____ a drawing to each of her friends.

5. Chickens pecked at bugs and fruit in the garden.

Chickens _____ at bugs and fruit in the garden.

6. Each egg will travel a thousand miles before it lands on her lap.

Each egg _____ a thousand miles before it lands on her lap.

7. The wings had plenty of room to spread.

The wings _____ plenty of room to spread.

8. Madison collects the hay in the morning after breakfast.

Madison _____ the hay in the morning after breakfast.

Exercise 4 – Progressive Tenses

In the following sentences, change the simple tense verbs to progressive tense verbs using the same time period (present, past, future). Avoid the perfect tense for this exercise.

Example: Martians land on the planet Earth. (present)

Martians are landing on the planet Earth. (present progressive)

(Remember: Progresssive tenses for the verb *to run* are:

Present: she *is running*

Past: she *was running*

Future: she *will be running*)

1. Ferdinand scoffed when his friends all left for college.

Ferdinand _____ when his friends all left for college.

2. He enjoys his flowers, vegetables and herbs.

He _____ his flowers, vegetables and herbs.

3. The pumpkins ripened too long last year.

The pumpkins _____ too long last year.

4. His friends will call at the next holiday or break.

His friends _____ at the next holiday or break.

5. Ferdinand answers the phone saying “What?”

Ferdinand _____ the phone saying “What?”

6. He screened his calls last week to avoid bill collectors.

He _____ his calls last week to avoid bill collectors.

7. His money goes under his mattress until he needs it.

His money _____ under his mattress until he needs it.

8. He will go fishing next week if he gets his license.

He _____ next week if he gets his license.

ANSWERS

The Grammar answer key is ordered alphabetically by grammar title:

Adjectives & Adverbs Answer Key (for 336-341)

Exercise A

1. Their timid leader tentatively put one fat, calloused foot on the grass.
2. She then gingerly placed the other foot down.
3. She paused, thoughtfully scratched her forehead, and then started to waddle quite gracelessly toward a dim light.
4. Soon the braver aliens followed her but the more cowardly aliens hung back inside the door of the silver spaceship.
5. Suddenly, they heard a short, high-pitched yelp.
6. The youngest alien had stepped accidentally on the tail of a small furry creature, and both of them cried out instinctively.
7. The little alien regained his composure right away and, curious about the strange creature, he carefully reached down to pick up the frightened mouse.

["Curious about the strange creature" is an adjective phrase that modifies "he", and "strange" is an adjective that modifies "creature"]

8. The mouse, still terrified, dashed away.
9. It ran over the sensitive toes of several aliens who squealed loudly

["Who squealed loudly" is an adjective clause modifying "aliens"; within that clause, "loudly" is an adverb modifying "squealed"]

10. The resulting commotion distracted the group, and they didn't notice the two young children slowly riding up on their creaky three-speed bicycles.

Exercise B: Individual answers will vary.

Appositives Answer Key (for 342-344)

ANSWERS

Exercise 1 – Noun Phrase Appositives – Sentence Combining

Combine the following sentences using NPAs.

1. The lunch was cheap, served cold, and brought an hour late. The lunch was a bowl of soup.
The lunch, a bowl of soup, was cheap, served cold, and brought an hour late.
2. Maxwell's car topped fifty miles per hour—but barely. His car was a sleek Corvair.
Maxwell's car, a sleek Corvair, topped fifty miles per hour—but barely.
3. The student body voted “no” on the resolution even though it would have benefited them explicitly. The student body is a confused group of adults whose only interest in common was the college's location.
The student body, a confused group of adults whose only interest in common was the college's location, voted “no” on the resolution even though it would have benefited them explicitly.
4. The pilot was stranded for twelve hours inside of his jet. The pilot was a former Air Force mechanic. His jet was a Cessna Skylane.
The pilot, a former Air Force mechanic, was stranded for twelve hours inside of his jet, a Cessna Skylane.
5. I want to speak on the important subjects. The important subjects are philosophy, linguistics and chemistry.
I want to speak on the important subjects: philosophy, linguistics and chemistry.
6. After six long years Alec finally achieved his lifelong goal. The goal was a scholarship to a good college.
After six long years Alec finally achieved his lifelong goal: a scholarship to a good college.
7. Even though you're willing to forfeit the prize, I think you should wait a week or two—until you know you won't need the money. The prize would be my salary for a whole year.
Even though you're willing to forfeit the prize—my salary for a whole year—I think you should wait a week or two—until you know you won't need the money.
8. The bear came to our tent, peeked in, and went on his merry way. The bear was a sleepy grizzly.
The bear, a sleepy grizzly, came to our tent, peeked in, and went on his merry way.

9. Camped around the fire, each of us stared at the night sky. The fire was a glowing source of warmth. The night sky was a bowl full of sparkling stars.

Camped around the fire, a glowing source of warmth, each of us stared at the night sky, a bowl full of sparkling stars.

10. Mrs. Peterson warned us that we would have only one more day to hand in the assignment. Mrs. Peterson is my least favorite teacher.

Mrs. Peterson, my least favorite teacher, warned us that we would have only one more day to hand in the assignment.

Exercise 2 – NPAs – Sentence Combining

For each of the following sentences, add one or more NPAs to give the reader additional information. Make up whatever you like! (Hint: find the noun(s) in the sentence to see what can take an NPA.)

NOTE: Answers will vary but one of the underlined nouns must be modified in each sentence.

1. My best friend lost the race.
2. Bill Clinton took first prize for his book.
3. Joanne told Larry to go for a ride on his boat.
4. Napoleon discovered the "trapple."
5. My binder contains one hundred papers and two pamphlets.
6. The dog bit Bill in the leg before he could run into a house.
7. Her shirt nearly blinded me.
8. Abe Lincoln probably didn't use Log Cabin syrup.
9. I like the school's newest building.
10. Cindy took the money to the bank.

Articles Answer Key (for 345-347)

ANSWERS

Exercise 1 – Definite and Indefinite Articles

Fill in the blank for each sentence using either *a*, *an*, or *the*, or leave the space blank if none is needed.

1. Last week a seagull dropped his fish onto my car.
2. Maria took out the garbage before reading.
3. The surfboard cut through the waves as she sped toward the beach.
4. Sculpture is an interesting art form, whether in metal, clay or uranium.
5. I love picnics—especially when I remember the food.
6. My house is falling apart, the shutters are in disrepair, and the windows are broken.
7. The brothers met to discuss a possible solution.
8. I went to the lab to work on a computer, but they were all taken.
9. Well, professor, an alien came and stole my gray matter before I could finish my homework.
10. This semester the same student violated his restraining order.
11. She passed him to avoid a confrontation involving the police.
12. I want to go to the part of Ukraine where they speak a Russian dialect.
13. The assistants found the theme that meant the most to them, and they wove it carefully into a handbook they could be proud of.
14. The airplane's tires skidded down X Los Angeles Airport's main runway before knocking out a baggage cart and a fuel truck.
15. I am studying X American history in school, but only after I pass my Biology class and ace the final exam.

Commas Answer Key (for 348-354)

Exercise 1 – Commas – Dependent & Independent Clauses

Add commas where necessary in the sentences below. Some sentences will not require one.



1. Lately Katherine has wanted more companionship even though she rather likes to be alone.
2. Jerry vies for her attention, but she has so much on her own mind as she suffers through this ordeal.
3. But whereas Alec acts like a friend, he also wants Katherine's admiration.
4. So that she will be found innocent, Miss Smatter will write another's confession.
5. Jerry eats his sandwich as coolly as the others do, yet he can't shake the feeling of deception and mistrust.
6. Sabrina thinks that the apartment's rent is trivial while Kelly thinks it crucial.
7. Although Rachel has little say in the matter, her friends could use the advice.
8. Because her dog was hit by a car, he walks with a substantial limp.
9. The doctor set it with pins, and even though he didn't scratch at it, he was still forced to wear a giant collar.
10. Either the bill is paid within the month, or the doctor will send a collection agency for the money.

Exercise 2 – Commas – Series and Adjectives

Add commas where necessary in the sentences below. Some sentences will not require one.

1. Lately Martin has been picking giant, swollen mushrooms from his yard.
2. Sue won the “Vegetable Prize of the Day” that included carrots, turnips, and leeks.
3. Most people don’t know that their favorite chips contain preservatives, artificial flavors, and MSG.
4. The three tall brothers took the brilliant, shining vitamins before playing sports.
5. Watching movies, reading books, sleeping, and exercising are my favorite weekend activities.

Exercise 3 – Commas – Essential and Nonessential Items

Add commas where necessary in the sentences below. Some sentences will not require one.

1. Shelly, my mother’s step-sister, gave me thirty dollars last week.
2. The campus police, who rarely arrest any faculty members, are responsible for patrolling all night long.
3. The man walking his dog down the street looks like my great-uncle Ted.
4. My grandmother, with a terrible scream, alerted me to the fire in her closet.
5. Doug gave me three helpings of dessert, which was a crème brûlée.
6. Speaking as if he was consumed with fury, Louis yelled to the audience.
7. The actor with no siblings starred in the blockbuster movie *Grammar Cop*.
8. The helicopter, a Grasker A-7, flew over the vast and empty desert.
9. His wife, the fifth one before Jane and after Cecilia, always worried their marriage wouldn’t last.
10. “Sonny’s Blues,” the famous story by Baldwin, contains rich allegory that weaves, along with fascinating symbolism, a rich fabric of text accessible to most readers.

Exercise 4 – Commas – Transitions

Add commas and/or semicolons where necessary in the sentences below.



ANSWERS

1. I didn't want to see the whole country; however, I did want to visit the biggest states and prettiest parks.
2. On the other hand, Martin said that Oklahoma is worth skipping.
3. Alternatively, I dream about the open road even if it is scary sometimes.
4. My car takes five quarts of oil, typically speaking.
5. I made the motel reservations already; therefore, I should leave next week.
6. Pharmaceuticals, as a result, are becoming more and more expensive.
7. Thus, I will need to buy a new car before I set off on Sunday.

Exercise 5 – Commas – Quotations

Add commas where necessary in the sentences below.

1. "Imagination is more important than knowledge," Albert Einstein wisely once asserted.
2. Walt Disney offered excellent advice when he said, "The way to get started is to quit talking and begin doing."
3. Do you agree with the assertion made by Socrates, "An unexamined life is not worth living"?
4. "To be or not to be?" is one of the most quoted phrases from Shakespeare's plays.
(no added comma)
5. "Live as if you were to die tomorrow," Gandhi advised. "Learn as if you were to live forever."
6. In *Brave New World*, Aldous Huxley puts a forth a shocking assertion, "Most men and women will grow up to love their servitude and will never dream of revolution."

Contractions Answer Key (for 355-356)

Exercise 1 – Contractions

1. The team is busy typing at the desk, but they're not going to stay long.
2. It isn't that their parents are mean, but they don't spend any time with them.
3. You'd have to be crazy to eat that fast food.
4. Paragraphs aren't my favorite thing to study, but they beat spelling.
5. In two more days we'll be sailing around the world.
6. The second student from the left wouldn't turn in his test on time.
7. Let's see what I'm doing next week so I don't double-book.
8. Who's coming to the party tomorrow?
9. This really isn't what I envisioned when I agreed to get paid.
10. The co-op doesn't have any cereal unless you're buying it in bulk.
11. In fact, it's cheaper, healthier, and shouldn't be any less fresh.
12. I've had a good experience at that store.
13. The food I brought home wouldn't ever go to waste.
14. They'll bag it for you and won't drop anything.
15. I'm a fan of going to a co-op like this instead of the large chain stores.

Adapted from Fog City Fundamentals, Fourth Edition, Altman & Deicke, 1998

Coordinators Answer Key (for 357-358)



1. He could not understand geometry, *nor* could he understand physics.
2. He took extra classes, *but/yet* the tutor couldn't seem to help.
3. He worked incredibly hard, *and* everyone in the math department was willing to help him.
4. He realized he would have to improve, *or* he was going to have to give up his ambition to become a great physicist.
5. The other students could build catapults out of popsicle sticks and rubber bands, *but/yet* Calvin's catapult couldn't even launch a pebble.
6. Calvin's experiments were always unique, *for* they proved that some basic law of nature no longer existed.
7. Calvin finally realized that he did not have it in him to be the next Stephen Hawking, ~~so~~ he changed his major to English.

Dangling Modifiers Answer Key (for 359-361)



ANSWERS

1. Reacting with suspicion and hostility to the Roma's distinct culture and nomadic lifestyles, some native Europeans have historically discriminated against them.
2. No corrections needed.
3. In World War II, the Nazis carried out an attempted genocide known as the *Porajmos*, or the "devouring," that killed between 200,000 and 800,000 Roma.
4. Some people continue to perpetuate derogatory stereotypes, characterizing the Roma as tramps and thieves.
5. Both embodying and transcending the sadness of this history, music is an important expression of traditional Rom culture.
6. Developed in Spanish Roma communities, flamenco is probably the style of Roma music most familiar to the outside world.
7. No corrections needed.
8. A celebration of the range and vitality of gypsy music, Latcho Drom, is an excellent documentary by the Roma director Tony Gatlif.

OR

The Roma director Tony Gatlif made the excellent documentary *Latcho Drom*, a celebration of the range and vitality of gypsy music.

Fragments Answer Key (for 362-366)



ANSWERS

Exercise A

1. A noticeable mistake which was on the flyer--*fragment*
2. Whenever I get tired of doing my math homework--*fragment*
3. The building across from the library is condemned. --*sentence*
4. My roommate who intends to finish college in four years--*fragment*
5. My other roommate has been in college seven years--*sentence*
6. Before the semester began--*fragment*
7. The teacher who liked to listen to the sound of his own voice--*fragment*
8. Because mid-terms are just about to start--*fragment*
9. If I could be left alone to do my homework--*fragment*
10. Although I don't usually enjoy hard work, I love studying Japanese. --*sentence*
11. Listening to tapes in the language lab is really time consuming--*sentence*
12. The boy typed on the Mac in the computer lab--*sentence*
13. The essay that I have to write—*fragment*
14. While I was eating my lunch at the campus center—*fragment*

Exercise B



1. Anxious about his love life, he decided to visit a fortune-teller.
 2. The fortune-teller asked for fifty dollars and the names of his favorite movie stars.
 3. *She* consulted her astrology charts and closely examined his palms.
OR
Consulting her astrology charts, *she* closely examined his palms.
 4. She predicted someone important, *a tall, dark stranger*, would soon come into his life.
 5. *He* was skeptical that such a clichéd prediction could come true.
OR
While he was skeptical that such a clichéd prediction could come true, *he was secretly hoping it would*.
- [Any independent clause that would complete the sentence is acceptable.]
6. No revisions necessary.
 7. The stranger who would change his life walked in the door and ordered a hot chai.
 8. She asked if she could share his table because the other tables were full of students studying for their midterms.
 9. Looking up from his crossword puzzle, he smiled and said yes.
 10. As she sat down in the table across from him, *she helped him find the answer to seven across*.

[Any independent clause that would complete the sentence is acceptable.]

Exercise C

In “The Lottery,” author Shirley Jackson implies that human beings are mindless, static creatures who cannot or will not free themselves from the domination of tradition, even when a ritual has lost all purpose or value. This theme is dramatized in her own tale of a town’s annual selection of one of its residents for sacrifice at the hands of his or her neighbors. On June 27th of every year, the head of each household draws a lot from an old black box to see whether someone in the household is the fated one.

On the day of the story’s action, the proceedings are supervised by Joe Summers, an old-timer who oversees square dances, the teenager’s club, and the Halloween program. The townsfolk are in a festive mood, approaching the oncoming massacre of a neighbor with no more concern than they give to the milking of a cow. They are not troubled that they no longer know the reason for the ritual, the purpose that prompted their forebears to initiate the proceedings. They simply consider the drawing a necessity, one of the town’s vital activities. Old Man Warner exemplifies the majority of the villagers. Sheep-like, he follows the dictates of tradition unquestioningly. “There’s always been a lottery,” he says. And, by implication, there always will be.

Possessives Answer Key (for 367-370)

ANSWERS

Exercise 1 – Possessives

Rewrite each underlined group of words, using apostrophes to show possession.

1. Nancy was driving along with Jo in the car owned by Beth.
Beth's car
2. The tires of the car screeched to a halt after a confession.
The car's tires
3. Not even the defroster could fight the fog of the windows.
the windows' fog
4. The two avoided the snow by walking underneath the leaves of the trees.
the trees' leaves.
5. The hands of Jo were cold; warming them wasn't entirely out of the question.
Jo's hands
6. "The attitudes of people just aren't ready for this," Nancy said.
People's attitudes
7. The two looked to the snowflakes of the sky and saw white dusty stars floating by.
the sky's snowflakes
8. "We should go home and sit before the heat of the fireplace," Jo said.
the fireplace's heat
9. "The mugs that belong to Beth should hold enough hot chocolate to warm us up."
Beth's mugs

Which possessive pronouns belong in the following examples?

This is Kimberly's handbook.

This is her handbook. The handbook is hers.

Those are Jessie's records.

Those are her records. The records are hers.

That is Frank and Todd's car.

That is his car. The car is his.

The tall vase belongs to you.

The tall one is your vase. The vase is yours.

Exercise 2 – Possessives

Rewrite each underlined group of words, using apostrophes to show possession.

Examples:

- The flavor of the coffee was unusual. ⇒ the coffee's flavor
- I live in the home of my parents. ⇒ my parents' home

-
1. The combined losses of the North and South were the greatest in any American war.
The North's and South's combined losses
 2. The president took away some of the responsibilities of the chief-of-staff.
the chief-of-staff's responsibilities.
 3. We loved the shoes of George and Sara.
George's and Sara's shoes.
 4. She was insulted by the rude remarks of her sister-in-law.
her sister-in-law's rude remarks.
 5. I couldn't stand the behavior of Alan and Jennifer.
Alan and Jennifer's behavior.
 6. The information of the ambassador was mostly incorrect.
The ambassador's information
 7. The voyages of Magellan and Columbus were controversial.
Magellan's and Columbus's voyages
 8. The novels of Fitzgerald and Nabokov are among the most admired in modern literature.
Fitzgerald's and Nabokov's novels
 9. One of the most famous events in American history is the journey west of Lewis and Clark.
Lewis and Clark's journey west
 10. Don't forget the birthday of your mother-in-law.
your mother-in-law's birthday.

Adapted from Fog City Fundamentals, Fourth Edition, Altman & Deicke, 1998.

Run-Together Sentences Answer Key (for 371-378)

ANSWERS

Note that in correcting RTS errors, you will often have had a choice between two or more equally logical coordinators or subordinators; therefore, where appropriate, several possibilities are given for each sentence.

Exercise A

1. At the beginning of the season there are fourteen aspiring fashion designers, *but/yet* in the end only three people get to show at Olympus Fashion Week in New York.
2. The supermodel Heidi Klum hosts, *and* famous designers serve as guest judges.
3. The contestants must take the design challenges seriously every week, *for* the loser goes home.
4. Some of the contestants have huge egos, *so* they are unnecessarily competitive.
5. I don't have TiVo, *so* I am going to my friend's house to watch the season finale.

Exercise B

Although the original order of sentences has been retained in this answer key, you could also reasonably switch the order of ideas, so that the subordinate clause comes first, or vice-versa. This is demonstrated with the first sentence.

1. She needed a part-time job *because* books and tuition were expensive this year.
OR
Because books and tuition were expensive this year, she needed a part-time job.
2. *Although/even though/though/while* she would have preferred not to have to work retail, the only job she could find was at a shoe store in the mall.
3. *Although/even though/though/while* the customers were frequently demanding and rude, she liked her co-workers.
4. *When/after/as soon as* she had been working for a month, her employee discount kicked in.
5. *When/after/as soon as* she paid off her credit card bill, she was planning to buy a new pair of shoes.

Exercise C

In the following sentences, using a transition word—the words in brackets—is optional.

1. Orville was almost thirty-five; his tummy had started to stick out.
2. His wife worried that his eating habits were unhealthy; [*therefore*] she tried to encourage him to eat more fruits and vegetables.
3. Orville was not as concerned; he would eat six cookies a meal without feeling guilty.
4. On the radio, Orville had heard that drinking green tea could help you lose weight; he decided to stop drinking coffee that very day and put his coffee machine away.
5. Only he didn't really stop drinking coffee; [*instead*] he just stopped making it at home and went to the neighborhood café instead.

Exercise D

1. The legalization of prostitution would actually help reduce crime *because* the prostitute wouldn't be a victim of extortion or beatings.
OR
The legalization of prostitution would actually help reduce crime, *for* the prostitute wouldn't be a victim of extortion or beatings.
2. *If* police could stake out a street crime area instead of a brothel, the effect would be safer streets and more efficient use of the police.
3. Not everybody is going to be so ambitious and work; many will probably do nothing.
4. *Although/even though/though/while* at one time people had responsibilities to their families and communities, now you only have to answer to yourself and no one else.
OR
At one time people had responsibilities to their families and communities, *but/yet* now you only have to answer to yourself and no one else.
5. To some, divorce provides an easy out to their problems of getting along together; therefore they dissolve the marriage rather than work it out.

Exercise E

Only the run-together sentences from the original paragraph have been reproduced below.

1. Sleep is a subject we should all know a lot about, *for* we spend one third of our lives sleeping.

OR

Sleep is a subject we should all know a lot about *because* we spend one third of our lives sleeping.

2. They used to believe that the body repairs itself while asleep; there is some truth to this, but the body also does this while awake.

3. The brain does not simply shut itself off at night, *but* it goes through a complicated series of chemical changes.

OR

The brain does not simply shut itself off at night; it goes through a complicated series of chemical changes.

4. They have found that we do not move smoothly from being awake to being asleep, *but* we pass through a cycle of four sleep stages.

OR

They have found that we do not move smoothly from being awake to being asleep; [instead,] we pass through a cycle of four sleep stages.

5. At each stage blood pressure and pulse rate drop, *and* the body temperature also goes down.

OR

At each stage blood pressure and pulse rate drop; the body temperature also goes down.²

² Altman, Pam and Doreen Deicke, Eds. Fog City Fundamentals, 4th ed. Pearson Custom Publishing: Boston, 1998.

Exercise F



ANSWERS

1. In 1867, *when* a chef at a hotel in Saratoga Springs accidentally dropped some thinly sliced potatoes into hot cooking oil, instantly the world found a new delicacy: the potato chip.
OR
In 1867, a chef at a hotel in Saratoga Springs accidentally dropped some thinly sliced potatoes into hot cooking oil; instantly the world found a new delicacy: the potato chip.
2. At the time, Saratoga Springs was America's most fashionable resort, *and* fads that started there usually found immediate success.
OR
At the time, Saratoga Springs was America's most fashionable resort, ~~so~~ fads that started there usually found immediate success.
3. The wide, tree-lined avenues were filled with people eating potato chips, *and* the huge veranda of the United States Hotel was no different; it was filled with chip-eaters too.
OR
The wide, tree-lined avenues were filled with people eating potato chips. The huge veranda of the United States Hotel was no different; it was filled with chip-eaters too.
4. Some of the richest, most powerful people in the world consumed them regularly; for instance, the Vanderbilts could often be seen daintily plucking chips from paper cups on their stroll back to their mansion.
5. The potato chip was no longer the snack of only the rich and famous, *for* it became a common household item.
6. Of course potato chips have changed a great deal in the last hundred years; now they come in various textures and flavors, some even stacked in paper tubes.³

³ Ibid.

Subject & Verb Identification Answer Key (for 379-381)

1. After a long, rainy winter, the woman and her husband had become tired of their small apartment, so they decided to drive to a seedy part of town in search of excitement.
2. The couple had been cruising slowly down a side street, looking for some local nightlife, when they heard music coming from a small bar on the corner.
3. They had just left their car when some stray cats started fighting in a side alley.
4. When the couple walked in and sat down at the bar, nobody bothered to look up.
5. At one end of the bar, a tired-looking woman was languidly smoking her cigarette and expertly blowing out smoke rings.
6. The bartender was wiping down the counter and softly whistling to himself.
7. Hunched over a table in the back corner, four men were enjoying a friendly game of cards.
8. A sad Billie Holiday tune had been playing softly from an old jukebox, but once the song was over, the room went silent.
9. Suddenly, a man in the back stood and threw his cards down on the table, cursing loudly.
10. When he began to reach into his pocket, the couple looked at each other anxiously and then hurriedly backed out the door.

Subject-Verb Agreement Answer Key (for 382-385)

Practice Exercises

Circle the correct verb for each sentence.

Tip: write the pronoun above the subject to help you identify whether the verb should be singular or plural.

- (*He*)
 1. Jordan (hang / hangs) the picture upside down above his futon.
- (*It*)
 2. *Starry Night* (contain / contains) eleven stars and one swirling moon.
- (*They*)
 3. The hammers (pound / pounds) the nails until each corner is flush against the wall.
- (*She*)
 4. Van Gogh's sister (take / takes) most of the credit for his genius.
- (*They*)
 5. The yellows in the painting (swirl / swirls) around the blue sky rather than the other way around.

Agreement Exercise

Fill in the verb for each sentence.

Subject	Verb	
Martin and his mother	<i>play</i> [to play]	backgammon every day after work.
The junior or senior	<i>marches</i> [to march]	in the Homecoming parade.
A plum, and not the carrots,	<i>provides</i> [to provide]	valuable nutrients to the body.
Martha or Dan's children	<i>scribble</i> [to scribble]	on the wall to create their art.
The banana's peel	<i>stretches</i> [to stretch]	across the floor to make them trip.
Saving of electricity	<i>takes</i> [to take]	strong initiative, but benefits all of us.
The group of friends	<i>calls</i> [to call]	each card aloud to win the game.

Agreement Practice Paragraph: The Supreme Court

Underline each subject once, each verb twice, and fix any incorrect verbs. The first sentence is done for you.

The Supreme Court Justices rejoices after a particularly difficult decision. Though they usually lean on the chief justice to announce the ruling (unless he is in the minority), each celebrates in his or her own way. A reporter, speaking on the condition of anonymity, tells that in each session, the justices bickers back and forth even when they seem to agree. One or two bicker more than the others, but no one keeps silent for long. All this bickering produces so much tension that when they finish a case, they all must go their separate ways until at least the following week when they repeat the whole process.

Subordinators Answer Key (for 386-389)

Note that in joining the two sentences, you will often have had a choice between two or more equally logical subordinators; therefore, several possibilities are given for each sentence. Note too that although the original order of sentences has been retained in this answer key, you could also reasonably switch the order of ideas, so that the subordinate clause comes first, or vice-versa. This is demonstrated with the first example in exercise A.

Exercise A:

1. Cockroaches are a health menace to humans *because/since* they carry viruses and bacteria that cause diseases from hepatitis to salmonella.

OR

Because/since they carry viruses and bacteria that cause diseases from hepatitis to salmonella, cockroaches are a health menace to humans.

2. *Even though/although/though* humans try to defeat cockroaches, they are very successful at surviving our attacks.
3. *Although/even though/though* cockroaches are smaller than the humans who chase them, they have extremely fast responses and sensitive receptors.
4. *If/when* there is no food, cockroaches subsist on glue, paper, and soap.
5. *If/when* they can't find glue, paper or soap, they can draw on their body stores for three months.
6. *If/when* cockroaches are really desperate, they will turn into cannibals.
7. Female Suriname cockroaches can produce generation after generation of identical females *because/since* they are able to clone themselves.



Exercise B:

1. *When* they sat down with Red Cloud to discuss the purchase of the Black Hills, whatever calmness the government commissioners still possessed must have been shaken.
2. *Because/since* the region was so valuable to the Native Americans, Red Cloud calmly proposed that \$600 million seemed like a fair price.
3. *After* the Native Americans had reconsidered their price tag, they suggested that \$6 million would be a reasonable offer.
4. *Because/since* commissioners were too intimidated to negotiate, they returned to Washington and angrily recommended teaching the Native Americans a lesson.
5. The government immediately ordered all Native Americans to come onto the reservation at once *even though/although/though* the demand was both illegal and impossible to comply with.
6. Most of the Native Americans could never know about the order *because/since* they were spread out all over the Black Hills.
7. *When* the deadline came, only one small band of Native Americans had come in.
8. *Because/since* the other Native Americans were now assumed at war with the government, the Indian Bureau turned the matter over to General Philip Sheridan.
9. It was a totally unprovoked war *because/since* no Sioux or Cheyenne had ever violated a treaty or actually attacked a U.S. citizen.

Verb Tenses Answer Key (for 390-395)

A diamond-shaped graphic with a gradient from light to dark, containing the word "ANSWERS" in bold, black, uppercase letters.

Exercise 1 – Simple Past Tense

Fill in each blank with the correct past tense form of the verb provided.

Example:

PLAY We played dodge ball all afternoon.

FRY 1. We fried the fish we caught in the lake.

STUDY 2. All of us studied hard for the physics exam.

CRY 3. Mary cried on his shoulder all through the movie.

MARRY 4. She married him on Tuesday and played slots that night.

TRY 5. Fred tried to get in the concert by posing as a security guard.

SHOP 6. I shopped for all of my birthday presents at the art fair.

ADMIT 7. No one admitted that he was tired.

PLAN 8. Marty and Isabel planned their marriage simply and loosely.

TERRIFY 9. The fireworks terrified the younger children.

COMPILE 10. The assistants compiled the materials into a great handbook.

Exercise 2 – Simple Past Tense

In each of the following sentences, underline any verbs that should have –ed or –d endings and supply the missing letters. Watch for time expressions (last week, yesterday, years ago) that indicate past time.

incorrect: The committee vote to adjourn yesterday.

correct: The committee voted to adjourn yesterday.

1. The driver asked for the exact fare last week.
2. Oliver used to live in Berkeley when he was a college student.
3. Katerina studied all the time and so she graduated from college last year.
4. College students are supposed to attend every class meeting.
5. Last Sunday, Laura listened to the drummers in the park.
6. Until I started school, I worked twenty hours per week and study the rest of the time.
7. Finally Gayle's cat returned home.
8. Several years ago I witnessed a crime and identify the criminal.

Adapted from Fog City Fundamentals, Fourth Edition, Altman & Deicke, 1998.

Exercise 3 – Perfect Tenses

Use the perfect tense to fill in the blank using the same time period (past, present, future) as the sample.

Example: Joan licks the popsicle. (present tense)

Joan has licked the popsicle. (present perfect tense)

(Remember: Perfect tenses for the verb *to run* are:

Present: she *has run*

Past: she *had run*

Future: she *will have run*)

1. Eric took piano lessons.

Eric had taken piano lessons since he was ten years old.

2. Tara raises as many children as she can.

Tara has raised as many children as she can.

3. Bill, on the other hand, will join the Coast Guard.

Bill, on the other hand, will have joined the Coast Guard.

4. Alyssa gives a drawing to each of her friends.

Alyssa has given a drawing to each of her friends.

5. Chickens pecked at bugs and fruit in the garden.

Chickens had pecked at bugs and fruit in the garden.

6. Each egg will travel a thousand miles before it lands on her lap.

Each egg will have traveled a thousand miles before it lands on her lap.

7. The wings had plenty of room to spread.

The wings had had plenty of room to spread.

8. Madison collects the hay in the morning after breakfast.

Madison has collected the hay in the morning after breakfast.

Exercise 4 – Progressive Tenses

In the following sentences, change the simple tense verbs to progressive tense verbs using the same time period (present, past, future). Avoid the perfect tense for this exercise.

1. Ferdinand scuffed when his friends all left for college.

Ferdinand was scoffing when his friends all left for college.

2. He enjoys his flowers, vegetables and herbs.

He is enjoying his flowers, vegetables and herbs.

3. The pumpkins ripened too long last year.

The pumpkins were ripening too long last year.

4. His friends will call at the next holiday or break.

His friends will be calling at the next holiday or break.

5. Ferdinand answers the phone saying "What?"

Ferdinand is answering the phone saying "What?"

6. He screened his calls last week to avoid bill collectors.

He was screening his calls last week to avoid bill collectors.

7. His money goes under his mattress until he needs it.

His money is going under his mattress until he needs it.

8. He will go fishing next week if he gets his license.

He will be going fishing next week if he gets his license.

What, Why, and How?

15

NON-NATIVE ENGLISH SPEAKERS

Definition and rationale

English survey

Parts of speech self-review

Top 8 tips to improve your reading

Tips for addressing length in academic writing

Turning spoken English into written

Tips for reported speech

Turning questions into statements

Conveying an Author's Point of View

Agreeing or Disagreeing with an Author

Proofreading Tips for ESOL students

Non-Native English Speakers chapter overview:

Non-native speakers in mainstream college classes face the extra challenge of reading, speaking, and writing in a language they have not studied their whole lives. The ESOL Instructors at Skyline College have designed this chapter to help provide added assistance to those students in mainstream English classes to support their learning and success.

English survey: To begin, you can complete this survey and then take it with you when you first meet with your English teacher so you can go over your history, your goals for the class, and your particular needs as a student. This will allow your English teacher to get to know you better, and you can make a plan together to help you be successful in the class

Parts of speech self-review: Be sure you understand the foundational elements of English. Complete this review and for any terms you are not sure of or cannot define, use this as a guide for which topics you should review in [Chapter 14: Grammar](#).

Top 8 tips to improve your reading: read as much as possible, make vocabulary lists, use a good dictionary, don't interrupt your reading by looking up words, use academic word lists to build vocabulary, annotate when you read (underline key points, take notes in the margins), read the newspaper, and read to your kids.

Tips for addressing length in academic writing: Academic writing should be developed into powerful sentences that convey an idea completely. State your ideas in simple clear sentences first. Use powerful verbs, nouns, and strong, descriptive adjectives. After your sentences convey those ideas, then consider joining them together using sentence joining strategies such as FANBOYS (coordination) or subordination.

Turning spoken English into written: There are three important differences between spoken English and written English: (1) Length: written English often takes more words to convey the same idea that can be conveyed in spoken English. (2) In the written version of a spoken conversation, the verbs shift from present to past, and from past to past perfect. This is because the speaker is reporting something that already happened. (3) When turning a if/whether question into a statement, the question cannot remain a question. It must be turned into a statement.

Tips for reported speech: Reported speech should only be used when reporting an action in past time. It is often used in the reporting fields of journalism and news casting, but may be appropriate for some forms of academic writing where reporting of a source is needed.

Turning questions into statements: Use If and Whether to Turn Yes/No Questions into Statements. When using reported speech, Yes/No questions cannot remain in question format. It is necessary to re-word the question to put it into statement format.

Conveying an author's point of view: Part of academic writing is accurately conveying the viewpoint of writers. You want to clearly state their points of view and arguments before you add your own evaluation and analysis. In other words, you want to fairly and accurately present the ideas in the material you are offering a critique of.

Agreeing and disagreeing with an author: In many cultures, it is considered rude or unwise to disagree with a published author. However, in the United States, it is considered perfectly appropriate for a student writer to agree or disagree with a professional author. In fact, it shows the student writer's ability to think critically and be a participant in intellectual dialogue. Your professor wants to see that you can think independently and can critique another writer's ideas.

Proofreading tips for ESOL students: Proofreading is the process of error detection and error correction in your own work. Put in other words, it is the identification and correction of your own mistakes. It should be an integral part of your writing process.

WHO ARE NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS?

Used in the context of living in the United States, the term non-native speakers means students who are not native speakers of English, meaning that English is not their first language. Other common terms used are ESL (English as a Second Language) and ESOL (English Speakers of Other Languages).

WHY HAVE A SEPARATE CHAPTER FOR NON-NATIVE SPEAKERS?

Non-native speakers in mainstream college classes face the extra challenge of reading, speaking, and writing in a language they have not studied their whole lives. The ESOL Instructors at Skyline College have designed this chapter to help provide added assistance to those students in mainstream English classes to support their learning and success.

HOW CAN I IMPROVE MY SUCCESS?

If you are enrolled in a mainstream English class (a class that is not ESOL specific so contains a mixture of native and non-native English speakers), then most likely there will be no class time dedicated to ESOL specific needs and issues. To ensure your success in the class and in improving your English skills, you will want to take advantage of your resources. The Learning Center in building 5 has a staff of dedicated English tutors (faculty, grad students and peer tutors) and ESOL trained tutors as well. You can enroll in a credit/no-credit lab course and earn college credit while getting assistance from tutors and taking advantage of the other resources in The Learning Center. Additionally, you can use the materials in this chapter as well as the Grammar and Style chapters in this Rhetoric to strengthen your skills.

English Survey

To begin, you can complete this survey and then take it with you when you first meet with your English teacher so you can go over your history, your goals for the class, and your particular needs as a student. This will allow your English teacher to get to know you better, and you can make a plan together to help you be successful in the class.

- 1. What is your native language? Can you speak, read and write fluently in this language? What other languages do you know? Can you speak, read, and write in each?**
- 2. How long have you lived in the United States? When did you begin studying English? How many English classes have you taken? What grade level? What grades did you get in those classes?**
- 3. What areas in grammar do you find most challenging? What have past teachers commented on about your writing?**
- 4. What other skill areas do you want to strengthen? Reading comprehension? Organizing your ideas? Developing your ideas? Doing research? Listening? Class discussion?**
- 5. Circle the answers to the following questions about your editing/proofreading habits:**

I edit and proofread the final draft of writing assignments.
Always Often Rarely Never

Somebody else helps me with editing and proofreading my papers.
Always Often Rarely Never

I edit and proofread by listening to how my writing “sounds.”
Always Often Rarely Never

I analyze my sentence structure by circling subjects and underlining verbs.
Always Often Rarely Never
- 6. What else would you like me to know about you as a student in my English class?**

Parts of Speech Self-Review

Be sure you understand the foundational elements of English. For any of the following you are not sure of or cannot define, use this as a guide for which topics you should review in the [Chapter 14: Grammar](#).

Noun

Definition: _____

Examples: _____

Verb

Definition: _____

Examples: _____

Adjective

Definition: _____

Examples: _____

Adverb

Definition: _____

Examples: _____

Pronoun

Definition: _____

Examples: _____

Preposition

Definition: _____

Examples: _____

Conjunction (also known as coordinator)

Definition: _____

Examples: _____

Top Eight Tips to Improve Your Reading:



- (1) **Read as much as possible:** the more you read, the more you build up your vocabulary and sentence structure. Choose books that interest you and are more fun than watching television.
- (2) **Develop a system for vocabulary.** Keep a list of vocabulary words with their definitions to review again and again.
- (3) **Make friends with a high-quality dictionary.** Develop a system for finding key words and use the dictionary to find definitions for key words.
- (4) **Make enemies with your dictionary.** Don't overuse your dictionary or interrupt your reading by looking up every word. Studies show that breaks in reading mean a gap in your understanding.
- (5) **Be familiar with academic word lists.** Find a vocabulary review book and use it to build your vocabulary. The more vocabulary you know, the better you will understand what you read.
- (6) **Annotate your academic reading.** Underline important points and make notes in the margin. Turn the text into a conversation! If you want to sell your book back, use post-it notes for your comments.
- (7) **Read the newspaper.** It gives you something to talk about and will increase your vocabulary.
- (8) **Read to your children!** Don't have any? Find some children and read to them!

What Researchers Say about Vocabulary and Reading

To understand spoken English , you need:	1,900 frequent core words
To understand written English , you need:	2,700 frequent core words
For 90% comprehension* of newspapers and pop fiction, you need:	6,000 core words
For 95% comprehension** of newspapers and pop fiction, you need:	10,000 words
For 97% comprehension of newspapers and pop fiction, you need:	16,000 words!

What does this research mean? It means that for advanced levels of ESOL, you need to nail down the 2,700 frequent core words and be well into learning the 6,000 core words!

**** 90% comprehension is not good enough! That means you will not understand 1/10 words. You need stronger vocabulary than that if you want to understand a newspaper or pop fiction (such as a mystery novel).***

*****95% is enough to guess the meaning of the words you don't know.***

Tips for Addressing Length in Academic Writing:

Academic writing should be developed into powerful sentences that convey an idea completely. One common problem among second-language speakers is when students don't observe punctuation rules; the sentences end up too long because they are not well punctuated, and the instructor tells the student, "Make your sentences shorter and simpler." However, another problem is created here because short and simple sentences are not as powerful as longer, more descriptive sentences. So what can you do?

- **What is the idea that you want to convey?** It may be several ideas that are connected. Separate them out first. Example:
 - Source: "The Black Table is Still There" by Lawrence Otis Graham
 - Graham is surprised to see that racial self-separation still exists at his old high school.
 - Graham doesn't know whether he should feel proud or sad about it.
 - Final sentence:
 - In *The Black Table is Still There*, Lawrence Otis Graham is surprised to see that racial self-separation still exists at his old high school, but he isn't sure whether he should feel proud or sad about it.
- State your ideas in simple clear sentences first. Use powerful verbs, nouns, and strong, descriptive adjectives.
- After your sentences convey those ideas, then consider joining them together using sentence joining strategies and tools such as FANBOYS (coordination) or subordination.

PRACTICE

Practice for Addressing Length in Academic Writing

Using a source from your current course of study, select an idea that you wish to convey. Break it into several ideas and state them in their own clear sentences first. Use powerful verbs, nouns, and strong, descriptive adjectives. Finally, join the ideas into one powerful idea. Refer to rules you know that address sentence joining (such as FANBOYS and subordination).

Source: _____

Idea 1: _____

Idea 2: _____

Idea (3): _____

Final sentence: _____

Turning Spoken English into Written:

Spoken English and written English differ in many important ways. One way they differ is in how questions are interpreted in past time. For example, look at this conversation between a teacher and a student:

Student: Did you receive my email?

Teacher: When did you send it?

Student: Yesterday.

Teacher: I'm sorry, I didn't see it. What was your question?

Student: I want to know if the research paper is due next week.

Teacher: Yes, it is.

Now, look at the description of the same conversation, but written instead of spoken.

I saw my teacher and asked her if she had received my email, which I had sent the day before. She hadn't seen it, so she asked what my question was. I asked her whether the research paper was due next week, and she said it was.

There are three important differences between spoken English and written English:

1. **Length.** Written English often takes more words to convey the same idea that can be conveyed in spoken English. The conversation above took 36 words, but the written version took 47 words.
2. **Reported speech.** In the written version that describes the spoken conversation, the verbs shift from present to past, and from past to past perfect. This is because the speaker is reporting something that already happened.
3. **Using if/whether to turn a question into a statement.** In reported speech, the question cannot remain a question. It must be turned into a statement.

Incorrect: I asked her ~~did she receive~~ my email.

Correct: I asked her if she received my email.

Incorrect: I asked her ~~is the research paper due~~ next week.

Correct: I asked her whether the research paper was due next week.

Tips for Reported speech:

When should I use it?

Reported speech should only be used when reporting an action in past time. It is often used in the reporting fields of journalism and news casting, but may be appropriate for some forms of academic writing where reporting of a source is needed.

Example:

Event: A fire in a building, set by arsonists

Police statement: We believe the fire was set by juveniles. The juveniles were seen by neighbors earlier in the day.

Journalist: “The police said that the fire had been set by juveniles who had been seen loitering around the building earlier in that day.”

Reported speech is NOT used when discussing the words of an author of fiction or non-fiction (the present tense is used).

When Mark Twain states “The funniest things are the forbidden,” he reminds us how we revel in pushing the boundaries of society’s rules. Perhaps he also suggests that he himself has been taken to task by those rules, and he seeks safety in like-minded individuals who appreciate risk.

Reported speech is also NOT used when reporting research that has been published and is used for determining other research (present tense is used).

According to DeFrancis (1989), the Chinese writing system is a syllabic system of writing.

How do I use it?

Take the verb from the original tense and move it backwards in time.

future and present	past
Senator Hill: “Taxes <u>won’t</u> go up next year, but I <u>can</u> see that changing the year after.”	Senator Hill said that taxes <u>wouldn’t</u> go up next year, but that he <u>could</u> see that changing the year after.

past and present	past perfect and past
President: “The International Treaty <u>was broken</u> in the aftermath of the civil war. My administration <u>supports</u> restoring the tenets of the treaty.”	The president stated that the international treaty <u>had been broken</u> in the aftermath of the civil war and that the government <u>supported</u> the restoration of the treaty’s tenets.

Practice for Reported Speech

Imagine that all of the following statements are source material for your paper. Decide whether these statements should be moved into reported speech. If they should be moved into reported speech, do so. If not, write “not reported speech” in the blank.

1. **College President, Memo to College Governance Council:** We are ready and willing to support the veterans who have served our country by providing them with excellent opportunities for success.
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2. **Author, Paulo Freire, “Pedagogy of the Oppressed”:** Self-depreciation is another characteristic of the oppressed, which derives from their internalization of the opinion the oppressors hold of them.
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3. **Health and Human Services Secretary, Kathleen Sebelius:** I believe strongly in the need for accountability, and in the importance of being good stewards of taxpayer dollars.
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4. **Linguists Edelsky and Goodman:** It is more common in modern education to combine the writing process with whole language to form a holistic process and philosophy of literacy learning.
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Now, find two sources for a paper that you are writing. Choose one that will be appropriate for converting into reported speech, and one that will remain in present tense. Remember to cite your source.

1.

2.

Using If and Whether to Turn Yes/No Questions into Statements:

When using reported speech, Yes/No questions cannot remain in question format. It is necessary to re-word the question to put it into statement format. Remember the earlier example:

Incorrect: I asked her ~~did she receive~~ my email.

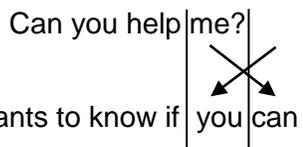
Correct: I asked her if she received my email.

Incorrect: I asked her ~~is the research paper due~~ next week.

Correct: I asked her whether the research paper was due next week.

Notice the many ways that a question can be worded.

Customer question: Can you help me?



1. Begin with independent clause.

2. Add if/whether.

3. Change the noun clause to SV order if necessary.

4. Delete *do*, *does*, and *did* if necessary.

	S	V	dependent word	S	V	
1	The customer	wants to know	if	you can	help her.	
2	The customer	would like to know	whether	you can	help her.	
3	The customer	is curious to know	if	you can	help her	or not.
4	The customer	is asking	whether	you can	help her	or not.
5	The customer	is inquiring	whether or not	you can	help her.	

PRACTICE

Convert these questions into statements.

Note the many ways to state a Yes/No question.

Example: Scholarship committee question: Will giving laptops to students improve student success?

Statement: **The scholarship committee is curious to know whether giving laptops to students will improve student success.**

1. **Community question:** Will the cost associated with the earthquake cause local taxes to go up?

Statement: _____

2. **Researcher question:** Is the low number of enrollees in the new program connected to the scandal involving the program's director?

Statement: _____

Conveying an Author's Point of View:

Part of academic writing is accurately conveying the viewpoint of writers. You want to clearly state their points of view and arguments before you add your own evaluation and analysis. In other words, you want to fairly and accurately present the ideas in the material you are offering a critique of. Here is an example of conveying an author's point of view:

In his essay, "We Should Cherish Our Children's Freedom to Think," author Kie Ho states that the U.S. is the "country of innovation" because of its emphasis on free thinking. He argues that countries who value conformity over freedom of thought are at a disadvantage in the global marketplace.

<p>What verb tense is used when presenting an author's ideas?</p> <p>a. present b. past c. future</p>	<p>If you answered a, you are correct! We use the present tense to present an author's ideas. This is because the author's words are always present. Do not use past tense for conveying the author's point of view except in very special circumstances describing events that happen in a sequence.</p>
<p>What verbs are used in the example above to report what the author says?</p> <p>a. states b. thinking c. argues d. value</p>	<p>If you answered a and c, you are correct! In fact, there are lots of words that can be used in place of the word "says." Look below for some excellent verbs used for reporting.</p>

Words to show what the author *says strongly*:

<p>advocates argues asserts believes brings to light claims declares</p>	<p>discusses emphasizes maintains points out establishes explains expresses</p>	<p>feels focuses on illustrates insists proclaims proposes</p>	<p>questions remarks says states stresses thinks</p>
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Example: Walter Mosley **asserts** that Wal-Mart's size can destroy competitive power in smaller businesses.

Words to show what the author *suggests* (doesn't state directly):

<p>advises alludes to cautions</p>	<p>conveys gives credence to implies</p>	<p>indicates insinuates recommends</p>	<p>shows suggests</p>
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Example: By tying the U.S.'s strengths in the global marketplace to its emphasis on free thinking, Kie Ho **implies** that his own country of Indonesia does a disservice to its economic future by valuing conformity.

Words to show what the author *says unwillingly or unhappily*:

<p>acknowledges</p>	<p>admits</p>	<p>allows</p>	<p>concedes</p>	<p>confesses</p>
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Example: While Mike Rose **acknowledges** that our educational system is ridiculously obsessed with evaluation and assessment, he **confesses** that he enjoyed getting good grades from his own English teacher.

Agreeing and Disagreeing with an Author's Point of View:

In many cultures, it is considered rude or unwise to disagree with a published author. However, in the United States, it is considered perfectly appropriate for a student writer to agree or disagree with a professional author. In fact, it shows the student writer's ability to think critically and be a participant in intellectual dialogue. Your professor wants to see that you can think independently and can critique another writer's ideas. When you are able to critique an author, you show yourself to be a strong thinker and writer.

There are many words and phrases that you can use to agree or disagree with an author, as you will see below.

Examples of Showing Agreement with an Author:

Brady **proclaims** that she wants a wife to support her and take care of all the child-rearing and homemaking duties so that she can be free to pursue a life without entanglements. **It is easy to agree with** her irony and obvious anger at having little choice in strict gender roles.

McCuiston **may be correct in that** kids have to "fit themselves into categories imposed by society" (283); after all, if society imposes these rules, what choice do young people have but to follow them?

Perrin's argument **is convincing because** no one can doubt his maleness after his explanation of his job (a horse wrangler), **yet** the reader sees how little freedom society allows him to be who he is.

Examples of Showing Partial, or Full, Disagreement with an Author:

While Brady's anger is understandable, her hyperbole **is not completely convincing**; she **assumes** that the whole purpose of marriage is to deliberately take advantage of the wife, and that the wife is, by definition, a servant. This is an antiquated view (the piece was written in the seventies) and therefore **may not be** representative of most marriages. **I hesitate to endorse** her view of "wife=slave" because I feel she isn't fair to men who truly uphold their half of marriage responsibilities. The argument **is not effective** because it **focuses** on one angle.

What McCuiston calls "a competitive sense that reverberates throughout adult life" (283) **I would call** building human connections. McCuiston **fails to consider** that competition is part of the way that humans, not just male humans, interact all over the world. Competition teaches us social dynamics, not just "controlled violence" (283) as McCuiston **insists**.

Notice that the language that is used is very polite and respectful, even if the student writer disagrees with the published author. Use the following words to agree and/or disagree with authors.

To agree with the author:

I/the reader...	The author...	The argument...
agree (with +person/idea) be convinced (by/that) endorse (+ author's point) support (+ author's point)	is convincing is correct adequately considers completely considers “ “ convinces “ “ supports	is well-supported is easy to agree with is effective/ clear is supported by (evidence) considers (evidence)

Example: Langston Hughes' description of a boy who loses his religion is compelling, and the reader **is convinced** by his implied argument that religion should not be forced on the unwilling.

To disagree with the author

I/the reader...	The author...	The argument...
do not/cannot agree disagree am/is not convinced cannot endorse hesitate to endorse/support do not/cannot support	is not convincing is not correct does not/fails to consider does not/fails to convince does not/fails to support assumes/wrongly assumes calls ... which is actually ...	is poorly supported is difficult to agree with is not effective / clear may not be accurate lacks support focuses on [the wrong angle]

Example: While E.D. Hirsch argues that American Culture is core knowledge that should be explicitly taught in schools, he **fails to consider** that **what he calls** American Culture is **actually** rooted in the dominant white experience and does not include the contributions of African American, Asian, and Hispanic cultures. In this way, his argument **is poorly supported**.

PRACTICE

1. Locate a quotation by an author that you are reading for your class. Choose a quotation that clearly states the author's point of view. Write that quote here:
2. Choose reporting verbs that will adequately and creatively report what the author is saying. Write those verbs here:
3. State your opinion of the author in the form of a critique. Use language for critiquing authors. Write that here.
4. Now, put it all together. Present the author's point of view using reporting verbs. Follow this with your statement of critique.

Proofreading Tips for ESOL Students

Proofreading is the process of error detection and error correction in your own work. Put in other words, it is the identification and correction of your own mistakes. It should be an integral part of your writing process.

Guidelines for Effective Proofreading

1. Leave **enough time** to proofread. Take a break from the paper for a while or leave it for the next day.
2. Proofread **only one line of text at a time**. Cover other parts that may prevent you from concentrating on the errors in that one line. Use a ruler or other straightedge for this purpose.
3. Many writers find it helpful to **read the text out loud and listen for errors**. You may find yourself filling in missing words or stumbling verbally over a duplicated word or incorrect verb tense in the text.
4. Focus on **only one type of error at a time**. Proofread throughout the essay, line by line for that one type of error. Take a short break between searches for each type of error on your checklist. Mark the errors you find with a pen other than black so the errors stand out. Make note of the correction, and put a line through the error, so you are left with only the correction to be made to your document.
5. **Sentence structure**—underline all verbs, circle all subjects, and put brackets around [clauses]. Does every sentence have an appropriate subject and complete verb? Does each sentence express a complete thought? Are all dependent clauses connected to independent clauses? Are there any fragments? Run-together sentences? Is your punctuation correct?
6. **Verb tense and modals**—use a wiggly line to mark all time expressions to help you determine the correct verb tense. When does the action take place? Have you used the correct tense? Are the verbs formed correctly? Remember, the tense may change even in the same sentence. Check every verb!
7. **Subject-Verb agreement**—check whether all third-person subjects are singular (he, she, it) or plural (they) and then check to see that the verb “agrees” with the subject.
8. **Nouns and articles**—put a box around each noun. Check whether each noun is: (a) proper or common. (b) specific/non-specific, (c) count/non-count, (d) singular/plural (If the noun is a plural count noun, check that it has the correct plural ending). Check that each noun has the appropriate article (a, an, the) or quantity word (some).

Proofreading Checklist

Directions: Go through this checklist, one item at a time. When you have checked for this item throughout the essay, mark what is true for your paper.

Items to check in this essay:	Yes	Not Yet
1. There is an original title centered at the top of the first page.	_____	_____
2. The title of the reading I am responding to, and the name of the author appear in the introductory paragraph.	_____	_____
3. The thesis statement can be found in the introduction	_____	_____
4. Each body paragraph has a topic sentence.	_____	_____
5. The paper has been double spaced throughout.	_____	_____
6. The first line of each new paragraph has been indented 5 spaces.	_____	_____
7. Standard English word order of S-V-O has been used throughout this paper except where I may have used passive tense.	_____	_____
8. All sentences begin with a capital letter.	_____	_____
9. All subjects and verbs agree. (He goes... <i>not</i> He go...)	_____	_____
10. The correct verb tense has been used in each sentence reflecting the appropriate use for present, past, or future meaning, as well as for actions or states started in the past, continuing into the present.	_____	_____
11. All word forms are in the correct parts of speech.	_____	_____
12. All singular count nouns have an article or a possessive adjective in front of them.	_____	_____
13. There are periods at the end of each sentence.	_____	_____
14. I have put my best effort into this paper.	_____	_____
15. I have proofread this paper line by line.	_____	_____

ANSWERS

Possible answers for: Parts of Speech Self-Review

Noun:

Definition: a word (other than a pronoun) used to identify any of a class of people, places, or things **common noun**, or to name a particular one of these **proper noun**.

Examples: chair, dog, essay, left-handed people

Verb:

Definition: a word used to describe an action, state, or occurrence, and forming the main part of the predicate of a sentence, such as *hear, become, happen*.

Examples: run, was singing, will be calling, sank

Adjective:

Definition: a word or phrase naming an attribute, added to or grammatically related to a noun to modify or describe it.

Examples: red, scary, enormous, challenging

Adverb:

Definition: a word or phrase that modifies or qualifies an adjective, verb, or other adverb or a word group, expressing a relation of place, time, circumstance, manner, cause, degree, etc. (e.g., *gently, then, there*).

Examples: slowly, well, quietly, rapidly

Pronoun:

Definition: a word that can function by itself as a noun phrase and that refers either to the participants in the discourse (e.g., *I, you*) or to someone or something mentioned elsewhere in the discourse (e.g., *she, it, this*).

Examples: he, they, we

Preposition:

Definition: a word governing, and usually preceding, a noun or pronoun and expressing a relation to another word or element in the clause, as in "the man *on* the platform" and "she arrived *after* dinner."

Examples: around, on, under, above

Conjunction (also known as coordinator)

Definition: a word used to connect clauses or sentences or to coordinate words in the same clause.

Examples: For, And, Nor, But, Or, Yet, So (FANBOYS)

Possible answers for: Practice for Reported Speech

1. **College President, Memo to College Governance Council:** We are ready and willing to support the veterans who have served our country by providing them with excellent opportunities for success.

The College President wrote to the College Governance Council that they were ready and willing to support the veterans who have served our country by providing them with excellent opportunities for success.

2. **Author, Paolo Freire, “Pedagogy of the Oppressed”:** Self-depreciation is another characteristic of the oppressed, which derives from their internalization of the opinion the oppressors hold of them.

Not reported speech

3. **Health and Human Services Secretary, Kathleen Sebelius:** I believe strongly in the need for accountability, and in the importance of being good stewards of taxpayer dollars.

Kathleen Sebelius, the Secretary for Health and Human Services stated that she believes strongly in the need for accountability, and in the importance of being good stewards of taxpayer dollars.

4. **Linguists Edelsky and Goodman:** It is more common in modern education to combine the writing process with whole language to form a holistic process and philosophy of literacy learning.

Not reported speech

Possible answers for: Converting Yes/No Questions in to Statements

1. **Community question:** Will the cost associated with the earthquake cause local taxes to go up?

Statement: The community would like to know if the cost associated with the earthquake will cause local taxes to go up.

2. **Researcher question:** Is the low number of enrollees in the new program connected to the scandal involving the program’s director?

Statement: The researcher is inquiring whether the low number of enrollees in the new program is connected to the scandal involving the program’s director.